Communicating Possibilities:  
A study of English nursery children's emergent creativity, exploring the three to four-year-old child as an artistic communicator and possibility thinker

TWO VOLUMES  
1 of 2

Submitted by Linda McConnon, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, November 2013.

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(Signature)

VOLUME ONE
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ABSTRACT

This research builds on previous studies that have documented evidence of Professor Anna Craft’s concept of ‘Possibility Thinking’ (PT) as at the heart of creativity which involves children transitioning from ‘what is this?’ to ‘what can I or we do with this?’ as well as imagining ‘as if’ they were in a different role. My thesis titled “Communicating Possibilities” examines English nursery children’s emergent creativity, exploring the three to four-year-old child as an artistic communicator and possibility thinker through a case study approach situated in one primary school in South West England. Three main research questions were posed concerning the ‘what, how, and why’ of creativity when children communicated through art; as well as exploring the nurturing role of others, and identity manifest through voice and learning experience.

This doctoral study is essentially interpretivist in nature seeking to explain how people make sense of their social worlds, and is an exploration framed by culturally negotiated, shared meanings, and complex social relations. Data was collected over one school year, in three nine-week research phases by the following ethnographic methods: naturalistic observations; researcher diary; children’s creative journals; and practitioner interviews. These methods were repeated for each phase. Inductive and deductive data analysis was conducted. Undertaken over time as the project unfolded, a grounded theory approach was applied in total to 27 episodes.

Micro event analysis of creative behaviours in action and narrative discourses of two kinds: peer-to-peer, and child-to-adult (teacher, early years practitioner, and my researcher dialogue) revealed four broad critical themes: Observing and documenting children’s creativity; What children can do together- recognising differences; Pedagogy of possibilities- developing a role; and The value of artistic communication in the nursery classroom. Each is discussed in terms of the key implications these themes hold for theory, policy, and early years practice.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organised under eight chapter headings: Chapter One: Introduction; Chapter Two: Literature Review; Chapter Three: Methodology; Chapter Four: Findings RQ: 1; Chapter Five: Findings RQ: 2; Chapter Six: Findings RQ: 3; Chapter Seven: Discussion; and Chapter Eight: Conclusion. More detail is given about the content of each chapter below:

Chapter One: Introduction
This chapter provides a personal rationale for the study and introduces creativity, Possibility Thinking (PT) and art in current early years education literature and policy. Key terms are defined, and research focus and research questions are outlined.

Chapter Two: Literature Review
This chapter presents a summary and critique of creativity research and justifies my focus on young children’s social art making in order to set the study within a wider context and explain its relevance.

Chapter Three: Methodology
In this chapter the methodology of ethnography is explored in relation to researcher positioning, data collection, and grounded theory which is explained in detail with regard to the analytical procedures.

Chapter Four: Findings RQ 1: Emergent PT
In this chapter the findings from Research Question 1 (How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?) is presented. I provide an analysis of these findings, and consider differences where notable. The presentation of findings in this chapter is
qualitative in nature and offers the reader an account of the findings by way of definitions, detailed categories and explanations, and vignettes intended to offer insights into the categories. Tables are used to summarise findings, and visual models are presented demonstrating the complex construction of ideas.

**Chapter Five: Findings RQ 2: The Nurturing Role of Others**
This chapter presents the analytical response to Research Question 2 (How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?). Its organisation follows the general format as the previous chapter.

**Chapter Six: Findings RQ 3: The Child’s Identity as an Artistic Communicator**
This chapter focuses on detailing creativity manifest through the child’s identity as an artist communicator in response to Research Question 3 (How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?). Its organisation follows the general format as the previous two chapters.

**Chapter Seven: Discussion**
This chapter brings together the main findings from the three research questions and considers their significance in light of the literature and early years education policy.

**Chapter Eight: Conclusion**
The final chapter provides a conclusion based on the study’s findings and highlights key implications for policy, practice and future research.
1.2 Personal Rationale

This thesis builds on my Undergraduate BSc dissertation completed as part of my Early Childhood Studies Degree (McConnon, 2009) and my MSc in Educational Research (McConnon, 2010).

I am aware of my own value stance in relation to this doctoral study and feel that it is imperative that this is briefly surfaced. I became interested in young children’s lives shortly after the birth of my daughter. Becoming a mother led me to question many parts of my own childhood, particularly in relation to my education, and a lack of concern for pupil voice in school.

I do not tolerate attitudes which undervalue children because of their perceived competencies in relation to gender, social class, cultural background or because they have additional needs. I am an advocate of children’s rights; total respect is given to children by listening to their voices and ideas, and I have a belief in education for innovation.

As a self-taught artist I became interested in communication through art in schools in order to investigate the potential for communicative, creative curricula. As part of my undergraduate degree I explored the effects of the learning environment on young children’s creativity and possibility thinking- I offer a brief overview of the study here.

When I was an early years worker I became increasingly perplexed and frustrated with the negative attitudes and comments I was observing and hearing in schools about the standards of young children’s art, and the evident lack of understanding of the effects of the environment on young children’s creativity. I felt this warranted an explorative study.

Two groups of children participated in the study (four 3 year old, and four 6 year old children), these groups were chosen to represent the age of
children entering into nursery (age 3) and those getting ready to transition into Key Stage 2 in primary school (age 6).

The children participated in three art workshops (in their age groups). The first workshop was underpinned by a free play philosophy (full and free access to resources and art materials). The second workshop was a task led fixed outcome session where all the children were provided with the same materials and had to make the same pre-prescribed product, adopting a “teaching by transmission” philosophy. The third and final workshop was underpinned by a “teaching by negotiation” philosophy (full and free access to resources and art materials).

Data was collected via video (action and dialogue), and still photographs. Analytical procedures followed an inductive/deductive thematic approach and levels of involvement were compared across children and workshops (Laevers, 1994).

I found that levels of involvement were higher for the free play and negotiated workshops, and that three key themes emerged from the findings which prompted me to write a research proposal for further investigation. Firstly all of the children enjoyed taking part in the art and craft workshops, but there were noticeable differences between the age groups. The older children (age 6) were driven by the final outcome and were working towards an end product, whereas the younger children (age 3) were much more focussed on the process. Secondly, whilst the six year olds worked together collaboratively to produce art works (models and pictures), there was no evidence of collaboration found with the younger children aged 3. Thirdly the artist employed to run the workshops found it quite difficult to alter her pedagogical stance and at times the children’s voices, ideas, and ownership of products were impacted upon by the artist “taking over”. One 6 year old participant commented on the artist’s pedagogy:
"You know what you want to do, but you can’t do it, you are trying to get it out and then someone comes along and just does it for you and then you should be able to say just give me an idea- I found it a bit annoying.”

McConnon (2009)

The original conception of the “Communicating Possibilities” study was designed to encompass longitudinal analysis of the development of collaborative emergent creativity, exploring the notion of the child aged 3-to-6 years as an artist communicator in early primary school; investigating co-constructions of knowledge and concepts of self as a learner. This age group was specifically chosen as it is within this time period that Piaget (1951) suggests children have no imagination and that internal conflict, such as the notion of egocentrism is proposed to directly challenge collaborative emergent creativity. As noted in my undergraduate study there were key differences evidenced between the age range of 3-to-6 years and thus is why I chose to research and track the developmental pathway of children’s creativity over time as they were inducted into the early years of their education. Indeed data was collected to fulfil the requirements of the original conception of the study; however it became evident that due to the vast amount of collected data, and deep rich findings the scope of the thesis was not going to accommodate the entire study. Therefore for the purpose of this doctoral study “Communicating Possibilities” concentrates on the 3-to-4 year old child in nursery and has changed focus from being solely interested in the development of collaborative emergent creativity to that of encompassing a broader perspective including the nurturing role of others and social-identity roles in school. This will be explicated further on in the thesis in the methodology- Chapter Three. Now this chapter focuses on defining key terms, research focus, and outlining the research questions for this doctoral study.
1.3 Definitions of Creativity

Depending on which lens is applied, there are many different ways to define, explore and explain creativity. According to Prentice (2000:145) ‘creativity is a complex and slippery concept; it has multiple meanings and for anyone writing about creativity in an educational context it is necessary at the outset to acknowledge that an established, precise and universally accepted definition does not exist’. This view of creativity therefore suggests that the term is so ambiguous that one can disagree with any definition, arguing that creativity by its very nature resists constraint and defies definitive explanations; however the field can be mapped into various perspectives, both historically and thematically.

The mid nineteenth century saw the beginning of the Romantic era in Europe; ‘Romanticism was the birth of contemporary notions of creativity’ associated with art; the romantics argued that creativity requires temporary escape from the conscious ego and a liberation in instinct and emotion’ Sawyer (2006:16). During the mid twentieth century creativity became associated with science as well as with art; ‘the early years of the twentieth century also saw a move towards the empirical investigation of creativity within the new discipline of psychology’ (Craft, 2002:2). Four traditions of psychology were prominent: psychoanalytic, cognitive, behaviourist, and humanistic; however Craft notes ‘that some theorists were influenced by more than one tradition or line of work’ (2002:4). It is worth noting both of these periods in the history of creativity research as this doctoral study draws from work emanating from both eras.

1.3.1 Big creativity, little creativity, mini creativity

Contemporary perspectives of creativity have explored the notion of creativity in terms of “levels”. For example the view of “giftedness” dovetails with the term “high creativity”, or “Big C” creativity, which is reserved for those few whose innovative ideas have resulted in a considerable impact on our world.
Sternberg’s position clearly states ‘creativity is the ability to produce work that is novel, high in quality and appropriate’, (2003:89). However if creativity is viewed from this perspective then it could be deemed as unobtainable and therefore not worthwhile in promoting among children as one could argue that the greatest works of art and acts of genius may conjure the impression of inferiority in everyday acts of creativity. Indeed this has been argued as a myth which can be overcome (Sawyer, 2006; Robinson, 2001), however “Big C” as a concept is rejected as not appropriate for this doctoral study.

If we are to accept that we are all capable of creating, but not producing great works of art or inventions, how are we supposed to evidence this? Prentice (2000:151) suggests ‘whatever form imaginative activity takes it is always generative and leads to an outcome that is original’. Fisher and Williams (2004:1) suggest ‘originality may be in relation to one’s previous experience’; not all products are required to be original to be valued, but may mean something unique to the individual that created them, this is more commonly known as individual, or “little c” creativity (Craft, 2002). The concept of “little c” thus seems relevant and fitting for the purposes of individual meaning making associated with 3-to-4 year old children (the focus age group in this doctoral study).

However Kaufman and Beghetto (2007) suggest that a creative outcome can be original on many different levels and that the terms “Big C” and “little c” are no longer appropriate distinctions, proposing the need for a concept which highlights the personal and developmental aspects of creativity. In 2009 Kaufman and Beghetto suggested the creative insights experienced by students as they learn a new concept or make a new metaphor is overlooked in the world of “little c”- therefore they proposed a new category, that of “mini c”, creativity inherent in the learning process encompassing the environment and social relations (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009:3). However if we are to limit the understanding of creativity to the learning process and the situatedness of the activity, for example in the school context, at exactly what point do researchers make the distinction between learning as a result of the
environment or social relations as detached or distinct from learning that arises as a result of individual meaning making? Indeed in their earlier work Kaufman and Beghetto gave the impression that they failed to recognise the “little c” work carried out in England. Much of the “mini c” concept overlaps with the “little c” concept of creativity in that the “little c” concept encompasses elements of creativity that are life-wide, (manifested in any aspect of life), as well as life-long (Craft, 2002:111); and furthermore overlaps creativity and learning (Craft, 2005). In later work Beghetto and Kaufman (2013) describe levels of creative expression in more detail distinguishing their interpreted differences between “little and mini c” however too many “overlaps” remain evident and therefore this study firmly adopts creativity as “little c” and strives to understand how this concept manifests for the individual child when engaging in art making where unique outcomes are a combination of personality, process, and product in the school environment.

1.3.2 The creative person, process, product, and environment

Some of traditional creativity research has focussed on four dimensions: that of the creative person, the creative process, the product of the creative act, and the environment that fosters creativity.

Investigations into the lives of creative people have questioned if they possess common personality traits. According to Isbell and Raines (2007:5) creative adults possess several characteristics; they are ‘curious, expressive, spontaneous, self-confident, playful, adventurous, open-minded and intrinsically motivated’. Isbell and Raines (2007) suggest that young children manifest similar characteristics, thus when creativity takes place, the creator applies certain modes of thinking, behaviours, methods and procedures; however very little is known about young children’s creative personalities and how these are manifest in the school context. This doctoral study seeks to fill this gap by seeking knowledge associated with artistic identity incorporating personality.
The creative process refers to a creative act and the methods or procedures that are used during this activity. The emphasis is on the thinking and doing during the process. Wallas (1926) developed a model of creativity encompassing four steps of the creative process, that of: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. It is worth drawing similarities to these systematic steps and those adopted by scientists, where a problem is identified and after some time a hypothesis is formed, tested and verified. This is not to suggest that Wallas is arguing that creativity happens as a linear process, rather it is a discursive process of exploring possibilities. Indeed creativity is multidimensional; it involves many different mental functions, combinations of skills and personality attributes (Robinson, 2001) and cannot be solely limited to scientific thinking or the testing of hypotheses. This doctoral study seeks deep knowledge of young children’s artistic processes and rejects a formulaic step or stage like understanding of art making, nor does it focus solely on artistic outcomes such as pictures.

Outcomes of the process stage of creativity have been linked with notions of what could be evidenced as a creative product. However outcomes may not always be in the form of visual products. Dowling (2005:125) suggests that researchers should examine more than just the concrete or physical elements of the environment, stating that ‘creativity involves emotions’. This doctoral study seeks to understand creative communication by exploring the combination of both creative process and outcome perhaps something that has afforded little attention in creativity research, particularly with young children as the age group identified for this doctoral study (aged 3-to-4 years) find it difficult to connect with and express themselves through their emotions. These aspects should not be overlooked as an emotionally supportive environment can encourage the development of creativity. Support allows for mistakes and encourages experimentation, openness and risk taking- all of these features have been documented in possibility thinking research.
1.3.3 Creativity as Possibility Thinking (PT)

Craft coined the concept of ‘possibility thinking’ (PT) to denote the shift from ‘what is’ to ‘what might be’. She argues it is therefore at the heart of all creativity and that in the case of young children involves their transitioning from ‘what is this?’ to ‘what can I or we do with this?’ as well as imagining ‘as if’ they were in a different role. PT as a concept refers to creativity which guides choices and route-finding in everyday life. This dovetails with “little c” creativity, a concept already aligned with this doctoral study, and thus creativity framed as PT is a relevant concept for this doctoral study to explore- Chapter Two presents a full review of PT literature and this section highlights some key knowledge gaps.

PT research has evolved over time stemming from Craft’s initial conceptual investigations into imagination (Craft, 1998). Qualitative co-participative empirical studies of PT in early years and primary classrooms started in 2002, and remain on-going. Most of the early studies involved researchers working alongside teachers to collect and interpret data about children’s creative engagement and therefore children’s voices were less evident in the research. Thus there is a distinct gap for PT research which affords a space for this to occur- this doctoral study aims to address this shortcoming by re-positioning myself as “the researcher” to work directly with the children in their classroom setting co-constructing meanings. The dilemmas involved in this way of working will be drawn out in the methodology- Chapter Three.

Work on the nature of PT has spanned the early years through to upper primary. The nature of young children’s PT was investigated by Burnard, et al. (2006) locating 8 core features: posing questions, play, immersion, innovation, risk taking, being imaginative, self-determination, and intentionality. A later study by Craft, et al. (2012a) documented core PT features in terms of “strength” for older learners aged 9-to-11 years, noting a distinct lack of risk taking; however very little is known about how PT features manifest in terms of “strength” for younger children age 3-to-4 years old, and
nothing is known about how this evolves and changes over time. This doctoral study aims to fill this knowledge gap by detailing the strength of PT features for younger children and furthermore seeks to understand key differences between and across participants by comparing and contrasting findings through adopting a case study approach (detailed further in the methodology- Chapter Three). Furthermore to date no other researcher has risen to the challenge of a sustained attempt to research PT with the same cohort of participants in order to explore how PT emerges, changes, and develops over time- this doctoral study is therefore unique as not only does “Communicating Possibilities” offer a longitudinal study, the specific age group chosen (3-to-4 years) dovetails with a key phase in young children’s lives- their transitions into the first year of education. A comprehensive and detailed exploration of PT in nursery school means that this doctoral study can also explore the pedagogical aspects associated with PT.

Previous analysis of PT pedagogy concluded the practices of standing back, profiling learner agency, and creating time and space were conducive to underpinning young children’s creative thinking and learning (Cremin, et al., 2006). According to Cremin, et al. (2006:110) when focusing on the learning of young children, ‘the key features of PT are seen to be contextualised by the overlapping domains of teaching and learning’. One possible bias that exists in the Cremin, et al. 2006 study is that the researchers chose to study early years classrooms that had already adopted creativity ‘at the core of the curriculum’ and ‘the teachers were identified as creative professionals’ Cremin, et al. (2006:111). At the time, Cremin, et al. did however question ‘the extent to which such a pedagogy is a feasible option or working reality in other classrooms’ ibid (2006:117). By spending a whole year in one nursery classroom this doctoral study aims to question the nurturing role of others (adults and children) and will explore if there are indeed different types of PT pedagogy manifest and what the characteristics of such pedagogies might be.
There are four main areas of PT research and these focus on: characterising PT (Burnard, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012a); pedagogical approaches fostering PT (Cremin, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012b); question-posing and question-responding (Chappell, et al., 2008); and most recently, the role of narrative in PT (Cremin, et al., 2013). This doctoral study draws from, and aims to build upon all of these studies and is therefore unique as it is the only study to date that has the potential to offer such rich and detailed insights with the same cohort of participants over time, and furthermore it is the only PT study to focus solely on art making.

1.4 Definitions of Art:
Realism, Idealism, and Expressionism

In 1973 Read suggested that there were three basic models of perceiving and representing the world around us: realism, idealism, and expressionism. The realistic model, in Read’s words is the “plastic arts”, representing the world exactly as it is. The vivid observations of the realists could be said to encompass more traditional tastes of historical imagery. Once favoured by wealthy patrons, artists produced true to life portraits reflecting back images which are ontologically independent of subjective thoughts and feelings; a narcissistic form of art which could be aligned with the stifling of creativity as artists strive to represent exactly what they see.

During the 19th Century social changes and political upheaval in France had a profound effect on artistic traditions. A rejection of old fashioned values challenged the authority of the Parisian art world and advances in “new technology” such as tubes of ready-made paint allowed artists greater freedom to leave their studios and express themselves in a different way. Choices of modern subjects, loose brushwork, and bright colours soon inspired informal, sometimes unfinished works capturing fleeting moments of light, atmosphere, and impression. Artists such as Monet, Renoir and Pissaro
had sparked a new wave in art. By the beginning of the 20th Century, artists began experimenting with shape, line, and texture, becoming more expressive in their own right. Art no longer had to tell a story, or portray reality; instead art began to have an intellectual basis; selecting or rejecting from a plethora of visual facts; this is what Read (1973) refers to when he talks of idealism. Read suggests that modern art, such as cubism and abstract ideas are “more perfect” than any original, and are therefore entitled to rank as idealistic art. In this sense art moved from the tenet “to see is to know”- to-“representing thinking”.

Hawkins (2002:211) states his position suggesting that artistic representation is not a matter of style; ‘the difference is a difference of the construction of meaning surrounding the nature of being itself’ which ‘is an engagement with the social construction of identity rather than a free and unfettered act of self-expression’. It is the latter of Read’s (1973) categories, expressionism which is implied as an outward demonstration of inner feelings- an emotional concept already noted as worthy of further investigation with young children. According to Read (1973:223) ‘expressionism is art that tries to depict, not the objective facts of nature, nor any abstract notion based on those facts, but the subjective feelings of the artist’. This romantic notion of art thus implies that art is not a means of interpreting the outer world, but a means of expressing the inner-self, in this sense expressionist art, by its definition is art that is individualistic, and that which could be aligned with young children’s “free” art.

1.4.1 Young children’s free art

According to Leeds (1989:93) ‘attitudes toward children’s art stem from the interplay of two distinct sets of ideas: those having to do with children and childhood’. Ricci (1887) was amongst the first to show a deep empathy with children’s artwork, refraining from passing aesthetic judgements he postulated that ‘children make signs with the same sort of description that
they would with words’ (1887:11-12). Ricci appeared to be suggesting that children learning to express ideas with art faced the same struggle between those learning to write.

Dickinson and Schaffer (1991:189) suggest ‘images are children’s first language: scribbling and drawing are the means by which they first represent the world, to children art is total communication’. However young children’s free drawings have been found to be undervalued in practice and termed scribbles with practitioners stating a preference for realist works of art (Kellogg, 1973; Ring, 2006). This suggests a learning situation which is underpinned by values which must be standardised so that objectives can be reached with some predictability, and thus learning becomes a matter of consumption, where conflict, variation, and choice are to be avoided; the interest then becomes adult centred and children’s free art is devalued. This doctoral study aims to confront and address negative perceptions of young children’s art by exploring the complexities of the making process, and does not focus solely on the outcome of the produced artwork, nor judge it in any way. The implications of viewing children’s creations in a negative way can damage self-esteem and the creator may be reluctant to expose themselves again. Dowling (2005:125) agrees: ‘negative feelings such as anxiety; can inhibit imaginative and creative thoughts and actions’; often resulting in an individual retreating in order to feel accepted, thus stifling creative thinking.

The stifling of creativity in the learning situation is not just an English phenomenon; Kaufman and Beghetto (2013:2) argue that “context matters” suggesting that ‘some education thinkers have expressed concerns that U.S. schools are stifling student creativity, or causing a "creativity crisis" (Bronson and Merryman, 2010). According to Kaufman and Beghetto (2013:2) certain contexts can curtail and suppress creativity, in particular, the school and classroom environment often send subtle messages that play an important role in determining whether students will share their creative insights and have the opportunity to develop their creative competence. There are key implications for practice here, for example if children are exposed to stressful
situations where they are put under pressure to justify and defend their art, or feel compelled to make it look “realistic” because there is a competitive atmosphere and social comparisons are made by teachers who value certain types of representations, there is a danger that children will become highly sensitive of being monitored and evaluated and may shut down their own individualised modes of expression and instead conform to a pre-prescribed way of thinking and doing which encourages “copy art”.

According to Leeds (1989:101) it was the work of Cizek, Dewey and Lowenfeld which changed the way art was taught to children; ‘copy art gave way to freer exploration, and a new respect was evident for inventiveness, authenticity and expressive qualities’. Dewey (1934) suggests that the primary purpose of art is to communicate; however stipulates this must encompass both the communicator and the listener, and therefore puts forth the idea that art must be symbolic in nature in order for expression and representation to be experienced and understood by others, not just the artist in isolation. This doctoral study aims to explore the nurturing role of others incorporating “the communicator and the listener” through identifying, sharing and understanding cultural symbols manifest in art making.

1.4.2 Identifying with cultural symbols

Diverse civilisations, faiths, societies, and cultures have evolved all over the world. It is suggested that humans have an innate need to express and communicate which has resulted in the use of symbolic “language” with which to portray concepts and express ideas, (Dimbleby and Burton, 1998). Clare Gibson in her book ‘How to Read Symbols’ (2009) demonstrates that symbolic images can be arranged both thematically and geographically; classified as: sacred symbols, symbols of identity, and symbolic systems. However Gibson (2009:6) acknowledges that ‘certain symbols transcend these boundaries, and could consequently be placed in more than one category, a testimony to the complexity of human consciousness and culture’. This implies that visual images containing symbols should not be
viewed, read, and interpreted as a rigid structure as this would render the “viewer or reader” as a passive recipient of a sign with a specific meaning. According to Tomlinson (1947:7) in order ‘to gain some knowledge of the principles which underlie the evolution of artistic symbols, it is advisable to study the work that has been produced by the primitive peoples of the first group’. For example the early fusion of language and art can be evidenced in the symbolic system of Egyptian hieroglyphs which used pictorial symbols to record and communicate.

As a note of caution Gibson (2009:18) observes that ‘symbols are not always immediately apparent in art, yet may add to a painting’s message if recognised and understood’; these may come in the form of figures, shapes, and colours of symbolic significance. For example the colour red may be interpreted as alluding to aggression, blood, or even romance; tones of yellow or gold could signify happiness, sunshine, or wealth- all of which are Western meanings and thus one should be aware of the cultural specificity of meanings. Indeed Hyde (2010) criticises Gibson suggesting her work has a troubled taxonomic structure, arguing that the etymological roots of the word symbol is a problem in itself. According to Hyde (2010) a symbol can have three separate meanings:

1. Something that represents something else
2. A sign with a specific meaning
3. An object representing something repressed in the unconscious

If for example if I was to draw a horizontal straight line, I could:

1. Say it was a stick
2. Say it was a mathematical minus sign
3. Say it was a symbol of my life path

In fact I could say whatever I wanted to say about the line, indeed this may change depending my mood, the environment, and to whom I was trying to
convey the meaning. Hyde (2010) provides a useful point of reference for symbolic meaning, however when considering the enculturation of symbols into children's art reference to literature which highlights the stage at which children start to use symbols in their art making would seem more insightful.

Tomlinson (1947) suggests symbolic representation happens somewhere between the ages of 3-to-8-years of age. Duffy (2006) is more specific suggesting symbolic representation emerges between the ages of 3 and 4 years of age, stating that young children can:

- Name marks, this is when symbolic representation is emerging
- Experiment with the variety of marks that can be made by different graphic materials, tools, and surfaces
- Unaided, use a circle plus lines to represent people
- Start to produce visual narratives

Duffy (2006:95)

Both Tomlinson and Duffy's models concentrate on the development of drawing, however this doctoral study whilst framed by art does not focus solely on drawing, and instead offers insights into all art and craft forms such as painting and modelling as well as drawing. The literature regarding children’s drawing phenomena is vast and this shall be incorporated and discussed in the literature review in relation to communicative artistic actions, narratives, and the pedagogical conditions which foster this. Whilst Tomlinson and Duffy's models are informative, in this doctoral study I will not ask children “to name marks”, however I am interested in the notion of visual narratives. Narratives have already been identified as a key area of PT research and furthermore dovetails with Jolley's suggestion that ‘in Britain art education is presented as both a problem-solving activity for the child as well as a means of expression’ (2010:251) which raises the question why researchers such as Ring (2006) have encountered such negative attitudes towards young children’s art making in schools. An examination of the
positioning of creativity and art in the English early years curriculum and classroom guidance documents is therefore warranted.

1.5 Creativity and Art in the English Early Years Curriculum and Classroom

During the 1960s the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967), provided a landmark for envisioning a role for creativity in the English curriculum (Craft, 2002). The report focussed on the notion of a child-centred approach to education, through which it was envisaged that children would take more of an active role in their education. Learning was emphasised as that which should be taking place through experiential exploration, discovery, and play. However there were many critiques of the Plowden Report, amongst which were arguments against its heavy focus on the arts and the ambiguity of the approach (Darling, 1994).

During the 1980s there was a shift away from creativity in education to that of knowledge acquisition and performativity. The notion of accountability through pupil assessment became prominent with the setting up and development of the Government's Assessment Unit (APU) (Gipps and Goldstein, 1983). At the beginning of 1987, the then Secretary of State for Education (Kenneth Baker) articulated his intention to centralise and regulate education in order to raise standards. According to Dann and Simco (2000:36) there was a backlash against creative approaches to learning: ‘Baker claimed the diffusion and variety characterising the English system once considered to be its strength, was now deemed to necessitate increased control’. The National Curriculum was introduced into primary schools in 1989, and implementation across the primary and secondary phases continued into the mid-1990s. By the end of the 1980s accountability came to be associated with the performance of individual schools rather than the system as a whole.
It was not until the 1990s that endorsements of the importance of creativity in education surfaced once again with the publication of the National Advisory Committee for Culture and Creative Education Report (NACCCE, 1999). The report offered a “democratic” definition of creativity: ‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’ (NACCCE, 1999:28). This workable definition of creativity acknowledged that originality and value may be interpreted by the creator thus challenging educators ‘to move away from the commonly held assumption that creative and cultural education is the preserve of the arts’ (Faulkner, et al., 2006:193) and therefore creativity became the concern of the curriculum as a whole.

Following the NACCCE report, the recognition of “creative development” was stated in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000); this early years guidance covered the education of children aged three-to-five years of age. The acknowledgement of creative development as a valid and important theme was welcomed and embraced by early years practitioners, (Mindham, 2005). The 2000 QCA curriculum guidance was replaced in 2008 (DfES, 2008a) with the Foundation Stage age range revised to that of birth-to-five years. Creativity was named as one of the key areas of development pervading throughout the document. Mindham (2005:81) supported a reconsideration of the child in need of education from an adult centric top down approach, rather proposing that educators should provide opportunities which emphasise imagination and invention: ‘the skills in which young children excel and are exceptional in the early years’.

In England, following a change of government, the Tickell Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) reinforced creativity as an important dimension of the early years curriculum; redefined as ‘Expressive Arts and Design’ acknowledging the importance of exploration and imagination with an inherent role in critical and creative thinking together with active learning and play as characteristics of young children’s engagement with the world around them (Tickell, 2011a, 2011b). The “new” EYFS characterised effective learning as creating and thinking critically which can be observed as: children
having their own ideas; making links; and choosing ways to so things. Expressive arts and design has two strands: exploring and using media and materials; and being imaginative. Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design, technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories. The “new” EYFS framework became implementable from September 2012 stating that as part of the enabling environment, in planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and demonstrate these in their practice (Statutory Framework EYFS, Department for Education, 2012). The fostering of creative thinking and empowerment through early years participation in creative processes resonate with some of the themes discussed in the Plowden Report during the 1960s highlighting the reflexive nature of considering the arts which have been, and continue to be an important aspect of many early childhood programmes. However in comparison to education models in other countries (e.g. Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy) greater understanding is required about the value of creativity and art, and how this is manifest, embraced, supported and nurtured in English education. This doctoral study aims to enhance this knowledge by comparing and contrasting its findings to the EYFS 2012 Framework (DfE, 2012) and EYFS Practitioner Guidance (Early Education, 2012).

1.6 Introducing Reggio Emilia in Practice

I express a specific interest in the manifestation of children’s creative learning through art in reference to the Reggio Emilia Approach, which interprets the language of art into a visible means of investigation; assisting the children when tracing and revisiting their work; increasing personal ownership of their education. Project work is a central aspect of the Reggio Approach; it does not follow a prescribed curriculum, but rather follows the child’s curiosities and provocations. According to Hewett (2001:96) this allows the children to
‘explore, observe, question, discuss, hypothesize, represent, and revisit’. However it has been suggested that the approach places too much emphasis on art. Indeed much of the work exhibited from the Reggio Approach depicts drawings, murals, sculptures and other artistic forms; however Hertzog (2001:3) is of the opinion: ‘it’s not about art!’ The use of graphic languages is a medium for advancing thinking, presenting challenges, expressing and making learning visible (Project Zero, 2006).

When the work is finished the children assess not only the aesthetic result of their representations but also the consistency between the ideas expressed in the group as they worked (Piazza and Barozzi, 2001). Sharing and support is encouraged and criticism is not seen as negative, but an important aspect of evaluation. Therefore whilst engaging in artistic project work children have the opportunity to further define and clarify their understandings, thereby expanding the richness of their thinking and further defining their role as that of a co-researcher (Mercilliott Hewett, 2001). However what is not clearly explained in the literature is how artistic experimentation by the children in Reggio Emilia schools (supported by nurturing pedagogy) has the capacity to move children beyond re-creating representational products to that of combining cognitive processes and pragmatic skills enabling them to become artistic communicators. This doctoral study aims to detail the nurturing role of others in supporting PT and artistic communication thus directly addressing this lack of understanding whilst acknowledging that “Communicating Possibilities” is set in an English context which affords comparisons to be made to other arts-based projects and organisations.

1.6.1 5x5x5=creativity

5x5x5=creativity is a well established English arts-based action research organisation. 5x5x5=creativity started in 2000 inspired by Penny Hay’s research with artists working in schools, and by Mary Fawcett’s involvement in the Reggio Emilia Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition. It brought together five local artists together with five local early years settings and five
cultural centres (for example galleries, theatres, museums) in the spirit of creative collaboration – hence the name 5x5x5=creativity.

Pope Edwards (2002:2) states the Reggio Emilia model of education helps ‘children realize their full potential as intelligent, creative, whole persons’, sharing a common goal with 5x5x5 ‘to be nurturers, partners and guides to children’ Pope Edwards (2002:6). Reggio Emilia places the child at the heart of its pedagogy and philosophy of educating the senses ‘the essential ingredient of children’s relationships with materials gives them multiple possibilities’ (Gandini, et al., 2005:15).

Fawcett and Hay (2004:235) note there is a long tradition of artist residencies in schools, however ‘5x5x5 seeks to maintain a continuous collaborative relationship between artists and educators rather than one off events with no legacy’. Whilst there are many exemplary arts organisations to draw examples from, I wish to introduce 5x5x5 in order to contextualise the proposed study. 5x5x5 plays a key collaborative role in partnership with the host school in which the “Communicating Possibilities” data was collected. The host school welcomes, supports, and draws from creative practice with 5x5x5, embracing and adopting many of its philosophies and principles in practice. According to Hay (2008:3) ‘during creative practice with 5x5x5, emphasis is placed on children taking responsibility alongside adults for their learning, asking good questions, making choices and being curious about the world’. In this practice there is no prescription for approaches and outcomes, therefore one must look at the underpinning shared values associated with partnerships of this nature in order to establish the key to its success.

1.6.2 Contrasting values of being an artist communicator in school

It is important to note that the parents of Reggio Emilia children support artistic styles of self exploration, and recognise the many aspects of communication associated with what Reggio describes as “the hundred
languages”. The Reggio Emilia community in Italy take an active part in understanding the value and benefits of this culturally relative approach available to them. However whilst Reggio parents are happy for their children to use art and other creative forms as a representation of their learning, it is acknowledged that in England the majority of children are expected to represent their learning and understanding predominantly through writing (Smidt, 2006). Hall (2009:180) acknowledges this argument, focussing on drawing she states that ‘writing has high status as an academic skill; drawing is generally less well regarded and viewed by some as a stepping stone to writing’. In 2009 Hall argued that implicit within the then current English curriculum documents, (Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES, 2008a) was the notion ‘that drawing is a pre-writing skill, i.e., drawing is useful as a form of communication only before young children are able to write words’, Hall (2009:179). This would seem to imply that in England the benefits of drawing stated below by Adams are overlooked.

Drawing as perception assists the ordering of sensations, feelings, ideas and thoughts; drawing as communication assists the process of making ideas, thoughts and feelings available to others; drawing as invention assists the creative manipulation and development of thought; and drawing as action helps put ideas into action.

(Adams, 2006) as quoted in Hall (2009:184)

Ring (2006) documented teachers’ experiences in English educational settings. Working with children aged 3-to-5 years Ring charted the adult’s role as they strove to “tune in” to the children’s needs in relation to drawing and the recognition of drawing activity as developmentally appropriate for meaning-making (Ring, 2006). However Hall (2009) cautions that given the seemingly endless variety of young children’s representations it should be noted that these drawings cannot be read or translated in the same way as a piece of writing; nor can they be easily understood out of context or judged using the same criteria that may be applied to adult’s drawings. Moreover it
should not be assumed that artistic communication happens in the purest sense, in that the conveyance of meaning through art is always understood as this would be to imply that artistic communication is only possible once symbolic representations are universally comprehended and shared. A deeper understanding of artistic identity is therefore required in order to illuminate children’s different motivations and purposes for engaging in artistic imagery- again a gap in knowledge this doctoral study seeks to address through sustained engagement and documentation of processes and outcomes over time. Furthermore Thompson (2003:135) suggests ‘children’s choice of imagery determines the form and content of their drawings from the time they begin to produce graphic symbols’; choices can be influenced by the media, peer culture, experiences, people, and events in relation to the self. This would therefore suggest that children’s artistic imagery and communication is built on what is noticed, valued and understood within engagement and participation in culture and complex social relations and hence provides the context for this doctoral study. This doctoral study therefore seeks to carry out research which focuses directly upon “artistic ways of being and communicating” through socio-cognitive and socio-pragmatic dimensions of creativity framed as PT, and how “thinking and doing” together relates to collaboration and identity.

1.7 Collaboration and Identity

A problematic repeatable pattern was experienced during searches for relevant academic works of young children’s creative collaborations which proved difficult as there seemed to be a large proportion of literature focussing on the upper primary age ranges of 6-to-11 year-old pupils. This indicates that very little is still known about young children’s creative collaborations in terms of the unique relationships formed. Eteläpelto and Lahti (2008) argue that there has been a lack of studies addressing creative collaboration in long-term learning communities. The emphasis of which is placed on the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnership,
through sustained and varied actions, and through the interweaving of social
and individual processes where individuals are seen as part of the social
environment and hence as resources for each other. This doctoral study
offers the opportunity to work longitudinally with children aged 3-to-4 years as
they are inducted into the first year of school in order to address the lack of
understanding of the dynamics associated with young children’s collaborative
creativity in the literature and furthermore seeks to generate knowledge to fill
the identified gap to understand how young children’s social identities are
formed in the classroom learning environment.

Identity is a concept that relates theories from various streams of psychology,
anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner,
Cain, 1998). It could be defined as a well-organized conception of the self
which is made up of values, beliefs, and goals to which the individual is
solidly committed; once organized identity plays a significant role in the
regulation of people’s everyday lives (Ryan and Deci, 2005). However this
definition could be deemed as inappropriate for describing young children’s
identity as it could be argued that they are still developing a sense of self and
social understanding. Furthermore according to Berger (1977) identity can
and does change depending on the environment and experience one finds
oneself in, and in this respect identity is dynamic, and can only be regarded
as relatively stable. Embedded in every society is a repertoire of identities
that is part of the ‘objective knowledge’ of its members suggesting there is a
relationship between individual and collective identity which is socially
constructed.

In this doctoral study identity is conceptualized as a personal expression of
individuality, by this I mean that distinctive characteristics define uniqueness.
I attempt to capture individual uniqueness through the dynamic and fluid
qualities of human self and social expression by viewing identity as relational
and contextual. I also recognise that identity has an embedded essentialist
core which is shared by all members of a particular group, for example:
gender, race, ethnicity, cultural origin, etc. In this doctoral study identity is not
identification, i.e. it is not viewed as an objective label. However I
acknowledge that identity occurs through identification with significant others, e.g. parents, siblings, male/female role models, peers, etc which may also procure aspirational characteristics, values and beliefs. In this sense self-reflection and awareness of self in relation to others links the concept of identity to social role behaviour.

It has already been suggested that children’s artistic imagery and communication is built on what is noticed, valued and understood within engagement and participation in culture and complex social relations. Whilst studies exist exploring the notion of identity embedded within young children’s drawings (Hall, 2010) to date there has been no sustained attempt to deeply understand how identity expressed through voice and learning experience when being an artistic communicator in school impacts on social dynamics. This is identified as an area of specific importance. Holland, et al. (1998:272) progress this notion suggesting that ‘identities take us backwards and forwards, from intimate to public spaces’. Therefore this doctoral study seeks to uncover how children’s own internalized self-identity emerges in order to carry out their own social-role-identity when being artist communicators within their peer group; moving from individual to collaborative creativity in nursery school.

**1.8 Overview of the Study and Research Questions**

The aim of this thesis is to research creativity framed as PT within the context of an early years classroom by working with a group of children as they are inducted into nursery school, gathering rich detailed data of their artistic learning experiences, following them as they progress through the first year of their education in order to investigate the children’s individual and collective PT pathways and how these emerge over time within their educational and environmental enabling context.
Throughout this introduction I have argued that there needs to be a more detailed and deeper understanding of what happens when young children engage in creative art making and what the benefits and implications are for practitioners in order to combat and overcome negative attitudes towards young children’s art in early years educational contexts.

Three key areas have been identified where there are gaps in the literature: emergent PT, the nurturing role of others, and artistic identity. Firstly, emergent PT: This doctoral study draws from, and aims to build upon previous PT research. To date no other researcher has risen to the challenge of a sustained attempt to research PT with the same cohort of participants in order to explore how PT emerges, changes, and develops over time. PT features in terms of “strength” for older learners aged 9-to-11 years old has been documented, however very little is known about how PT features manifest in terms of “strength” for younger children age 3-to-4 years old, and nothing is known about how these might change over time. This doctoral study aims to fill this knowledge gap by detailing the strength of PT features for younger children and furthermore seeks to understand key differences between and across participants by comparing and contrasting findings through adopting a case study approach. This doctoral study is unique as not only does “Communicating Possibilities” offer a longitudinal study, the specific age group chosen (3-to-4 years) dovetails with a key phase in young children’s lives- their transitions into the first year of education. Furthermore it is the only study in the history of PT research to focus solely on art making and therefore will make a landmark contribution to knowledge.

Secondly, the nurturing role of others: A comprehensive and detailed exploration of PT pedagogy in the nursery school aims to question the nurturing role of others and will explore if there are indeed different types of PT pedagogy manifest and what the characteristics of such pedagogies might be. Most of the early studies of PT involved researchers working alongside teachers to collect and interpret data about the children’s creative
engagement and therefore children’s voices were less evident in the research. Thus there is a distinct gap for PT research which affords a space for a greater understanding of children’s voices as active participants in the research- this doctoral study aims to address this shortcoming by re-positioning myself as “the researcher” to work directly with the children in their classroom setting co-constructing meanings. This doctoral study aims to explore the nurturing role of others incorporating “the communicator and the listener” through identifying, sharing and understanding cultural symbols and language manifest in art making. What is not clearly explained in the literature is how artistic experimentation by children has the capacity to move them beyond re-creating representational products to that of combining cognitive processes and pragmatic skills enabling them to become artistic communicators. This study aims to detail the nurturing role of others in supporting PT and artistic communication thus directly addressing this lack of understanding.

Thirdly the child’s identity as an artist communicator: A deeper understanding of artistic identity is required in order to illuminate children’s different motivations and purposes for engaging in artistic imagery- a gap in knowledge this doctoral study seeks to address through sustained engagement and documentation of processes and outcomes over time. Culture and complex social relations provide the context for this doctoral study where children’s artistic imagery and communication is built on what is noticed, valued and understood. Whilst studies exist exploring the notion of identity embedded within young children’s drawings, to date there has been no sustained attempt to deeply understand how identify expressed through voice and learning experience when being an artistic communicator in school impacts on children’s social dynamics. To date there have been no studies which has explored in any depth the characteristics of young children’s artistic identities and how these are manifest in the school context. This doctoral study seeks to fill the identified gap by seeking knowledge associated with artistic identity incorporating the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnership, sustained and varied actions, and the
interweaving of social and individual processes where individuals are seen as part of the social environment and hence as resources for each other. Therefore this doctoral study seeks to uncover how children’s own internalized self-identity emerges in order to carry out their own social-role-identity when being artist communicators within their peer group; moving from individual to collaborative creativity in nursery school.

This doctoral study proposes to answer the following three research questions (RQ):

- **RQ1**: How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?

- **RQ2**: How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?

- **RQ3**: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?

### 1.9 Summary

In Section 1.1 of this chapter I detailed the organisation of the thesis. In Section 1.2 a personal rationale for conducting the study was explained with relevance to my previous experiences. Sections 1.3 and 1.4 explored definitions of creativity and art (realism, idealism, and expressionism). In Section 1.5 creativity and art were cross referenced with early years curriculum and classroom practice. Section 1.6 introduced Reggio Emilia and Section 1.7 offered insights into collaboration and social-identity. And finally an overview of the study and research questions was presented in Section 1.8.
Chapter Two enters into a full literature review of creativity research, and young children's social art making in order to set the study within a wider context and justify its relevance.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary and critique of creativity research and young children’s social art making in order to set the study within a wider context and justify its relevance. A critical review of relevant creativity literature is presented with a direct focus on the concept of PT, defined as ‘creativity which guides choices and route-finding in everyday life’, (Craft, 2000:3). Values underpinning creative and artistic learning opportunities in the school context are examined in order to gain an understanding of art in relation to the communication of ideas within the learning process with a focus on the inherent role of narrative. Collaborative emergent creativity is discussed with specific reference to the defined age range of children making a transition into formal education (3-to-4 years), and the chapter concludes with a consideration of social identity formation in relation to the early years of life and education. Whilst the review aims to focus on research involving children from the ages of three-to-four years, it also refers to studies that have involved children older than four years where gaps in the literature exist.

2.2 An Overview of PT Theory and Research

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, Professor Anna Craft coined the concept of PT to denote the shift from ‘what is’ to ‘what might be’. She argues it is therefore at the heart of all creativity and that in the case of young children involves their transitioning from 'what is this?' to ‘what can I or we do with this?’ as well as imagining ‘as if’ they were in a different role. PT as a
concept refers to creativity which guides choices and route-finding in everyday life.

Four main areas of PT research focus on: characterising PT (Burnard, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012a); pedagogical approaches fostering PT (Cremin, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012b); question-posing and question-responding (Chappell, et al., 2008); and most recently, the role of narrative in PT (Cremin, et al., 2013).

2.2.1 2006 Characterising PT studies

The work on the nature of PT has spanned the early years through to upper primary. The nature of young children’s PT was investigated by Burnard, et al. (2006) locating 8 core features: posing questions, play, immersion, innovation, risk taking, being imaginative, self-determination, and intentionality. Burnard, et al. (2006:244) explored children’s creative experiences, seeking to distinguish which aspects of PT were most evident during the process and outcome stages of creativity. The researchers reported ‘PT was seen as transacted in the posing of questions’, theorising that the children were using action and dialogue in order to progress their thinking and try out their ideas. The researchers produced a theoretical framework based on Craft’s earlier work (2001); identifying that the separation of process and outcome was not easily evidenced in practice and therefore through naturalistic collaborative enquiry the framework was refined and re-conceptualized, (Burnard, et al., 2006:245). The study identified initial interpretations from data analysis of what PT was, and what enabled it, concluding with ‘a new diagrammatic representation, which appears to foster the development of PT’ (ibid, 2006:257), see Figure 2.1.
Further analysis of pedagogy concluded the practices of standing back, profiling learner agency, and creating time and space were conducive to underpinning young children’s creative thinking and learning (Cremin, et al., 2006). According to Cremin, et al. (2006:110) when focusing on the learning of young children, ‘the key features of PT are seen to be contextualised by the overlapping domains of teaching and learning’ (see Figure 2.2 on the following page).

As already highlighted in Chapter One a possible bias that exists in the Cremin, et al. 2006 study is that the researchers chose to study early years classrooms that had already adopted creativity ‘at the core of the curriculum’ and ‘the teachers were identified as creative professionals’ (Cremin, et al., 2006:111). At the time, Cremin, et al. did however question ‘the extent to which such a pedagogy is a feasible option or working reality in other classrooms’ (ibid, 2006:117). Cremin, et al. (2006:108) acknowledge that PT,
‘its role, as manifest in the learning engagement of children and the pedagogical strategies of practitioners has not been fully illuminated’. Later PT work contributing to the understanding of PT pedagogy, such as that carried out by Craft, McConnon, and Matthews (2012b) is detailed further on in this review, following the timeline of PT studies to date. Similarly to Craft, et al. 2012b this doctoral study also aims to enhance the understanding of PT pedagogy by determining if different types of PT pedagogy manifest in the early years classroom, and determine what the characteristics and outcomes of such pedagogies might be.

![Image of Pedagogy and PT, Cremin, et al. (2006)](image)

**Figure 2.2: Pedagogy and PT, Cremin, et al. (2006)**
2.2.2 2008 Question-posing and responding study

Researching the framing of questions evident in children’s creative processes focussed on question-posing and question-responding as the driving features of PT, (Chappell, et al., 2008). Events were sampled from two early years settings in England by video and transcript data analysis. The identified categories of questioning were: ‘(i) question framing, reflecting the purpose inherent within questions, such as leading, service and follow through questions; (ii) question degree, manifestation of the degree of possibility inherent in questions, possibility narrow, possibility moderate, possibility broad; (iii) question modality, manifestation of the modality inherent in children’s questions, including verbal and non-verbal forms’, Chappell, et al. (2008:267). Play and immersion set the context for question-posing and question-responding taxonomy which emerged as: testing, predicting, evaluating, undoing, compensating, repeating, accepting, rejecting, and completing, (see Figure 2.3 on this page and Figure 2.4 on the following page).

Figure 2.3: Question-posing and question-responding, and original PT framework Chappell, et al. (2008)
2.2.3 2012 PT studies exploring the role of collaboration

In all of the studies a key common feature in all enabling environments for PT is the children’s involvement in exploratory combinatory play fuelled by problem finding, question-posing and imagination (Craft, 1999). Play in all its varied forms can thus be drawn upon in unique combinations and has been proposed as logically necessary to PT (Craft, 2011:58 a, b) and interestingly has also been evidenced in PT studies involving older children aged 9-to-11 (Craft, Cremin, Burnard, Dragovic, and Chappell, 2012a). Craft, et al. (2012a) found that within this age group there was a marked absence of risk taking which raised questions about the nature of the teacher controlling tasks, their inherent agendas, and terms of engagement in creative work, including classroom conduct. However Craft, et al. (2012a) acknowledge that it was
possible that risk taking was occurring but that it remained hidden and undetected by the researchers, but also raised an important point that even though risk taking was absent it did not hinder PT taking place, so pose the question: ‘if risk taking is actually necessary to PT?’ (Craft, et al., 2012a). In keeping with previous PT research methodology this doctoral study seeks to generate PT knowledge from both inductive and deductive analysis and thus will be directly seeking evidence of PT features in action including question-posing and risk taking. Furthermore PT features in terms of “strength” for older learners aged 9-to-11 years has been documented, however very little is known about how PT features manifest in terms of “strength” for younger children age 3-to-4 years old. This doctoral study aims to fill this knowledge gap by detailing the strength of PT features for younger children and seeks to understand key differences between and across participants by comparing and contrasting findings through adopting a case study approach.

Collaborative group work was also a prominent feature of the Craft, et al (2012a) study where older pupil’s PT encompassed apprenticeship- ‘children showing one another ways of approaching work through their behaviour, and modelling actions on the behaviours of others was seen occurring between pairs during collaborative work’ ‘this we defined as PT happening so as to build ideas together- rather than individuals working in relation to one another’ (Craft, et al., 2012a:19). To conclude Craft, et al. (2012a) reflect on Beghetto’s (2007) notion of ‘ideational code switching’ a metaphorical concept to help teachers understand the capacity of learners to shift from intra-personal creativity (generating new ideas which are personally meaningful) to inter-personal creative expression (generating novel ideas which are interpersonally meaningful); ‘in other words [they are] able to share their ideas with others and have these recognised’ (2012a:22). However there is no PT literature exploring this phenomena with younger learners, and there is a lack of understanding of emergence in relation to PT. Emergence is defined as a generative process where two people “bounce” ideas off each other in order to move thinking and outcomes forward (Sawyer, 2000). This doctoral study seeks to explore the roles and relationships formed when
young children engage in social art making, and furthermore “un-pick” the associated dynamics of emergence in relation to understanding others’ thinking and associated actions.

2.2.4 2012 PT and child initiated play

Craft, McConnon, and Matthews (2012b) investigated PT generated within child-initiated play stimulated by provocations in an early years setting with a focus on four-year-old children. Three sets of behaviours in action emerged from the analysis of key episodes (see Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PT Behaviour</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour 1</strong> Stimulating and sustaining possibilities</td>
<td>Children were seen to be generating ideas, leading on possibilities, and maintaining interest, focus and ownership in the evolution of ideas; sometimes collaboratively, thus sustaining their play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour 2</strong> Communicating possibilities</td>
<td>Children communicated their ideas into action slipping with ease into narrative engagement, and embodied action and expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour 3</strong> Children’s agency, roles, and identities</td>
<td>There was an initial owner or director of the possibility play, supporting peers, and/or permitted collaborators and actors, and additional peers, collaborators and observers. The emergent narratives held distinctive individual, collaborative, and communal flavours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: PT behaviours in action (Craft, et al., 2012b)

This study, as well as other PT studies carried out in early years settings reinforced all aspects of the core theory, however what was revealed by Craft, McConnon, and Matthews (2012) was the vital role of the leading question and associated narrative throughout, and the role of the practitioner in supporting this in order to encourage child-initiated creativity. Figure 2.5 shows PT through provocation-stimulated play (Craft, et al., 2012b).
In determining the role of the practitioner in supporting creativity in child-initiated play, Craft, et al. (2012b) revealed five ways in which this was manifest: Provoking possibilities; Allowing time and space for children’s responses; Being in the moment with the children; Interventions: supporting, sustaining, suspending; and Mentoring in partnership (see Table 2.2 on the following page).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PT Practitioner Role</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role 1 Provoking possibilities</td>
<td>Practitioners provided props, offered open access to materials and sought to open wide possibilities in terms of where children might take their play. Practitioners became involved in the play, leading at times, directing the learning at times, introducing resources and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role 2 Allowing time and space for children’s responses</td>
<td>Allowing time and space for children’s authentic responses involved at times setting up and creating play-spaces, stepping back, observing, holding back from interrupting, following children’s interests, and also creating a space for children’s participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role 3 Being in the moment with the children</td>
<td>Adults played alongside children, were evidently present ‘in the moment’, being in the thick of the action, combining observing with intervention. They were available and very actively engaged with the children’s play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role 4 Interventions: Supporting Sustaining Suspending</td>
<td>Supporting: where children’s experiences were scaffolded, the role being one of enabling children; Sustaining: extending the play in different contexts, continuing threads from child-initiated moments, seeking to sustain the play; Suspending play: by managing the moment in terms of dynamics between children, modelling acceptable or preferred behaviours, managing frustrations, offering advice, managing space, guiding, resolving conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role 5 Mentoring in partnership</td>
<td>Practitioners worked interchangeably within mentor and observer roles, at times each taking the lead with the children and critiquing each other’s practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Practitioner role in PT (Craft, et al., 2012b)

The (2012b) study reinforced the key aspects of pedagogy for PT already documented in earlier work (Cremin, et al., 2006). Adults were seen standing back at times and offering children space and time to develop their ideas, valuing children’s agency. They demonstrated sensitivity to the emotional environment forming part of the enabling context for children, co-reflecting critically after each episode to consider the extent to which they had got the balance of emotional comfort right. The analysis extends previous work on PT in three ways, firstly by revealing more about the enabling context, particularly the role of the provocation, emotional space and encouragement; secondly by showing how at times practitioners stepped forward into the children’s play balancing standing back with co-authoring; and thirdly in
revealing how professional co-investigations involved “meddling in the middle” (see Figure 2.6). Meddling in the middle will be discussed at a later point in the literature review demonstrating further links between pedagogy and creativity and discusses the implications of what “meddling” involves, what the perceived benefits might be, and to what extent meddling pedagogy is a feasible working reality in the early years classroom.

Figure 2.6: Pedagogy nurturing possibility thinking

Craft, McConnon, and Matthews (2012b)

2.2.5 2013 PT and the role of narrative

Most recently, Cremin, Chappell, and Craft (2013) reflected on the two 2012 studies; (Craft, et al., 2012a) and (Craft, et al., 2012b). Craft, et al. (2012a) evidenced peer collaboration as an emergent PT feature, documenting an
overlap between imaginative and playful behaviour which was particularly striking given the older age group (9-to-11 years). They also revealed how pupils communicated their creativity shifting from intra-personal creativity (generating new ideas which are personally meaningful) to inter-personal creative expression (generating novel ideas which are interpersonally meaningful); ‘in other words [they were] able to share their ideas with others and have these recognised’ (2012a:22). The study with younger learners (Craft, et al., 2012b) noted the role of provocations and the presence of children’s imaginative storying, both with their peers and with adults.

According to Cremin, et al. (2013:5) ‘the emergence of narrative in the 2012 studies led the team to re-examine the data analysed in the previously published PT studies’; they report their findings below:

The analytic process resulted in the identification of key features of the narratives as representations of an event or sequence of events in all PT episodes. These included character/s, plot, sequence of events, significance to children and emotional aesthetic investment. Differences surfaced relating to who began them; narratives were child or teacher-initiated, and to whether they were fantasy, everyday, or everyday historical in nature.

Cremin, et al. (2013:16)

The 2013 re-analysis highlighted that most of the early studies of PT involved researchers working alongside teachers to collect and interpret data about the children’s creative engagement and therefore children’s voices were less evident in the research. Thus there is a distinct gap for PT research which affords a space for a greater understanding of children’s voices as active participants in the research- this doctoral study aims to address this shortcoming by re-positioning myself as the researcher to work directly with the children in their classroom setting co-constructing meanings. This doctoral study aims to explore the nurturing role of others incorporating “the
communicator and the listener” through identifying, sharing and understanding cultural symbols and language manifest in art making. This doctoral study is unique as not only does “Communicating Possibilities” offer a longitudinal study, the specific age group chosen (3-to-4 years) dovetails with a key phase in young children’s lives- their transitions into the first year of education. Furthermore it is the only study in the history of PT research to focus solely on art making and therefore will make a landmark contribution to knowledge.

2.2.6 PT in the wider research field

The challenge to explore, document, and understand PT has now stretched beyond that of the original core research team (Craft, Cremin, Burnard, and Chappell) to other doctoral students under the direct supervision of Professor Craft in the field of drama (Lin, 2010), mathematics (Clack, 2011), and secondary art pedagogy in Taiwan (Ting, 2013), and to the wider international research community investigating art (Pavlou, 2013).

The most relevant of these works in relation to the “Communicating Possibilities” study seems to be that published in 2013 by Victoria Pavlou, situated in the context of a Cypriot school with a group of 7-to-8 year old children. Although this study is with much older participants it is relevant as to date no other PT study has attempted to exclusively focus on art practice. Pavlou explored ‘interrelations between the study of artworks and the development of creativity in children’s thinking and art-making’ (2013:71). Whilst Pavlou does not make her philosophical assumptions explicit in the article, she adopts a somewhat pragmatic approach in framing creativity by mentioning PT and attempting to document “development” using a “pre-post-test” design (something not in keeping with previous core PT research).

Pavlou’s (2013) study initiated from the premise that ‘engagement with artworks does not automatically release children’s imaginative capacities’. Pavlou followed an aesthetic mode of enquiry which involved the active
engagement of children, which led Pavlou to reveal that ‘viewing artworks enabled children to embrace and practice the capacities of noticing deeply, embodying, questioning, creating meaning, and taking action’, and ‘to describe in detail what the artwork contained, to make connections, and to wonder’ (Pavlou, 2013:84). Interestingly Pavlou claims to have evidence to support risk taking which is a core feature of PT scarcely identified with older primary school children, however this is not made explicit in the paper and therefore I am unable to concur with this finding; perhaps it would have been pertinent to draw out the evidence of risk taking using vignettes in relation to the context and teacher expectations to clarify this point.

The pedagogic stance adopted in Pavlou’s 2013 study incorporated an aesthetic mode of enquiry through which children were invited to share their initial ideas about trees, then discuss a chosen work of art- ‘The Tree of Life’ by Klimt, and finally produce their own trees through drawing, painting, and on the children’s request- modelling. It is the discussion which is of most interest here as Pavlou’s account of the enquiry process documents a stage like approach- to begin with the children were describing what they could see, then they were prompted to look even deeper which resulted in thicker descriptions, however it was only when the children were asked to interpret the artwork- ‘to speculate, ask questions, to hypothesize and to uncover meaning, to close their eyes and take a magic trip into the artwork’ that the children offered narratives relating, and connecting to their own past experiences. Here Pavlou noted that ‘for some of the children this was a pleasant experience whereas for others this was not’ (2013:79); but she did not expand, nor speculate as to why this was so.

Pavlou (2013) concludes the paper by raising a pertinent point with reference to the extent to which “generalist” teachers are responsible for art lessons in schools, arguing that current research with pre-service teachers has shown that when undergraduate modules acknowledge student-teachers’ limited experiences with artworks and target the development of their pedagogical strategies, student teachers are enabled to offer meaningful art-viewing
activities which adopt an aesthetic mode of enquiry. As Dyson (1986:381) notes: ‘young children are symbol weavers, their drawings may be composed, not only of lines and colours, but of language as well’; thus emphasis is once again placed on combining cognitive processes and pragmatic skills enabling children to become artistic communicators through behaviours in action and associated narratives. However one must question more deeply to find out exactly what is happening for learners before a mode of “transferability” can be assumed.

According to Lindström (2009:2) ‘previous studies on arts transfer failed to document what kinds of thinking were going on in arts classes. Hetland, et al. (2007) set out to describe what excellent visual arts teachers teach, how they teach, and what students learn in their classes in order to determine what kinds of thinking emerge from “serious” visual arts study. Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan (2007) found three structures evident in the art studio learning environment which supports different aspects of student learning: Demonstration-Lectures; Students-at-Work; and Critiques. Demonstration-Lectures convey information; Students-at-Work emphasizes the development of individual students; while Critiques support a dynamic flow of thinking among teachers and students. Hetland, et al. (2007) also identified eight studio habits of mind that art classes taught, including: the development of artistic craft; persistence; expression; making connections; observing; envisioning; innovating; and reflecting. Whilst informative, this set of broad value statements bears little relevance to this doctoral study in terms of direct application as Hetland, et al. (2007) worked with and studied older students who were highly privileged as far as conditions for studio work are concerned and thus there is a disconnect between what circumstances are created in the studio and what actually happens in everyday normal practice in the classroom. Thus to date a gap in the literature exists which warrants closer examination of the pedagogical values and adopted stance underpinning art practice with younger children in educational contexts and this doctoral study aims to fill that gap.
2.3 Studies Based on Pedagogy

2.3.1 Introduction

This section starts with an exploration of questioning strategies to encourage young children to talk about art, and then moves to meddling in the middle and classroom talk. Communicating artistic actions and narratives then links specifically with drawing narrative and pedagogy.

2.3.2 Questioning strategies to encourage young children to talk about art

According to Topping and Trickey (2007) systematic investigation of classroom dialogue began in the 1960s when studies first noted that teachers rather than children did most of the talking and that there was a lack of open questioning (Alexander, 2004). Subsequent studies, for example Wegerif, Mercer, and Dawes (1999) evidenced that teacher-led discussions mostly only offered students the opportunity to make the briefest of responses; closed questions predominated; teacher talk which challenged pupils to think for themselves was scarce; many classroom questions had a low level of cognitive demand; and autonomous pupil discussion and problem-solving activities were rare.

In 1983 Martha Taunton wrote a paper focusing on “teacher talk” for the journal ‘Art Education’. Taunton stressed that teaching art through provocative dialogue is particularly difficult for those who teach preschool and early elementary age children- ‘in part this difficulty simply stems from a lack of realization and faith that young children can and should discuss art in a meaningful way…it often results from uncertainty about how to conduct discussions about art with children who are so young’ (Taunton, 1983:40). Although this paper is 20 years old, it still holds relevance to educational practices today as concerns are still being expressed about teacher training programmes which fail to address practitioners’ uncertainties about how to
conduct discussions about art with young children (Ofsted, 2012). Taunton (1983) makes the suggestion that carefully planned questioning strategies can foster thinking processes which generate new insights, and reflected on work by Gallagher and Aschner (1963) in terms of the contribution it made to students’ productive thinking. Four broad question types were proposed by Gallagher and Aschner to foster discussions about art:

- Cognitive memory questions: The child has to reproduce facts, formulae, definitions, or other remembered content
- Convergent questions: The child represents the analysis and integration of given or remembered facts by reasoning
- Divergent questions: The child produces their own ideas to a situation, or takes a new perspective to a given topic
- Evaluative questions: The child explores matters of judgement, value and choice giving their assessment

Adapted from Taunton (1983)

Taunton considered these four broad question types and stressed that ‘as any teacher of young children will confirm, the teacher’s response to a child’s initial answer to a question can profoundly affect the quality of the continuing conversation’ (Taunton, 1983). Indeed Orme (1970) proposed four “probing” techniques or “question responding” techniques for teachers to consider when responding to young children’s art talk in order to gain more in-depth responses:

- Clarification: The teacher looks for more information and meaning
- Critical awareness: The teacher looks for justification for the child’s initial answer
- Providing prompts: The teacher gives the child a hint after an “I don’t know” type of answer
- Refocusing response: The teacher refocuses the class by making reference to an issue of concern after a high quality answer

Adapted from Orme (1970)
However what appears to be the main driver or concern here (in the case of Orme) is what is discovered from the teacher’s perspective, not what is child-initiated or child-centred/focussed. Whilst Gallagher and Aschner’s questioning techniques do seem to offer a broader context in terms of spanning from reproducing facts, formulae, and definitions to children exercising their own judgment, value and choice, producing their own ideas to a situation, or taking a new perspective to a given topic; questions must be raised as to the purposeful engagement of adopting questioning strategies such as these to encourage young children to talk about art. Do practitioners want to gain insights and form opinions from understanding young children’s concrete thinking, or engage them in an imaginative dynamic? Cross reference is made here to the EYFS practitioner guidance notes for the age group of 30-to-50 months, covering the nursery year in the UK, focussing on expressive arts and design guidance: ‘Being Imaginative’ (Early Education (DfE) 2012, see Figure 2.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Relationships: what adults could do</th>
<th>Enabling Environments: what adults could provide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Support children’s excursions into imaginary worlds by encouraging inventiveness, offering support and advice on occasions and ensuring that they have experiences that stimulate their interest.</td>
<td>• Tell stories based on children’s experiences and the people and places they know well. • Offer a story stimulus by suggesting an imaginary event or set of circumstances, e.g., “This bear has arrived in the post. He has a letter pinned to his jacket. It says ‘Please look after this bear.’ We should look after him in our room. How can we do that?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.7: Expressive arts and design: Being imaginative practitioner guidance*
Adapted from Early Education (2012:46)
It would seem that the Department for Education does indeed want to encourage practitioners to engage young children in an imaginative way, but the guidance in this area is weak and offers no opportunity for artistic communication; and little insight is offered as in how to encourage imaginative thinking; moreover there is still a heavy emphasis placed on the role of the adult rather than approaching learning from a child-initiated/child-focused perspective. Thus there are evident gaps in the literature (research and policy documents) concerning pedagogical guidance for engaging young children in discussing their art. Whilst it is acknowledged that open questioning and sustained shared thinking are advocated in early years documents, there is scant attention paid to questioning strategies to specifically enhance imaginative thinking with reports of teachers lacking confidence to engage in creative practice this must be addressed, and this doctoral study aims to fill this gap in knowledge and understanding by adopting one such pedagogical strategy turning top down teaching on its head- “meddling in the middle”.

2.3.3 Meddling in the middle

Drawing on Pink’s (2005) work suggesting that in the future there will be less focus on routine information-seeking, executing transactions, and routine problem solving, moving towards a greater focus on forging relationships, tackling novel challenges, and synthesising ‘big picture’ scenarios; Erica McWilliam (2008) argued that we will need to move beyond the binary formula of teachers as either ‘the sage on the stage’ or ‘the guide on the side’, to a new role of ‘meddler in the middle’. According to McWilliam (2010:295) ‘meddler in the middle is a much more active and interventionist teaching role, it positions the teacher and student as mutually involved in assembling and disassembling cultural products. Meddling is a re-positioning of teacher and student as co-directors and co-editors of their social world, in other words changing the pedagogical focus from the teacher to the learner. However McWilliam acknowledges that this is not an easy task- ‘the biggest hurdle is likely to be the mental models of teaching that most of us carry
around in our heads’ (ibid). McWilliam thus proposes a shift in classroom behaviours and actions as detailed below (Figure 2.8).

### Figure 2.8: Meddling in the middle, shifting behaviours and actions

*McConnon, 2013*

In 2011 Shem-Tov suggested that ‘one of the central complexities and challenges in training educators is how to teach them to contend with surprising and unexpected situations that frequently take place in the classroom, ranging from inappropriate behaviour, to a pupil’s brilliant comment or question that the teacher was not anticipating’ (Shem-Tov, 2011:103).

In reference to reflexive practitioner strategies and appropriate pedagogical interventions fostering PT, Craft, McConnon, and Matthews (2012b) revealed ways in which practitioners balanced standing back along with co-authoring, and professional co-investigations which involved meddling in the middle—‘the opportunity to reflect with a colleague for each practitioner meant
comparison of perceptions...practitioners challenged and clarified one another’s interpretations and their collegiate reflection [developed a] pedagogical possibility space’ (2012b:59). Craft, Chappell, Rolfe, and Jobbins (2012c) explored research-focussed reflective creative partnership at the heart of Dance Partners for Creativity (DPC), documenting emergent practice in relation to meddling in the middle. Craft, et al. (2012c) discussed the stretches and challenges in the study, revealing ways in which partnerships were dynamic and sometimes uncomfortable, whilst still offering exciting potential for change. What these studies have in common is improvisation in an open and authentic possibility space, which thus challenges the tradition of instructionism in education (Sawyer, 2011).

According to Sawyer (2011:8) ‘creative learning will require a change away from the instructionist model that is dominant in schools today, such a change faces immense institutional, administrative, and political challenges’.

So how does this relate to art educational practice with young children; can this way of being in classrooms be taught and developed? According to Fenner (2010:121) ‘the first step is openness, without it nothing else matters, repeated exposure to opportunities for imaginative activities are key as this will motivate greater investment towards deeper aesthetic engagement’.

Bentley (2011:174) places narratives at the heart of artistic learning and vehemently calls for higher awareness and levels of engagement on the part of the early childhood educator, and asks the teacher to watch more carefully, to consider more closely the daily dramas of classroom life- ‘if we continue to listen and respond, we learn more, we become more adept at noticing and supporting these moments, and the artistic learning of young children has the opportunity to flourish’ (2011:174). So why is this “way of being” in the classroom perceived as such a difficult accomplishment? This doctoral study has the potential to answer this question; by immersing myself in classroom culture I will be able to deeply analyse classroom behaviours and the association between PT and classroom talk.
2.3.4 Creativity and classroom talk

Evidence of spoken creativity may be more prevalent in certain types of social context and within certain types of interpersonal relationship; as it has been demonstrated that the most creative language features cluster reciprocally and interactively (Carter, 2004). Ellis and Lawrence (2009) describe the development and use of the Creative Learning Assessment (CLA) on children’s learning and teacher’s teaching. Following analysis of the data Ellis and Lawrence (2009:9) suggest ‘there was a marked and consistent finding among project teachers, noting the quality and sustained nature of children’s talk arising during the project; and that more opportunities were provided for children to talk informally in workshop sessions’. Rojas-Drummond, Mazon, Fernandez, and Wegerif (2006:85) define the use of language for thinking together as exploratory talk; when participants use this type of talk they give and provide reasons and take turns for speaking and asking all the members of a group to participate and reach joint agreements. In this respect the reasoning is visible in the talk of the participants. The educational implication of these ideas is that encouraging an awareness/and use of exploratory talk may help learners develop communicative and intellectual habits that will serve them well across a range of different situations (Littleton, et al., 2005). However, studies of British primary classrooms indicate that children have very little opportunity to engage in open questioning and enquiry through talk (Bennett and Dunne, 1990; Galton and Williamson, 1992). Therefore if such forms of classroom discourse do not encourage and allow such discussion it remains pertinent to question how young children would be able to take a more active role in using talk to construct knowledge in class, thus how can young children understand themselves as an essential contributor to their own learning if children are both part of and through actions and interactions, co-creators of the social context and a link in a chain of creative communication?

Research carried out by Littleton, Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, Rowe, and Sams (2005:180) suggest it is ‘how the learner engages and interacts with others
[which] may potentially have a more profound and enduring impact on their circumstances’ and therefore argue it is imperative for children ‘to understand themselves as the essential contributor to their own learning’ (ibid, 2005:181); a feature of creative learning environments through which narrative is manifest. Narration is referred to as a mode of thinking and understanding incorporating the key aspect of meaning making (Bruner, 1996; Egan, 2005), and is therefore relative to the “Communicating Possibilities” study in order to understand how children engage with materials and convey the meaning of their art through action and narrative- a key focus of this doctoral study.

2.3.5 Communicating artistic actions and narratives

Thompson and Bales (1991) described social interactions in kindergarten art classes in the USA whilst observing children drawing “densely layered, successive waves of marker, maps and scenes” which were a chaotic tangle of incident and narrative- ‘Five-year-old Joshua knew that he had attracted an attentive audience’ as he regaled his group with ‘ingenious twists in [his] plot’. However Thompson and Bales warn- the drawing provided no entry to a viewer who had missed the performance which bought it about’ (1991:43). Interestingly, Rose (2005:9) opposes Thompson and Bales viewpoint arguing that ‘story making is not a performance’. However if one looks at the language used it is easy to see that Rose is referring to what McWilliam (2008) refers to as the “sage on the stage” and is not criticising the use of storying and performance by children. For example Rose (2005:9) suggests that ‘the teacher has to withdraw from the telling so that the children can take over the telling and internalise the story for themselves’. Interestingly similar threads were found by Thompson and Bales (2005:9) suggesting that children do not need adults in order to converse- ‘children’s talk about their art persists without the immediate encouragement or participation of adults’ and furthermore concluded that ‘by the age of 4 children are intrigued by the work of their peers and eager to join in discussion of the issues that arise from the experiences they share’ (ibid).
One study focussing solely on young children’s artistic narratives which echoes these findings was documented by Bentley (2011). Bentley explored the day-to-day experiences of 30 children aged 2-to-5 in their pre-school classroom as they navigated and shaped the constructs in their daily lives. Four particular narrative themes were manifest: world-making, rewriting expectations, meaning-making, and foundational metacognition. World making was defined as narrative artistry that helped construct knowledge about the world; rewriting expectations as rewriting difficult situations, reconstructing characters or storylines; meaning-making as creating personally meaningful connections, deepening relationships to the experience; and foundational metacognition as a starting point for children thinking about their own thinking.

Cox (2005:119) also observed peer-to-peer narratives in the nursery art room and found that the children commented on, and responded to each other’s drawings as well as their own, noting that sometimes one of the children made a change to their drawing in response to the marks made by the other child “conversing” through the drawing rather than in words. She also noticed other forms of subtle and discreet forms of artistic engagement between children. For example- ‘Jake drew several arcs above each other and identified his drawing as a rainbow, at that moment someone near to him sneezed and he decided that the drawing now represented a sneeze’; and on another occasion one child ‘had drawn an enclosed shape which he said was a rock (Cox: 2005:199). In response to this comment a child nearby, who had drawn a tall vertical shape identified his own drawing as a rocket, and a child who had drawn a banana-like-shape named his own drawing as a rocker.

Scott-Frisch (2006) studied 3-to-5 year old children’s representational drawings in a Norwegian pre-school showing that children created a symbiosis of meaning through drawing and storytelling which resulted in a ‘kind of print of the individual’s social relations and contextual conditions, catalysing emotions, knowledge, perception, experience and story-making’. Conversely in 2010 Coates explored free choice artworks of children aged 3-
to 7 years old and found that there appeared ‘to be a change in the accompanying narrative as the age group changed; the youngest children communicated to themselves as they worked, and offered descriptions about their completed pictures, which Coates suggested that they were working towards a particular formula similar to that referred to by Browne (1996:34) – ‘one which they had realised was acceptable to adults’. The discussion returns once again to communicating with adults which raises questions as to which mode of creative communication is perceived as more valuable in the nursery classroom - the drawing, or the narratives?

2.3.6 The value of drawing, narrative, and pedagogy

In England Eileen Adams has focussed on drawing as a medium for learning (The Power Drawing Programme) and suggests that whilst some areas of learning through drawing are well established in schools, such as observational drawing where pupils are at pains to reflect back to teachers what they have learned, the link between thinking and drawing has been neglected (2002:230). Adams highlights two strands which together form a negative and positive tension, firstly schools that have developed drawing have found that there can be a close correlation between the development of verbal and visual literacy; however secondly acknowledges that teachers and learning support staff do not always have the confidence and skills to know how to support children. Teachers’ poor knowledge of how to teach drawing, art, and creativity has been noted by Ofsted as a key weakness of education in English schools. Furthermore Ofsted suggest ‘the extent to which pupils were confident in making choices and believed in their potential as young artists was directly linked to the range and quality of the provision’ (Ofsted, Drawing together, 2009:7).
The teacher’s own artistic competence, whether acquired from their own education, through formal training or simply from an appreciation of art, was an important contributor to success. In the most effective lessons, teachers used their own sketchbooks or collections for discussion and exemplification, or provided confident demonstrations that enabled the pupils to see the artist in the teacher. Unconvincing teachers, on the other hand, did little to win the confidence of pupils, admitting “I can’t draw” or showing a lack of inquisitiveness about the work of visiting artists or of talented pupils.

Ofsted, Drawing together (2009:13)

In 2012 Ofsted carried out further surveys and in their report ‘Making a mark’ stating that children made a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage by developing their confidence and creativity through mark-making. However, between Key Stages 1 and 3 pupils lacked confidence in drawing to the detriment of their enjoyment, suggesting that the notion that “everyone can draw” was not being kept alive beyond the early years of schooling. Indeed the survey found too much variation in the quality of teaching. In every phase of education, early expectations were not always high enough. The lack of reliable assessment information or opportunities for learners to share previous work contributed to expectations which were too low. Ofsted concluded with the suggestion that teachers should refresh their own engagement with drawing through professional development, including work with creative practitioners and art galleries, (Ofsted, Making a mark, 2012).

Pringle (2008:44) comments on artists’ perspectives regarding pedagogy, noting: ‘artists saw art practice as providing a model for a creative learning process wherein learners drew on their experience to gain an understanding, develop new knowledge and articulate their ideas’; which infers that art making is purposeful and that there is a direct link between artistic and creative processes and outcomes of learning.

Anning (2003) suggests that children’s personal versions of meaning making are undervalued and rapidly shaped into “educational” versions, dominated
by the imperative to get children writing as quickly as possible, also see Hall (2009). According to Adams (2002:230) ‘it is difficult for them [the educators] to evaluate and assess drawings, to give pupils feedback...some teachers have found it difficult to understand drawing as a process for investigation, experimentation, and reflection where there may be unexpected outcomes and the learning activity is not under control of the teacher’. Anning (2003:32) concurs with this notion recalling that where children received little feedback from adults on their “messages” they closed down this aspect of communication, they drew less and less at school, when they did it was in response to an adult directed task or agenda with an “educational” purpose, for which they [the children] showed little enthusiasm or commitment.

Burkitt, Jolley, and Rose (2010) carried out a survey investigating the attitudes and practices that shape children’s drawing experience at home and at school, and counteract both Anning and Ofsted’s argument suggesting that there is ‘little evidence for an age-related decline in children’s drawing behaviour and experience’. Burkitt, et al. (2010: 262) continue- ‘overall most children [aged 5-to-14] presented a very positive picture, seemingly spending a significant amount of time drawing, enjoying their drawing, and holding positive perceptions of their drawing ability’. However Kathy Ring also found evidence of “questionable” practices in her 2006 study ‘Supporting young children drawing: Developing a role’ in which it was found pedagogy impacted on children’s perceptions of drawing. Ring (2006) found that in one setting there was an acute undervaluing of young children’s self-initiated drawings of their own body movements, and sounds and movements of objects around them, and that the drawings were termed by practitioners as “scribbles” emphasising a preference for realist and recognisable visual forms which the process and desired outcomes were mainly adult directed. These findings dovetail somewhat with Parsons (1987) study of art in school who found that younger school aged children tended to conceive a good painting as one that was beautiful and realistic, and their apparent negativity towards unrealistic and unpleasant subject matter was found to be associated with abstract works of art. Interestingly Burkitt, et al. (2010) found
that in response to what makes a bad drawing many children, teachers, and parents agreed there was no such thing however found that of all three groups children were most preoccupied with issues relating to scribbling, realism, detail, and dull/unpleasant subject matter as contributory factors in a poor drawing. This led Burkitt, et al. (2010:267) to thus consider the implication that ‘opportunities for creative and expressive drawing may be under represented and under-facilitated in schools’. A deeper understanding of artistic identity is therefore required in order to illuminate children’s different motivations and purposes for engaging in artistic imagery- a gap in knowledge this doctoral study seeks to address through sustained engagement and documentation of processes and outcomes over time. Culture and complex social relations provide the context for this doctoral study where children’s artistic imagery and communication is built on what is noticed, valued and understood. Whilst studies exist exploring the notion of identity embedded within young children’s drawings, to date there has been no sustained attempt to deeply understand how identity expressed through voice and learning experience when being an artistic communicator in school impacts on children’s social dynamics. It is acknowledged in the literature that creative thinking processes can be manipulated by pedagogical conditions fostered in the context of the school environment, however it should also be recognised that peers are also part of the environment and the next section focuses on understanding peer-to-peer collaborative relationships.

2.4 Studies Based on Peer-to-Peer Collaborative Relationships

2.4.1 Introduction

Creativity contextualised as social and transactional means that in order to fully illuminate and explain creativity, it requires and understanding not only of the individual, but also circumstances relating to collaboration, networks of support, education and culture (Sawyer, 2006), this is explored in the first part of this section. Transitions into formal education are discussed in relation
to the developing sense of self and social understanding. Finally collaboration, emergence, and transitioning from individual to collaborative creativity link with social identity development in the context of the early years classroom.

2.4.2 Social creativity

Personal meanings generated during forms of social creative activity frame and orientate interactions; thus there is a need to adopt an interdisciplinary approach that explains creative people in their social and cultural contexts. Craft (2002:8) states ‘some significant theories have been put forward in which creativity is seen from a systems perspective, where various elements of the overall social and cognitive context are seen as highly relevant to the activity of creating’ (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; Sternberg, 1988).

Complex dimensions of social and collaborative forms of creativity examine the way in which young children become engaged in a process of “thinking and doing together”. This becomes of specific interest when merged with the developmental and social characteristics associated with the afore mentioned age group selected for study; that of three-to-four year old children. Mouchiroud and Bernoussi (2008:374) suggest a ‘potential predictor for social creativity is decentration, or the ability to take and consider others’ perspectives, which itself relates to the development of a theory of mind’. ‘During early and middle childhood, metacognition expands greatly as children construct a naïve theory of mind, a coherent understanding of people as mental beings, which they revise as they encounter new evidence’ (Berk, 2007:296). One must surely reflect and consider Piaget’s (1926) perspective of the child as a lone investigator in the world constructing individualised knowledge and moreover Piaget’s notion of egocentrism, characterized in young children, particularly under the age of four years, as egocentrism is said to inhibit young children’s social engagement with others.

If we are to question Piaget’s view of the young child as egocentric, as one unable to fully engage in social processes with others then this opens a pathway for further investigation as to how children aged three- to-four years...
develop creative collaborative skills, thus contributing to a theoretical understanding of social and transactional relations between young children.

2.4.3 Transitions into formal education

As the literature has moved towards discussions examining the social elements and influences upon children’s creativity, it is worth mentioning the transition period into school which is a key milestone for most children. The transition period into formal education is a time when children may undergo personal changes in identity and shifting agency; children must accommodate and adjust to new physical settings, adult authorities, daily schedules, peer companions and academic challenges. The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education, (EPPE, 1997-2003) study incorporated assessments of more than 3000 children at the start of pre-school (around the age of 3) collecting data from their home environments and the preschool settings they attended. The children’s developmental progress was monitored until they entered school, and then for a further three years until the end of Key Stage 1. The study applied an “educational effectiveness” design to establish the factors related to children’s progress, followed by intensive case studies to “un-pack” effective practices. EPPE reported a key finding indicating quality provision includes warm interactive relationships with children where settings view educational and social development as complementary and equal in importance, finding that children make better all-round progress when they adjust adequately to the transition into school (DfES, 2004).

Positive experiences during transitions into school are particularly relevant when considering peer relations as according to Peter’s (2003:46) observations: ‘not only did friends play a vital role in facilitating the children’s transitions into formal schooling; they also assisted directly in facilitating the children’s learning’. Some examples of this were navigating, locating materials and modelling the work. However it must be acknowledged that this study was culturally situated in New Zealand and that the transition period for children happens much later at five years of age than in Britain where
children can enter into the “Foundation Stage” of formal nursery provision from aged 3 years. However this is still relevant when contrasting the notion put forth by Ladd (1990), suggesting prior friendships provide a context for immediate companionship, conversation and play and that having access to close friends during school entrance may be especially important in the establishment of positive school perceptions and future development.

2.4.4 The developing self and social understanding

In order to address how children come to understand their multifaceted social worlds, it is necessary to interpret their experiences. Self-development begins with the dawning of self-awareness in infancy and gradually evolves during early childhood which is why it is of relevance to the study of young children entering into school (Thompson, 2001). Social cognition becomes better organised with age as children integrate separate behaviours into an appreciation of their own and others’ personalities and identities. Social cognition moves toward metacognitive understanding; as children get older their thinking is no longer limited to the self, they also think about their own and other people’s social thoughts (Berk, 2006).

Pickard (1979:99) states ‘with experience and the development of cognitive structures the individual begins to understand himself [or herself] as a reality, with his [or her] own identity, standing in relation to other realities [and] will move from fantasy and ego-centricity to imagination and the possibility of creating’. Piaget (1951:73) argues that ‘the child’s egocentrism is essentially a phenomenon of in-differentiation; i.e. confusion of his [or her] own point of view with that of others’; and that a lack of awareness of the point of view of others must be challenged. Thus the key to overcoming the egocentric phase is communication and interaction with peers, through a process of exchange and overcoming. Egocentrism therefore directly impacts upon the ability to engage in the social aspects of creativity. However Bussey and Bandura (1999:676) state that children can ‘contribute to their self development and bring about social changes that define and structure relationships’ through
their agentic actions within the interrelated systems of influence. In this perspective role behaviour, is the product of a broad network of social influences operating both familiarly and in the many societal systems encountered in everyday life.

2.4.5 Collaboration

In order to fully understand creativity Grossen (2008:247) suggests researchers should look at ‘the micro-context of the interaction [which] is related to other contexts', including that of the social and institutional sphere. To clarify in this doctoral study collaboration is not simply defined as “working alongside each other, or together”- rather during collaboration, ‘emphasis is put on mutuality, sharing, negotiation of a joint perspective or shared meaning, co-ordination and subjectivity’ (Grossen, 2008:248). In this sense it is clear that collaborative creativity cannot be reduced to mere individual processes and that intersections of agreements and divisions are inevitable facets of conversing and mediating through tensions and conflicts. Therefore Grossen (2008) concludes that discourse is always the result of a co-construction and not the mere expression of inner mental states- this is in direct conflict with Piaget’s notion of egocentric theory.

Evidence of children’s collaborations were noted in a study by Burgess-Macey and Loewenthal (2008:138): ‘children exchanged ideas and meanings with each other, committing themselves emotionally to processes necessary for negotiation’; however the study focused upon children aged 10-to-11 years. This furthermore enhances that notion that age could be a possible indicative factor for a lack of peer interaction, suggesting that comparatively, younger children may not have the necessary skills to enable collaboration on a deep communicative and emotional level, and therefore directly links to Piaget’s (1896–1980) notion of egocentrism.

However, Chappell, et al. (2008:267) reported collaborative PT events ‘sampled from two early years settings, one [being a] reception class, (4-to-5
year olds). And, Bancroft, Fawcett, and Hay (2005:13) also note during a kindergarten 5x5x5 project, 3 year old ‘children pulled others into the interaction’ and that ‘the children worked as a team’. However whilst acknowledging examples of collaboration in young children’s activities exist, it is not explicit in what particular sequence of events this was occurring and to what extent the process relied upon the effective practitioner’s pedagogical support skills and experience.

It has already been noted that thoughtful pedagogy has a significant role to play in nurturing productive collaborative creativity over time (Craft, 2008). According to Siraj-Blatchford (2007:3) ‘creativity, communication and collaboration are all combined in sustained, shared thinking’ described by Siraj-Blatchford as ‘an effective pedagogic strategy’ (ibid). Thus the statement infers that it is the practitioner structuring and facilitating the process, not the natural choice of engagement by the children. According to Siraj-Blatchford (2007:8) increased collaboration can be sought through ‘the involvement in improvised play with partners’. Therefore it is not clear if the link to collaboration is pedagogy, or play as opposed to social, creative learning activities as it could be argued that learning to be creative together is different from learning to play together.

Chappell (2008) sought to develop a better understanding of creativity as a co-construction, deepening knowledge of what it means to be “in a relationship” as part of creativity. Chappell suggests that collaborative creative activities and outcomes of collaborative interactions were used to fuel individual creativity. Chappell produced a framework for mediating tensions between creativity as individual, collaborative, and communal, it is shown on the next page (Figure 2.9). Chappell’s main area of interest is that of dance; indeed it will be interesting to apply this framework to research in other contexts such as the visual arts to investigate if the same phenomena are evident.
A repeatable pattern experienced during searches for relevant academic works of young children’s creative collaborations proved difficult as there seemed to be a large proportion of literature focussing on the upper primary age ranges of 6-to-11 year-old pupils. This indicates that very little is still known about young children’s creative collaborations in terms of the dynamics of relationships formed.

2.4.6 Emergence

Littleton and Miell (2004:1) suggest that ‘taking a view of creativity as fundamentally and necessarily social, and in many cases an explicitly collaborative endeavour can bring new and important insights to our understandings of both the process and outcomes of creative activities’. However the focussing of attention on the processes of collaborative creativity suggests that it is impossible to reduce the dynamics of the creative process to one individual. Moran and John-Steiner (2004:11) progress this
notion; ‘to a certain extent, all creativity is collaborative in that it draws from the ideas and products of past creators or raw materials, and depends on publications, audiences, collectors, etc to propagate the new idea’.

It is the collective activity of social groups and improvisational cultures which are those that result from collaborative emergent phenomena. Sawyer (1999:447) defines and characterises emergence as ‘complex dynamical systems that display behaviour that cannot be predicated from a full and complete description of the component units of the system’. By this Sawyer and DeZutter (2009) mean that collaborative emergence is created by efforts of the entire group. Improvised narratives are good examples of collaborative emergence because they are so obviously created by more than one person. No single speaker creates the narrative; it emerges from the give and take of conversation. The narrative is constructed turn by turn; one actor proposes a new development for the play, and others respond by modifying or embellishing that proposal. Each new proposal for a development in the narrative is the creative inspiration of one person, but that proposal does not become a part of the play until the other members of the group respond to it, and potentially redefine it retrospectively. In the subsequent flow of dialogue, the group collaborates to determine whether to accept the proposal, how to weave that proposal into the drama that has already been established, and then how to further elaborate on it.

Sawyer’s (2000) discussion of creativity associated with improvisation draws on perspectives and insights gained through examining the processes and interactions involved in the performing arts, namely improvised jazz and theatre. Sawyer notes the work of Becker (1982) who proposed that such performances require an understanding of etiquette and the following of shared structures. Interestingly not only does this apply to the actors and musicians but also to the audience, as familiarity leads to a better understanding of the performance. Therefore if this is applied to the visual arts tensions would exist between creating something new and staying within the tradition of the genre so that your audience can understand what you are doing; if the performance is too new the audience will not understand it.
(Sawyer, 2000). Restrictions on “norms and rules” therefore have the potential to lose the value of novelty, and inhibit and restrict creativity, particularly innovation, already described as the engine of creative learning and PT (Chappell, et al., 2008). However a collaborative emergent is not a final end product, like a creative product or a connectionist network end state; it is constantly changing dynamics of the interaction, which in turn influences the emergent processes that are generating it. Thus the results are evident in top-down and bottom-up processes, and are always simultaneous and bi-directional (Sawyer, 1999:465). Longitudinal case studies such as this doctoral study have the potential to examine how collaborative emergent creativity evolves, and is sustained thorough examination of all the dynamics involved in these social processes thus I will be able to fully answer how young children transition from individual to collaborative creativity in a communal context.

2.4.7 Transitioning from individual-to-collaborative-to-communal creativity

Before schools, apprenticeship was the most common means of learning, used to transmit the knowledge required for expert practice in many fields including the arts. Collins, Brown, and Newman (1989), and Collins (2006) suggest that schooling has replaced apprenticeship, but argue that if there was some way to tap into the power of apprenticeship it could be a powerful way to improve schools- referring to this phenomenon as ‘cognitive apprenticeship’. According to Collins, et al. (1989) apprenticeship embeds the learning of skills and knowledge in the social and functional context of their use. For example Lave (1997) studied apprenticeships in the cultural context of a tailor shop in Africa and found the central features identified were a combination of observation, coaching, and practise; with guided participation as a key aspect of coaching in particular. Boud, Cohen, and Sampson (2001), and Boud and Lee (2005) define another type of peer-to-peer collaboration, namely- ‘peer learning’; in this sense the learning happens as a two way reciprocal activity. It is acknowledged that Boud and
Lee (2005) draw their taxonomy from working with university research students, but “Communicating Possibilities” seeks to uncover if young children are also capable of learning from each other; whether symbiosis occurs, and co-production emerges by working together in a reciprocal relationship where two or more people contribute towards moving thinking forwards.

Brice-Heath and Wolf (2005) suggest that if individuals serve as resources to one another there is a requirement for the dependency upon individuals to recognise they are needed in their roles for the task to move to successful completion. Prior talk and experiences become the common distributed cognition of the entire group; thus arguing that improved functions of language and communication moves along the group's achievement. Mercer and Littleton (2007) propose that a benefit of belonging to a long term learning community (such as a cohort class) is that the shared history of the group can be expected to function as an important resource for collaboration. This dovetails with Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral participation, which suggests that a collective community manifests an effect of gradual or unconscious assimilation of ideas and knowledge. It is ‘legitimate because anyone is potentially a member of the community of practice; peripheral because participants are not central but on the margins of the activity; and participation because learners are acquiring knowledge through their involvement with the community’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991:100). Brown (2006:2) has also adopted the concept of peripheral participation, suggesting that through a process of osmosis pupils can pick up the sensibilities, beliefs, and idiosyncrasies of the particular community of practice, where learning happens seamlessly as part of an enculturation process as the learner moves from the periphery to a more central position in the community.

As previously noted Chappell’s (2008, 2011) humanising perspective highlights the interconnections between all three kinds of creativity (individual, collaborative, and communal) as part of an emergent story. Littleton, Taylor, and Eteläpelto (2012) make reference to socio-cultural
theory suggesting that creativity always takes place in a community linked by common identities, where there is a feeling of belonging, and all the shared practices which enable communication. Littleton, et al. (2012) note that ‘it is through such practices that the creative is not only enabled, but also categorised and valued’; however also re-emphasise the role within collaboration of individual agency. Comparisons can therefore be made here contrasting relationships between teachers and pupils, and even peer-to-peer relationships in which there are sometimes actors with less power. In the school context differential relations of power, authority, and expertise could even manifest tensions in friendship groups which then have the potential to not only restrict collaboration, but could also conversely promote collective creativity.

Searle (2004) suggests that a key factor affecting participation in any creative task is the level of trust between team members. In order to enhance creativity, a safe environment is required in which vulnerability is minimised. Eteläpelto and Lahti (2008) concur that the main obstacles to creative collaboration are related to the emotional atmosphere and power relations of the group. However according to Berk (2006:264-8) this is not the case as ‘Western children usually require extensive guidance and training in how to work together for cooperative learning to succeed’; thus collaborative relationships may well manifest in different ways, in different cultures, in different settings, and for different individuals with different identities- and thus reinforces a key focus of this doctoral study. Eteläpelto and Lahti (2008) argue that there has been a lack of studies addressing creative collaboration in long-term learning communities. The emphasis of which is placed on the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnership, through sustained and varied actions, and through the interweaving of social and individual processes where individuals are seen as part of the social environment and hence as resources for each other. This doctoral study offers the opportunity to work longitudinally with children aged 3-to-4 years as they are inducted into the first year of school in order to address the lack of understanding of young children’s collaborative creativity in the literature and furthermore
generate knowledge to fill the identified gap to understand how young children’s social identities are formed in the classroom.

**2.4.8 Identity development**

In relation to collaborative creativity, Moran and John-Steiner (2004:14) posit: ‘collaborator’s identities can remain distinct over the course of the collaboration, contributing their particular strengths and taking the lead at different times’; also highlighted in educational practices inspired by Vygotsky’s (1976,1978) social learning theory which include reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning, in which peers resolve differences of opinion and work toward common goals. Moran and John-Steiner (2004) suggest that over time creative collaboration can become a vehicle for identity development allowing different aspects of identities to come to the fore, differentiate from, and integrate with other emergent identities (Bateson, 1990; Goldberger et al., 1996). The “Communicating Possibilities” study does not attempt to indicate a causal effect for changes over time, however seeks to evidence links between the children’s emerging use of language, and assumed identity roles when engaging in artistic collaboration.

**2.4.9 Social identity**

According to Berger (1977:96) ‘every society contains a repertoire of identities, that is part of the ‘objective knowledge’ of its members; it is known as a matter of course that there are men and women, that they have [certain] psychological traits, and that they will have [certain] psychological reactions in typical circumstances’. Berger argues that as the individual is socialised, these identities are internalized which not only ensures that the individual is ‘real’ to themselves, but that they will respond to their experience of the world with evolving cognitive and emotive patterns appropriate to this reality. Berger appears to be suggesting that there is a relationship between collective identity and individual identity which is socially constructed partly upon knowledge and meaning which is objectively shared by society as a social structure, and that which is subjectively interpreted and
accommodated as psychologically real to each person in their own consciousness. When thinking about the development of children’s identity one would need to question if indeed children are capable of this dialectic relationship; are children able to consciously mediate between a socially defined group identity and an internalised self-identity in order to construct their own social role identity within the group? In this sense Berger proposes that symmetry between objective and subjective identities is the ‘criterion of the successfulness of socialisation’ (Berger, 1977:96).

2.4.10 Identity in the context of the early years classroom


Anthropologist Leslie White (1959:3) embeds resources further in culture: ‘culture consists of tools, implements, utensils, clothing, ornaments, customs, institutions, beliefs, rituals, games, works of art, and language’. For White, culture relies upon symbols. Kottak (2006:348) concurs, suggesting humans have shared the ability ‘to learn, to think symbolically, to manipulate language, and to use tools and other cultural products in organising and coping with environments’. Lev Vygotsky also defined the use of tools as: technical tools, and psychological tools, however prioritised language as the most important cultural tool. Vygotskian notions of cultural tools led Bruner (1996) to describe learning as taking place through ‘courteous conversations’ involving interpretation and mediation, highlighting the extent to which cultural context is incorporated into the interactions and outcomes of both teachers and pupils (Edwards, 2004). Thus it would seem that agency and
identity play are deemed as an essential part of children’s meaningful learning experiences which contributes to children’s cultural worlds (Jeffrey, 2008). To date there have been no studies which has explored in any depth the characteristics of young children’s artistic identities, very little is known about how these are manifest in the school context. This doctoral study seeks to fill that gap by seeking knowledge associated with artistic identity incorporating the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnership, through sustained and varied actions, and through the interweaving of social and individual processes where individuals are seen as part of the social environment and hence as resources for each other. Therefore this doctoral study seeks to uncover how children’s own internalized self-identity emerges in order to carry out their own social-role-identity when being artist communicators within their peer group; moving from individual to collaborative creativity in nursery school.

2.5 Justification for the Research Approach

Below I summarise how the literature review serves to illustrate the varied use of theory and methodology in this research area by highlighting key points of interest with the aim of justifying the research approach and questions:

• RQ1: How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?

• RQ2: How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?

• RQ3: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?
2.5.1 Studies of PT

To date there have been no sustained attempts to research PT longitudinally with the same cohort of participants over time in order to explore how PT manifests, emerges, evolves, and develops. There have been no PT studies which have focussed exclusively on art making practice and pedagogy. Using PT to frame this doctoral study will offer opportunities to contribute to a better understanding of PT theory and art practice with younger children.

2.5.2 Studies based on pedagogy

There are evident gaps in the literature (research and policy documents) concerning pedagogical guidance for engaging young children in discussing their art. Whilst it is acknowledged that open questioning and sustained shared thinking are advocated in early years documents, there is scant attention paid to questioning strategies to specifically enhance imaginative thinking with increasing reports of teachers lacking confidence to engage in creative practice, this must be addressed.

2.5.3 Studies based on peer-to-peer collaborative relationships

In general, studies that explore peer-to-peer collaboration have focussed on older children usually in the upper primary phase of school. Many studies have reported younger children working together, but there is little understanding of the nature of collaborative relationships and no mention of the implications of social identity on creative relationships and how these are formed as children enter into nursery and begin their transition into the early years of education.

2.5.4 Voice

“Communicating Possibilities” aims to give children opportunities to voice their opinions and to be supported in expressing their views. Issues of power
are evident in the literature surrounding young children’s art and I aim to address this by adopting a child-centered approach empowering children to experience freedom to make their own decisions about what they want to make and talk about, creating a safe consulting space for meaning making. Total respect will be given to the children and their ideas- thus creating rich data.

2.5.5 Richness of data

Artwork is an observable dynamic process and voice will be accompanied by ethnographic observation and the fresh fieldwork strategy of meddling in the middle. Ethnographic observation can offer opportunities to find out how children see their experiences and meddling in the middle will afford me an opportunity to engage with children in a meaningful and purposeful way whilst adopting a reflexive stance of my own pedagogical practice. Richness of data will be achieved by adopting multiple data collection strategies, and comparing and contrasting multiple perspectives of complex lived experience.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has presented a summary and critique of creativity research and young children’s social art making in order to set the study within a wider context and justify its relevance. A critical review of relevant creativity literature was presented in Section 2.2 with a direct focus on the concept of PT. Values underpinning creative and artistic learning opportunities in the school context were examined in order to gain an understanding of art in relation to the communication of ideas within the learning process with a focus on the inherent role of narrative and pedagogy (Section 2.3). In Section 2.4 Collaborative emergent creativity was discussed with specific reference to the defined age range of children making a transition into formal education (3-to-4 years), and considered social identity formation in relation
to the early years. Finally Section 2.5 concluded the chapter with a concise synthesis of the main points of interest highlighted in the literature and hence justifies the research and its approach. Chapter Three presents a comprehensive report of the methodology.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodology of ethnography is explored in relation to data collection and grounded theory which is explained in detail with regard to the analytical procedures and the findings which are presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. The methodology was selected in order to address the research questions which were determined by the positioning of myself as the researcher:

• RQ1: How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?

• RQ2: How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?

• RQ3: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?

The methodology accords with a relativistic ontology and constructionist epistemology. Below the research design is described and fully detailed, and is justified as a response to answer the research questions.
3.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

3.2.1 Introduction

This section explores the theoretical stance of my positioning as a researcher in designing and conducting this doctoral study; what Peshkin (2001:238) refers to as researcher “positionality”. A detailed consideration of ontological and epistemological positioning is discussed below following with a concluding statement of my stance in relation to theoretical frameworks.

3.2.2 Ontological positioning

When positioning oneself as a researcher, Heidegger (1962:24) argues: ‘inquiry itself is the behaviour of a questioner, and therefore of an entity’, and thus one is acknowledging oneself as being real. If we are to consider ourselves as knowing beings then the knowledge we hold has important consequences for how our behaviour and actions are interpreted, not only by ourselves, but by other beings during complex communications. According to Popper (1972:41) ‘rationality, language, description, [and] argument, are all about some reality’, therefore proposing that ‘realism is essential to common sense’ (Popper, 1972:37). If we are to accept and adopt Popper’s proposal here it would be to determine that this doctoral study falls into the realms of being as one that reflects an ontology of realism. However this is not to be used in concurrence with Pring’s suggestion that ‘realism is the view that there is a reality, a world, which exists independently of the researcher and which is to be discovered’ (2004:59). In this sense knowledge is deemed as a set of universal, context free generalizations and laws; a stance that I reject for this doctoral study.

My ontological perspective is one associated with the social construction of reality which aligns with the chosen methodology for this doctoral study which is ethnography. Ethnographic methodologies tend to reflect, and even celebrate the possibility of multiple realities. Contrast is therefore noted
between studies regarding the seeking of universal facts or laws to those recognising and respecting cultural and diverse difference. This doctoral study seeks to understand the situated-ness of activity, not just in terms of location or environmental space, but also and perhaps most significantly focuses on seeking to capture social interaction and meanings attributed to both individual and shared learning experiences. If a researcher sees the world as one that is socially constructed, then follows the notion that human beings have the potential to view the world through different socially-informed and constructed lenses, in this sense it is proposed that there can be more than one reality, even for individuals. Indeed this must be taken into account in terms of exploring perceptions, ‘since each of us experiences from our own point of view, a different reality’, (Krauss, 2005:760). Application of this ontology to this doctoral study means that ‘the assumptions move from ontological realism to ontological relativism’, (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004:23).

### 3.2.3 Epistemological positioning

Crotty (1998:3) states ‘epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know’; in this respect I ascribe to Crotty’s notion that ‘meaning is not discovered, but constructed’ (ibid, 1998:9), and thus meaning exists in the realm of experience and engagement with the world and the people within it. According to Denscombe (2007:62) ‘there is some acknowledgement that the ethnographer’s final account of the culture or group being studied is more than just a description – it is a construction’; a construction in which it is recognised that reflexively encompasses the ethnographer’s identity and own experiences, shaped by cultural, social, and historical circumstances. The epistemology for this doctoral study therefore reflects the constructionist view ‘that meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context’ (Crotty, 1998:42).
I refer to the term “construct” with particular relevance paid to the meaning of knowledge shared between people. However one must consider the appropriateness of the proposed epistemology of constructionism to that affiliated with Robson’s notion that ontologically ‘reality is socially constructed’ (2002:27). Denscombe (2007:73) explicitly identifies this as a methodological tension: ‘ethnographies generally attempt to accommodate an internal contradiction between ‘realist’ aspirations to provide full and detailed descriptions of events or cultures as they naturally exist, and a ‘relativist’ awareness of the reflexive nature of social knowledge’. ‘From the constructionist viewpoint, therefore, meaning (or truth) cannot be described simply as ‘objective’; by the same token, it cannot be described simply as ‘subjective’” (Crotty, 1998:43); therefore constructionism is seen as both realist and relativist.

To clarify- this research is based upon a relativistic ontology and constructionist epistemology. However, I acknowledge that ‘different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon’ (Crotty, 1998:9). Therefore I concur with individualised meaning making, through a constructivist lens. Constructivism therefore takes account of the unique and individual experiences of each human being, the epistemology is transactional and subjectivist; ‘the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds’ (Guba and Lincoln, 2004:26). It would therefore appear useful to reserve the term constructivism for epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on the meaning making activity of the individual mind and to use the term constructionism where the focus includes the collective generation and transmission of meaning as is appropriate for this doctoral study, (Crotty, 1998:58).
3.2.4 Theoretical framework

Anfara and Mertz (2006:xxvii) state that theoretical frameworks should be viewed as ‘theories that can be applied as “lenses” to study phenomena’, suggesting that researchers should be open to considering the applicability of these frameworks to the research problem chosen. According to Sanders and Gero (2002:81) previous ‘cognitive studies have naturally focussed upon the individual and paid less attention, if any, to the social and cultural contexts that influence the creative individual at work’ and hence argue that ‘creative systems extend beyond any particular creative individual and include the socio-cultural context within which the individual works’ (ibid). This doctoral study takes into account the socially constructed nature of learning opportunities by exploring jointly constructed meanings in the classroom through interactions, shared meanings and understandings- the theoretical stance of interpretivism is thus adopted. Interpretivism seeks to explain how people make sense of their social worlds, with particular emphasis on how this evolves over time, requiring researchers to actively make sense of people’s behaviour- including their own.

The reporting of multiple perspectives fits well with the underpinning philosophy of constructivism, an exploration framed by culturally negotiated, shared meanings and complex social relations, which frame the thinking of individuals. According to James and James (2004:12) ‘it was Aries (1962) who first highlighted the socially constructed character of childhood’; acknowledging the complex discourses that shape children’s lives and that a universal construction of childhood could not be advanced because of its very nature. Consideration of the diverse nature of children’s lives means that I do not concur with positivism. Hughes (2001:32) notes ‘positivists try to explain and predict their surroundings in terms of cause and effect relationships’ producing ‘results that simply and straightforwardly reflect the world’. I reject this stance and view children’s experiences as a means of making sense of their surroundings, demonstrating an awareness of agency, change, and individual evolvement which can influence interpretations and
behaviours accordingly. Therefore the longitudinal and social nature of this doctoral study bodes well with Mac Naughton and Rolfe’s description of interpretivist knowledge: ‘interpretivists believe that we continually create and re-create our social world as a dynamic meaning system; that is a system that changes over time’, (2001:36).

Reflecting on the notion that human beings are social constructions through interactions also relates to the world of the symbolic interactionist. The assumption inherent in interactionist perspectives relates to ‘language, communication, interrelationships and community, in and out of which we come to be persons’ (Crotty, 1998:63). This doctoral study examines all of these aspects, particularly that of communication. Robinson (2001:119) states the most distinctive ability of human beings is ‘the power of symbolic thought’, indicating that language is an example of an inherited cultural meaning system with many dynamics. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:24) ‘it is the nature of the interaction, the dynamic activities taking place between people’ which draws the focus of the study for the symbolic interactionist; furthermore arguing that through this process the ‘interactionist creates a more active image of the human being and rejects the image of the passive, determined organism’ (ibid). Indeed romantic ideals associated with the notion of the natural unfolding of developmental pathways are not positioned in this doctoral study and is therefore interactionist in nature.

Blumer (1969:2) cites three basic interactionist assumptions: One that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them. Two that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows, and Three that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. It is interesting to note that Blumer at no point specifically refers to language; indeed Robinson (2001:121) raises an interesting point here: ‘languages reflect different ways of thinking’…‘words help us to think about
some types of experience, [but] they are relatively useless in dealing with others’. Therefore the scope to encapsulate culture and communication within this doctoral study beyond the realms of spoken language resonates with the notion of the child as an artist communicator, where expressed thoughts do not always fit the concept of words, but also exist in visual forms. Robinson (2001:123) progresses the notion of symbols further suggesting that ‘anything can be a symbol, symbols are personal and psychological’, they are both systematic and schematic. Robinson defines systematic symbols as those governed by rules such as spoken languages which need to fit patterns of representations to make sense, whereas schematic symbols, such as paintings, poems, music and dance express their meanings uniquely in the forms they take (Robinson, 2001). This leads one to conclude that there are no fixed meanings for the symbolic forms of art, and thus art becomes a matter of individual interpretation, rather than an understanding of universalised meaning and assumptions. This understanding concurs with a statement by Cohen, et al. (2007:24): that symbolic interactionism ‘does not represent a unified perspective or embrace a common set of assumptions’. Denzin (1978:99) therefore suggests: ‘methodologically, symbolic interactionism directs the investigator to take, to the best of his [or her] ability, the standpoint of those studied’; which concurs with the chosen methodology of ethnography as adopted for this doctoral study.

3.3 Ethnography

I have chosen to approach this doctoral study adopting elements of ethnographic methodology reflecting my theoretical stance of interpretivism which seeks to explain how people make sense of their social worlds, with particular emphasis on how this evolves over time, requiring me to actively make sense of people’s behaviour- including my own, thus ethnography is
most fitting for the purpose of the study. The term ethnography literally means a description of people or their cultures; its origins as a research strategy can be found in the work of early anthropologists. Ethnography requires the researcher to spend a considerable length of time in the field, demonstrating the benefits of allowing for the documentation of in-depth descriptions of the events, processes and relationships and also allows for the holistic analysis of phenomena. Perhaps most importantly given the longitudinal nature of this doctoral study, the methodology enabled the documentation and analysis of emerging features of children’s experiences in school over time.

The impetus for this doctoral study arose out of an interest in Piaget’s notion of the developing child, starting from an egocentric standpoint, transacting oneself forth to accomplish a sense of social being. This stance concurs with Denscombe’s purpose of ethnographic research: ‘to shed some light on an area of life whose significance depends on a theory, to elaborate on theory, or even check on whether the theory really does hold true and explain things as they happen in real life’ (2007:67). In order to gain rich and detailed accounts of events I immersed myself into a classroom culture which was viewed as an opportunity to engage with participants in their own environment. Robben and Sluka (2007:146) suggest ‘the ethnographer and subjects are both performers and audience to one another’, by immersing oneself in the culture being researched in order to gain an in-depth view of phenomena this allows for barriers to be relaxed and a lessening of ‘analysis of social interaction in terms of the means by which people seek to control the impressions others receive of them’, therefore a truer picture is obtained.

Advancing this notion further Henstrand (2006:9) highlights ‘cognitive anthropology [which] focuses on discovering how different people organise and use their cultures’ and ‘seek to understand the organizing principles underlying behaviour’; demonstrating an interest ‘in both differences between cultures and differences within cultures’. The ethnographic stance fosters the study of both individuals and their relations to others within their cultures and social communities, referencing the historical circumstances in
which they occur and how these are developing and emerging over time. Denscombe (2007:62) suggests the emphasis is ‘placed on the need to look for inter-linkages between the various features of the culture and to avoid isolating facets of the culture from the wider context within which it exists’. Cohen, et al. (2007:23) therefore note ‘it is convenient to distinguish between two types of ethno-methodologists: linguistic and situational’. Linguistic ethnomethodologists focus upon the use of language and the ways in which conversations in everyday life are structured, whereas the situational ethnomethodologist will cast their view over a wider range of social activity and seek to understand the ways in which people negotiate the social contexts in which they find themselves. However this doctoral study dovetails both linguistic and situational ethnomethodologies by focussing on communication and sociology.

It would therefore appear pertinent to address the aim of the study and the purpose of ethnography. It has been established that the aim of this doctoral study is to gain an in-depth view of school culture as is the purpose of ethnography, but I am also seeking an understanding of children’s creative development over time. Hammersley (1990:598) therefore suggests that ‘descriptions must remain close to the concrete reality of particular events, but at the same time reveal general features of human social life’. I therefore introduce grounded theory as an additional form of emergent methodology. Grounded theory will be discussed at length in relation to the analytical procedures applied following the method section.

3.3.1 Ethnographic data collection methods

I wish to introduce the data collection methods to contextualise the following section in relation to children’s participation.

The data was collected by the following ethnographic methods:
Naturalistic observations - incorporating video data, photographic still images, and voice recordings

Researcher diary - recording notes, artefacts, and informal conversations

Children’s creative journals - collating photographs, artefacts, and practitioner observations

Practitioner interviews - responses, and reflections to observations and analytical findings

3.4 Children’s Participation

3.4.1 The Mosaic Approach

At the onset of the study elements of the “Mosaic Approach” were used which included children’s creative journals as part of the process. The idea behind the approach is that over time children can build up a “picture or mosaic” of their creative learning experiences by using many means of expression, photographs, drawings, artefacts, recorded notes etc. Clark and Moss (2001:15) suggest this allows “opportunities for the children to reflect on their previous responses and to assess how their situations and feelings have changed”. According to Clark (2004:146) ‘the method can provide a valuable insight’. The method includes ways to actively involve children in the research process, by providing tools such as digital cameras.

I provided two digital cameras which initially remained on the school site and were available to the children at all times, even when I was not there. The children were also encouraged to capture their experiences outside of the school classroom, in the playground, on school visits, and in the community to show to me on my return visits. Reflecting on the use of still photographs; Clark and Moss (2001:13) suggest, ‘this snap shot provides a record of play in progress which can be discussed with children’, perhaps through a focus group session. However one of the cameras was accidently broken within
the first week, and even though the children took hundreds of images, they found it difficult to talk about them in any great detail due to the “time gap” in-between capturing the image, editing, and discussing. I also reflected upon my previous experiences using this method with a group of young children, which sometimes proved unsuccessful as the children did not want to converse together. Hennessy and Heary (2005:241) suggest this could be because ‘the expressive language and social interaction skills of younger children may not be sophisticated enough to engage in group processes’. It is suggested that voice is dependent on the social context in which it is located and that researchers should be mindful that children’s informative abilities are profoundly shaped by the interviewing practices of their adult interlocutors, (Lamb and Brown, 2006). The methods have to be reliable, yet non-threatening, accessible and enjoyable for children as not to exclude children who do not use speech as their first mode of communication, and those who may have additional needs, (Rabiee, Sloper and Beresford, 2005). Therefore it was decided that the children could continue to use the cameras as “play items” during my visits, but I would not “press” the children to discuss their images unless they approached me to do so at the time.

3.4.2 Explore journals

“Explore Journals” as the school calls them are part of normal everyday practice- other early years practitioners may recognise the EYFS expression “Profile” as a way of recording visual documents and verbal narratives. It was hoped that the journals would be used in reflective conversations with the children as Clark and Moss suggest; however this did not come to fruition as when I attempted meta-cognitive conversations prompted by the journals (after the fact so to speak), the children would usually give responses such as: “that’s me”, “I’m doing drawing”, and as such any deep meanings were not achievable with this age group. It was therefore decided that the “Explore Journals” would be used as documents to find out what the children had been doing during times when I was not on site, and that it was best practice to capture the children’s reflective thoughts and narratives.
about their artwork as it was being made in action at that moment in time, thus still involving them as producers of knowledge. In this sense children are therefore viewed as active participants, respecting their right to expression; Alderson captures the underpinning ethos of this doctoral study succinctly:

Studies that use observations and interactions with children in the context of their everyday lives, examine topics in which the children are expert, use semi structured narrative interviews, toys, games, drawings and other non-verbal media, avoid normative tests and judgements, work to establish friendly rapport and trust with children and to work with them as partners, aiming to understand their perspectives and reasoning.

Alderson (2008:156)

3.4.3 Case studies

Drawing attention to the constraints posed upon my available time as a solo data collector; a case study method was used, where the case was bound, focussing on a whole class in one site which enhanced the depth and quality of data collection. Ochsner (2001:254) defines this as ‘a comprehensive research strategy aimed at explaining, describing, illustrating and/or exploring contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context of a single individual, group, event, institution or culture’. As a solo researcher it was also impossible to collect and analyse the data sets of a full cohort of 50 cases. Therefore the strategic decision was made to follow a few select children known as “the focus sample” with a view to providing insightful accounts of events, relationships, experiences, and processes in order to unravel the complexities for the individual children in the focus sample and how each individual child within the focus sample related to each other as a whole, i.e. within and across the focus sample and the collective case study, thus allowing for emergent grounded theory analysis to occur. The selected
children from the focus sample are discussed further in the participant section below.

3.5 Participants

3.5.1 The school setting

The host school for the “Communicating Possibilities” study is situated in South West England. I was introduced to the school during an externally funded project in early 2010. The head teacher describes the community as one consisting mainly of local authority housing, noting that the majority of pupils are in receipt of free school meals. During a recent inspection Ofsted noted that a significant number of the children have speech, language, and communication problems; however the staff at the school aim to develop learning and communication by embracing “a can do” philosophy which values children’s ideas supporting their natural curiosities about the world through free play and creative opportunities that the school has now termed “Explore Time” which follows the children’s individual interests.

3.5.2 Child sample

At the onset of the project the whole nursery class was engaged as active participants, this consisted of 20 boys and 15 girls. The term active participants and the nature of the research reflects the view of doing research with children, not on children, and that the children were invited to express their views and decision making processes in accordance with UNCRC (1989, Article 12), and were not excluded or silenced.

The project started in the Autumn term of 2010 and ceased in Winter 2012 (28 months). The research project followed a cohort of children through each year of school, (nursery, reception, and transition into year one of their primary education). The children were aged between three and four years of
age at the onset of the research project and were between five and six years of age at its conclusion. As previously mentioned the original conception of the “Communicating Possibilities” study proposed to follow the children for the full 28 months as they transited through their very first years in school; this was indeed carried out and the unused data was archived for future use as the study became “too large” for this doctoral study. Therefore this thesis will focus on the nursery year only. Thus the children in the sample for this doctoral study were all aged between 3 and 4 years old.

3.5.3 Focus sample

As this doctoral study required an in-depth exploration of the children’s individual development over time; a further sampling process was adopted in order to select a smaller number of children to document their individual development. For the purposes of this doctoral study these children were known as the focus sample. The focus sample initially consisted of 10 children, 5 boys and 5 girls; the number of focus participants took into consideration the possibility of withdrawals from the project. Indeed over time the composition of the sample did change due to 1 child leaving the school and 1 child actively expressing disinterest and did not want to take part in the project. Time constraints placed upon myself as a solo researcher also impacted on the ability to follow the children when they changed classrooms, upon entering reception parallel classes were formed splitting the children, thus I decided to work in one classroom only. After consulting with the teachers it was agreed that the number of focus participants would be 3 (children all in the same class); two boys- Box Boy and Hot Wheels, and one girl- Rosie, (pseudonyms chosen by the children). The teachers assisted in choosing the focus children, each child was chosen reflecting their individuality and difference (some more art active than others) offering the opportunity to compare and contrast their behaviours, narratives, and relationships formed. Table 3.1 explicates these choices and annotates details of the other potential focus participants including those who withdrew or did not want to take part.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Notes on potential focus participants</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boy 1</td>
<td>TA left the school.</td>
<td>Withdrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy 2</td>
<td>TY did not enjoy talking to me. During one of the first sessions I found his microphone in the oven in the home corner, when I listened to it, he had taken it off as soon as the session started and shouted into it: &quot;We aint gotta do nuffink you tell us to!&quot; and put the microphone in the oven and slammed the door shut.</td>
<td>Did not want to take part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy 3</td>
<td>JM was not an English speaking pupil. He had interesting modes of play and communication through movement and gesture. JM liked painting and exploring textures and sounds. Sometimes JM found it difficult to communicate with his peers.</td>
<td>Went into a different class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy 4</td>
<td>BB was chosen as he was fascinated with paper, scissors, folding, and generally making things which were inventive and creative. BB had a lot of followers, his art and play had a ripple effect in the nursery. BB was quite social, however sometimes lacked interaction with other children as he preferred solo activities. BB was very interested in my video recording equipment and he liked to spend time talking with me.</td>
<td>Focus Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy 5</td>
<td>HW was chosen as he found it difficult to transition from home to nursery, but used pictures as a coping strategy. HW did not often communicate through words and was quiet; he often hung back from activities. HW liked to stay close to adults and engage in their pre-prepared craft activities. HW enjoyed making marks and quick free drawings, but his main preference was for the building blocks and jigsaw puzzles.</td>
<td>Focus Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl 1</td>
<td>RA liked to draw and paint, she was petite and shy at times, but enjoyed talking to me and was social with her peers. However she spent the vast majority of her time playing &quot;Mummy and Daddy&quot; with the dolls in the home corner.</td>
<td>Went into a different class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl 2</td>
<td>MM was chosen as she found it difficult to transition from home to nursery. She enjoyed talking openly to me, however was nervous of the microphone clips. She was also quite anxious of her peers and in general found nursery stressful. MM took a long time to settle, but when she did she would spend long periods of time making very detailed and intricate colourful drawings.</td>
<td>Went into a different class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl 3</td>
<td>EM only wanted to play in the home corner; she was not very art active, but she did like to engage in prescribed activities and usually drew pictures which represented what was going on in her life at that moment in time, i.e., “on the way to school”, “my pet.”</td>
<td>Whole Class Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl 4</td>
<td>BS had speech difficulties but this did not impact on her social development. She was often a companion to BB and liked to follow his activities; she shared his love of cutting and folding and would stay close to his side as he was able to get the scissors from the teacher. BB also liked to sit at the table with adults when they had prepared craft activities.</td>
<td>Whole Class Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl 5</td>
<td>RO was extremely social and liked to communicate with both adults and peers. RO always engaged in art making and creative play. Every day she would paint first thing and spend the vast majority of her time in nursery either at the easel or art and craft table. RO was an enthusiastic talker and enjoyed spending time with me and talking openly about her art, her imaginative ideas, and her daily life in nursery and at home.</td>
<td>Focus Participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Notes on potential focus participants
3.5.4 Introducing the focus children

The focus children are introduced here by way of mini pen portraits taken from an interview with the lead teacher which took place during Phase 1 - the children's first term in the nursery. During the interview I asked the teacher for her initial observations of the focus children as they made the transition from home to school. Whilst it could be argued that one teacher’s perspective is “limiting” I regard these observations as a valuable and insightful introduction as the lead teacher knew the children and their families very well.

The same questions were posed for each child offering the reader a comparative report. The portraits are representative of the voice of the teacher and the order is presented as follows: Rosie, Box Boy, and Hot Wheels.

3.5.4.1 Rosie

Rosie was really happy to say goodbye to Mum to start with, but then after a couple of weeks she was quite teary. She soon settled down and she became actively social with her peers and became familiar with the adults in the setting. Rosie has good speech and language skills; however she sometimes needs encouragement for the correct pronunciation. She is very chatty with the grown-ups, sometimes a bit too chatty; she can be quite challenging and will go from adult to adult telling them the same story, looking for a reaction. Rosie will also dictate to the other children and can’t tell sometimes if other children have had enough. At carpet time Rosie will sit as near to the grown-ups as possible. She likes the song basket and is focused when adults are reading stories to her. Rosie’s gross motor skills were not particularly strong to begin with; being quite petite she found the stepping stones quite difficult to start with and needed a push on the bike to get her going. There are no issues with her fine motor skills and her special interest is painting on the easel every day, it is the first thing she likes to do.
3.5.4.2 Box Boy
Box Boy was fine parting from Mum and Dad, in fact it was more the opposite, trying to get him to go home was the problem. When Box Boy started he didn’t say much at all to begin with, he just gave one word answers, he was very quiet and hung back a lot; he didn’t want to join in with any group times or the other children at all. However during September he changed and he was ready to come and be included; having said that sometimes he still has got to be in the right mood to converse. With regard to the adults, conforming is an issue. He didn’t want to sit down and conform. If you asked him to sit down he just stared at you. He was not able to become absorbed in group activities; he tended to hold back on the edge of activities to start with. He won’t put an apron on; there are certain things that he has to do his own way. Box Boy has excellent gross motor skills he likes the scooters and there are no issues with his fine motor skills either he enjoys the scissors and paper, this started in September and it is his special interest, he also likes the train track, sand, and water outdoor play.

3.5.4.3 Hot Wheels
Hot Wheels actually started in January and was so upset parting from Mum and Dad that he had to stop coming, he just cried all the time he was here. We started in half hour increments, but he never got past the half hour, so in the end Mum and Dad decided to keep him at home until he got a bit older. When he started in September we still had quite a few tears but no where near what we thought we were going to have. He has not had much experience of any other groups, I asked Mum in January to try him at a playgroup, but I don’t think she took him. Hot Wheels found it quite hard initially to socialise with other children so he tended to do things on his own quite a lot and it’s only recently, after a few weeks in that he has started to mix with other children. During carpet time Hot Wheels found it hard to be involved as a group, sometimes he didn’t want to sit down with us he wanted to hold back. He becomes absorbed as long as he can follow his own interests. In the first few weeks of nursery Hot Wheels would associate with adults quite a lot more, but not for comfort because he was cross with us.
that Mum and Dad weren’t coming to get him straight away if he was upset. Hot Wheel’s speech and language is comparatively OK, slightly above average for here and he does seem to be able to express himself fairly well. Hot Wheels has good gross motor skills, he quite enjoys the ride on toys in the garden. With regard to his fine motor skills he is one of the boys that quite often chooses mark making, that is probably one of his preferred activities, and he likes to have a picture to take home. His other special interest is the computers.

3.5.5 Focus sample rationale

A focus sample of three may seem a low figure to some researchers, however Cohen, et al. (2007:105) suggest ‘a sample of five or six may suffice the researcher who is prepared to obtain additional corroborative data by way of validation’. In this doctoral study the option to participate was open to the whole class (35 children). The rationale for keeping the option to participate open to the whole class and the focus group allowed me the opportunity of contextualising wider perspectives of the children’s enculturation into, and through school. It was inevitable that children from the whole class sample and the focus sample would interact with each other and this allowed for a deeper understanding of their social worlds, therefore it was necessary to have all the children in the class included as part of the sample as well as the focus sample.

3.5.6 Practitioner sample

Practitioners at the school (heads, managers, teachers, teaching assistants, early years staff, lunch time staff, creative practitioners, visitors etc) were informed about the aims of the project and were invited to actively participate in classroom observations, informal interviews, and reflect on the transcripts and findings memos through member checking. The Nursery Manager and Early Years Co-ordinators at the school who have close relationships with the children also engaged in reflections and offered their
professional feedback on the developing theories, thus achieving internal validity.

All staff at the setting, including visitors- supply teachers and students were invited to participate at a level they felt comfortable with, ranging from having their photograph taken, capturing their image on video, recording their voices, and validating data, or indeed exercising their right not participate which was respected.

3.5.7 Researcher position- insider/outsider

The close up mobile video data reflects my position in the classroom in that I was present in all of the episodes as an “insider” collecting the data via close up video recording, and thus became enmeshed in the children’s sustained activities. Focussing on collecting narratives, this approach captures the emotion of the moment described, rendering the event active rather than passive, and is infused with the children’s own words spoken whilst communicating through the medium of art, and thus adopts a philosophy of giving a voice to those people whose voices would otherwise not be heard (Berger and Quinney, 2005). According to Gregory and Ruby (2010:9) ‘the intrinsic aim of ethnography is to present emic interpretations’ (seeing events from the participants’ point of view), however also attempts to unpick the almost insoluble dilemmas of being an “insider” and “outsider”, suggesting that it is not possible to be both at the same time. Bakhtin’s (1986) notion of the “dialogic self” offers a view of the self as a changing entity, constantly engaged in dialogue. Dialogic self concepts weave two concepts, firstly the self and secondly dialogue. Together they merge in such a way that a more profound understanding of the interconnection of self and society is achieved. A dialogic view of language and culture thus inherently entails being responsive to others and sees the act of authoring as a creative answerability and responsibility (Gregory and Ruby, 2010) and dovetails with my positioning in this doctoral study.
3.6 Ethics

Following the initial invitation to both staff and children to participate in the research, ethical procedures were negotiated within the guidelines of the University of Exeter Ethics Committee which is bound by the British Educational Research Association Ethical Code; at the time this was the 2004 version. The procedures followed involved written informed consent for parents and practitioners (see Appendix 2 and 3), and the children’s assent was also sought prior to the commencement of the sessions by informing them of their right to choose if they wanted to take part. The right to abstain or withdraw from the project at any time was upheld, and both raw and analysed data material was anonymised and stored in a secure data system.

In July of 2012, following key supervision meetings, it was decided that the scope of the thesis would not be adequate to entertain the full 9 phases of data collection (nursery, reception, and year one). I sought permission from the school to continue with the data collection to analyse during post-doctoral work and after this was granted I approached the Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter to apply for new ethical clearance on the grounds of a change of purpose on site. Teachers, parents, and children were made fully aware of these changes through consultation and a letter sent home acknowledging the Head Teacher’s request to use “plain language”. Further details of ethical considerations are documented in this section.

3.6.1 Access to the sample

The setting up of the project and access to the sample was negotiated through the Head Teacher and teaching staff (informal meetings) and written parental consent (home visits with nursery staff, information letter and return of consent form). I made separate visits to the school before the start of the new term (September) in order to accompany the staff to visit some of the children in their home settings. This afforded the nursery staff an opportunity
to introduce me to the children and their carers, and gave me an opening to position the study and make personal invitations to take part, allowing time to explain the process in depth to the children’s parents and carers if they wished to find out more information. I took time to inform parents and carers that the children are viewed as ‘highly informed experts’, (Alderson and Morrow, 2004:10), and that the study was not designed to test children, intellectually or psychologically; rather it was a tool to examine theory and reflect upon practice, and also created a space for children to express their views.

3.6.2 Informed consent

I respectfully acknowledged the right of all participants, children and adults to be informed of the research process in which they were to be engaged and therefore sought voluntary informed consent. All participants were briefed on the project aims and outcomes prior to the commencement of the project.

During the initial introductions, parents and carers were furnished with an information letter declaring my CRB clearance, consent form and ‘plain language statement’ as advised by Mac Naughton (2001:26). The letter was intended to aid parents and ‘participants [to] understand the process in which they are to be engaged’ (BERA, Article 10, 2004:6). Roberts-Holmes (2005:69) suggests ‘relevant information should always be given to the children, and their informed consent sought as well as the gatekeeper’s’; therefore during my first site visits I spent time talking informally with the children and sometimes used pictures to talk the children through the research process and its aims, allowing the children plenty of opportunity to ask any questions and discuss concerns if they had any, however no such concerns were raised. The children were also informed of their right to choose if they wanted to take part. Addressing this in a manner which was in keeping with the children’s ages and stages of development, the children were asked at the start of every close up recording session if they were happy for me to watch them play.
3.6.3 Participant selection

Following negotiation and access to the site and class sample it was agreed that I could select the focus sample children from the “pool of participants”. This was handled with some delicacy, so as not to be seen singling out or favouring certain children which could have been detrimental to the research. It was originally envisaged that this would happen in one of two ways, each with its advantages and disadvantages. The first way was that of a simple random lottery, i.e. selecting names from “a hat”. A simple random sample is easy to administer. Each individual is chosen randomly, entirely by chance, such that each individual has the same probability of being chosen during the sampling process. It is also free of classification (apart from gender), and requires minimum advance knowledge of the participants; however this could also be seen as a disadvantage in terms of missing the opportunity to study in-depth children of particular interest. The second proposed method of selection was invitation to participate, seeking volunteers through a full briefing process, involving all concerned parties, i.e. teachers, parents and children. It was this method of sampling that was chosen as the most ethically sound. Volunteer sampling allows for greater agency on the part of the participants. If however a greater number of volunteers are presented than the researcher requires it will then fall to the researcher to make a decision as to which participants to select. An example of this is a purposive sampling, where researchers have the opportunity to handpick the cases to be included. This type of sample is built on greater knowledge of participants, however is deliberately selective. In this particular community school setting it was deemed by the teachers that purposive sampling was more appropriate in direct consultation with all parties concerned. The chosen focus participants were then individually invited by myself and nursery staff, and additional information letters and consent forms were distributed.
3.6.4 Right to withdraw and debriefing procedures

Participants and their guardians were informed of their right to abstain or withdraw from the research for any and no reason and assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. I acknowledged and respected this right in accordance with BERA, Article 13 (2004:13).

BERA, Article 29 (2004:10) suggests it is also good practice, ‘to debrief participants at the conclusion of the research’; indeed the adult participants were briefed as an on-going part of the study and were offered perusal of reports and publications as they occurred. I did not however deem this as suitable for young children and therefore invited the children to look at the photographs and engage in informal conversations as they occurred during the study. I viewed this practice as more child friendly as opposed to offering a report.

3.6.5 Confidentiality and anonymity

All verbal data (collected from teachers and children) was treated as anonymous via the use of pseudonyms which the focus children chose themselves. The girl in the focus sample chose to be known as Rosie and the two boys in the focus sample chose to be known as Box Boy and Hot Wheels. All other children in the class had their names changed by randomly assigning them pseudonyms which were not associated with any other child’s name in the class.

I acknowledged that care must be taken when collecting photographic data as not to include any participants whose parents and guardians had requested for them not to be photographed or filmed. In addition the photographic data was subjected to a filtration process by myself and teachers, identifying any participants who wish their identity to remain confidential. Any photographs found during this process were deleted. The storing of data remained confidential and compliant with the Data Protection Act (1989). The exact location of the school, along with its name also
remained confidential even to the point of editing photographs to blur out and erase names on pictures and school badges on uniforms etc.

Very early on into the project it was brought to my attention that several of the children had chaotic home lives - evidence of which would filter into school through the children’s play behaviours and narratives. I was regarded by the children as a confidante and they would sometimes tell me things of a personal nature which after comforting, re-assuring and advising the child concerned that they did the right thing telling someone and that I too had to tell someone else (such as their class teacher) who could help them further. On occasions such as this I handled the children’s disclosures in accordance with the child protection policies of the setting by passing information to the Child Protection Officer and writing a disclosure report.

### 3.6.6 Inclusive arrangements and cultural diversity

The opportunity to participate in the research was open to all pupils of the chosen sample regardless of their gender, race, culture, faith, socio economic status, academic performance, language capabilities, additional needs, or age (within the range of the sample group year). It was acknowledged that to some degree the whole class would be involved in this project and therefore considerations were necessary in order to incorporate inclusive practices for those children with additional needs to ensure facilitation and active participation. Any such circumstances that arose during the course of the study were addressed by direct consultation with parents, teachers and children on an individual basis in the best interests of the child.

### 3.6.7 Deception and incentives

There were neither deceptions nor incentives involved in this project. However it should be noted that I gave the whole class gifts at the end of every year to show my gratitude. At the end of the nursery Summer term the children were given a party bag containing toys and treats, at the end of
reception Summer term the children were invited to choose an art and craft pack such as painting a model, card making, clay set etc, and at the end of the year one study, (the final winter term on site November/December) all of the children in the class were given an advent calendar. Gratitude was also shown to the staff by supporting fund raising and after school community based events thus demonstrating the reciprocal nature of my work ethic by taking time to factor into my busy schedule moments to “give back”.

3.6.8 Engagement in research situation

Whilst on site it was necessary for me to handle multiple identity roles- that of researcher, academic advisor, play partner, friend, and female mother figure. I was able to maintain working relationships with children, parents, staff, and creative practitioners by being approachable, friendly, and open to challenge and accountability- often taking time to explain differences and alleviate tensions when they occurred. I showed a willingness to engage in professional development days with teachers and outside agencies, and my flexibility and commitment were shown here by travelling to these in my own time.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

In this doctoral study the creative system, within the context of the school is defined as the dynamics between the children, the teaching staff, creative practitioners, myself as the researcher, and the environment and hence provided the discourse for data collection. Therefore in order to capture deep, insightful, rich data the research design is framed by a case study strategy (Yin, 1989), encompassing multi methods of data collection. The rationale for adopting this stance enabled me to collect and maintain triangulation which was achieved via the multiple sources of data obtained, and cross case analysis exploring key similarities or differences between the
children. Referring to Flick (2006) who suggests that the research design should demonstrate the combination of appropriate perspectives and methods that are suitable for taking into account different aspects of the problem (Flick, 2006:108).

3.7.1 Ethnographic data collection methods

As previously mentioned the data was collected by ethnographic methods. Table 3.2 demonstrates how each of these methods contributed to the analysis and how the data helped me to answer the research questions. The larger size of block indicates a greater contribution to the analytical procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection method</th>
<th>Contribution to analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalistic observations- incorporating video data (fixed classroom and hand held close up mobile camera)</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographic still images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice recordings (video narrative, and individual microphone clips*) *Not used in this doctoral study</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher diary- recording notes, artefacts, and informal conversations</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s creative journals- collating photographs, artefacts, and practitioner observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner interviews- responses, and reflections to observations and analytical findings</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Contribution of data to analysis
3.8 Procedure

3.8.1 Pilot Phase

Originally it was proposed that there would be an initial Pilot Phase of the project which would run from September 2010 to December 2010. The Pilot Phase was designed to afford myself an opportunity to review and address any issues that arose during the early stages of the research. It was envisaged that the pilot phase would encompass:

- Familiarisation with the setting and participants
- A review of the data collection tools
- First stage preliminary analysis
- Establish initial findings

During the Pilot Phase I encountered a few “teething problems” with the data collection tools. Firstly the positioning of the fixed video camera was problematic as the scope of the lens was too narrow to capture all the areas of interest in the classroom. I purchased a wide lens camcorder and tripod to resolve this issue and after trying it out from several vantage points it was found that clipping it at about 4 feet from the ground on the side of a classroom divider worked best. The battery life of the camera was also noted; during this trial period I found that it was necessary to charge the cameras during the lunchtime period as they were not strong enough to last all day; without a re-charge the cameras would shut down during the afternoon session.

There were also a few initial issues with the microphone clips- I purchased 10 voice recorders (one for each focus child) which were slim MP3 players. To start with the some of the children were scared of the microphones and did not like them to be placed on them or in their personal space. I trialled several ways of attaching the microphone clips to the children’s uniform and
found that the most successful way was to place them in a very small brightly coloured patterned sock (either a baby or pet sock) and attach colourful elastic to the sock which made it into a necklace which was placed over the children’s heads and tucked inside their jumper or shirt to avoid any accidents. With regard to individual sensitivities, Box Boy was the most anxious about wearing the microphone. Over time I was able to desensitise Box Boy’s associated feelings of anxiety with his microphone by firstly showing him how it worked; recording funny voices and playing them back to him, putting the microphone on a teddy for him to carry around, then I gradually progressed to introducing the microphone to Box Boy’s personal space, at first asking him to put it in his trouser pocket, then at last on a sock necklace around his neck.

At the start of the Pilot Phase I started recording in the following areas: the painting easel, the mark making table, the art and craft table, and the computer area. At the end of the Pilot Phase after reviewing the scope of the fixed camera and the quality of close up mobile camera data being collected in each area I started to focus in on areas of particular interest: painting, drawing, modelling and constructing, at the painting easel, the mark making table, and the art and craft table, thus excluding the computers.

The focus sample was also narrowed at the end of the Pilot Phase in consultation with the children, teachers and parents. The children accumulating the most interesting evidence were- Rosie, Box Boy, and Hot Wheels.

During the early transcriptions and foundational analytical process in the Pilot Phase it was decided that for the purposes of this doctoral study the microphone data would not be used as the video narrative was adequately sufficient; however the data was collected over the course of the project (following revised ethical clearance) and was archived for post-doctoral work.

The preliminary analytical procedures in the Pilot Phase (discussed further on into this chapter) were found to be successful and thus the initial findings
were incorporated into the study and became known as “Phase 1” instead of the “Pilot Phase”. Phase 1 through to Phase 3 thus became a continuum of evolving data collection and analysis.

3.8.2 School site visits

I visited the school on a regular basis to enable the data to be collected systematically in order to develop an emerging picture over time. Nine weekly visits were planned and spread out equally which roughly equated to time being spent on location every three weeks during the school’s active academic calendar. The school was inactive during scheduled holidays, half term vacations; Christmas and Easter breaks and these were factored in when planning the visits. I also followed the Head Teacher’s suggestion that the visits happened in week blocks, i.e. Monday through to Friday so that I could follow the children’s learning journeys as they evolved during the week rather than gaining a fragmented perspective which he suggested would be the case if I visited each week (i.e. every Monday). Three weeks of data collection were then chunked into the Phases.

- Phase 1: September- December (3 weeks of data)
- Phase 2: January- March (3 weeks of data)
- Phase 3: May- July (3 weeks of data)

Totalling 45 days on site and 9 full weeks of data collection spread equally across the academic year.

3.8.3 Recording the data- video, photographs, and voice recordings

As previously mentioned in the Pilot Phase it was found that the areas of particular interest in the classroom where art (painting, drawing, modelling and constructing) were taking place was the painting easel, the mark making table, and the art and craft table. These areas formed the foci for data collection.
The nursery day was split into morning and afternoon free play sessions. Prior to the start of each session the teachers would have “carpet time” with the children and this is when I set up the camera recording equipment. The observational data was collected by video (image and voice), and still photographic recordings. Two cameras were set up. Camera one (the fixed camera) was a static view of the learning environment, which aimed to capture the physical and social positioning of the children in the classroom. The fixed camera was positioned in its vantage point focussing on the painting easel, the mark making table, and the art and craft table which were all located near each other in one corner of the classroom in a cluster. Camera two (the hand held mobile camera) was available to me 100% of the time as was the photographic camera (both were held around my neck on a strap) for recording episodes of activity with the children. As soon as the teacher started to “wrap up” carpet time I activated the recording equipment and physically positioned myself in the corner of the classroom where the art areas were clustered.

All sessions were fluid and unstructured and when the children entered the art area I was ready to observe and capture their art making on video as it occurred and manifest naturally during the course of the session. Hadfield and Haw (2012) explore the use of video in various modalities and I refer to their work here in order to justify the reason for this choice of data collection method and meaning making methodology. Hadfield and Haw (2012:312) refer to ‘the term “video” to describe methods that involve creating some form of video artefact within the research process’ and question ‘what kind of “purpose” video serves in the pursuit of a particular research aim’. Hadfield and Haw (2012) conceptualize “purpose” in terms of different modalities of video use and make explicit the nature of the connection between seeing, representing, and knowing. Their work has led them to identify five modalities of video usage: video as extraction; resource supporting reflection on a phenomenon; projection and provocation; participation; and articulation. Upon first reading these terms I made the assumption that the use of video in this doctoral study could have easily
have fallen into several of these modalities. However in this complex doctoral study the aim of the research is to understand the complexities of creativity manifest as PT and deepen understanding of what it means to be “in a relationship” as part of this phenomena. Micro-analysis of pupil-to-pupil (peer-to-peer), pupil-to-teacher, and pupil-to-researcher interactions within the classroom thus forms a key part of capturing daily life within the setting. The notion of video modality as extraction thus resonates here. Hadfield and Haw (2012:316) use the metaphor of thinking about video in this modality as similar to that used in sports broadcasting, ‘the instant replay format’.

Instant replays are used to examine significant moments within an overall event in greater detail. They extract from a game a key passage of play, a controversial decision by a match official, or an exceptional piece of skill and make it available for comment by presenters and analysts.

Hadfield and Haw (2012:316)

The analytical procedures as set out later on in the thesis detail the use of video. Firstly, the video data from camera one (the fixed camera) was frozen at regular intervals, (every two minutes) in order to socio-grammatically map the children’s movements in the setting; i.e. with whom, or what activity they are working near, or engaged with. This framing ground work not only gave a broad picture of events, but also opened up the possibility to further analyse data sets from camera two (mobile camera). These episodes demonstrated key moments of immersion, PT, and peer interaction and communication for each focus child, across all sessions at later stages of the analysis. The selection of key episodes thus enabled the examination of an event from multiple perspectives in “slow motion” by transcribing verbatim line by line dialogue and action, highlighting and magnifying particular parts through open, axial, and key coding, and therefore dovetails with the modality of extraction as defined by Hadfield and Haw (2012).
The focus sample children also wore the microphone clips in order to clearly capture verbal data (as mentioned previously).

Recording sessions lasted for an average of about one hour each and two to three sessions a day were captured (usually two a.m. and one p.m.). It was found that this amount of data collection was necessary as not all of the children were in on the same days, and some of the children attended nursery in the mornings and some in the afternoons.

3.8.4 Recording the data- diaries, journals, and interviews

The design of the research was carefully thought through as not to cause stress or place undue pressure on either the children or the adults involved, keeping the duplication of work to a minimum by utilising practices already in place (creative practice and explore journals, photography, practitioner response and reflection). Formal interviews were kept to a minimum and took priority only in the initial stages of the project in Phase One.

Earlier on in the thesis the focus children were introduced by way of mini pen portraits taken from an interview with the lead teacher. The same questions were posed for each child offering the reader a comparative report. The questions related to:

- Parting from parent or carer
- Social skills
- Speech and language
- Concentration and focus
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Special interests and use of time

I was kindly given permission to photocopy the children’s explore journals and the accompanying practitioner notes which I used to thread practitioner voice of interpretations, opinions and reflections of the children’s actions and behaviours into each case study.
I kept a daily diary recording details for reflection and reminders as to what was happening in the nursery, and used these notes to stimulate informal conversations with practitioners which were not scheduled and would take during the normal ebb and flow of the day, or were sometimes scheduled in at the end of the school day at the nursery manager’s request. These conversations varied in length and depth and the data collected was again used to thread practitioner voice of interpretations, opinions and reflections of the children’s actions and behaviours into each case study.

By engaging practitioners I aimed to reflect on documentation of experience and practice in accordance with previous PT studies (e.g. Cremin, et al., 2006:111) where ‘the study sought to enrich the thinking and discourse of both the practitioners and the researcher through systematic and reflective documentation’. In this doctoral study key episodes and findings were discussed and reflected upon with the lead teacher and nursery manager who offered their thoughts and feelings as the research progressed.

The data was also reliably validated by myself and the lead teacher and nursery manager, as noted by Cohen, et al. (2007). ‘Descriptive validity: the factual accuracy of the account that it is not made up, selective or distorted’ was achieved along with ‘interpretive validity: the ability of the research to catch the meaning, interpretations, terms, intentions that situations and events have for the participants’ (Cohen, et al., 2007:135). This is discussed further in relation to the analytical procedures associated with elements of the grounded theory approach.
3.9 Grounded Theory

3.9.1 The emergence of grounded theory

Grounded theory as a methodology emerged from a collaboration between sociologists Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss when they studied the dying in hospitals (1965, 1967). Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) seminal work rejected simple linear causality and the de-contextualisation of data, arguing that the world is multivariate and connected. Strauss later went on to work collaboratively with Juliet Corbin developing grounded theory methods, and in 1990 they made a statement noting that ‘the method has evolved in practice; a grounded theory should explain as well as describe’ (Corbin and Strauss, 1990:5).

It is evident throughout the extensive grounded theory literature that both Glaser; and Strauss and Corbin have differing epistemological histories, including their orientations towards research. However what is not so evident in grounded theory is the philosophical stance inferred. Given the lack of explicit discussion this leaves grounded theory open to be epistemologically contested, especially as there are a number of epistemological positions within which the qualitative researcher can work. In this sense it could be argued that Glaser and Strauss created a functional method but they did not furnish it with clear and consistent epistemological foundations (Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg, 2005).

On a pragmatic and practical note grounded theory has protected itself against many critics by establishing detailed systematic data collection procedures; grounding its content analysis in data, yet focusing on theory development. However there are many methodological challenges associated with grounded theory which need to be considered and reconciled such as the apparent range of conflicting opinions and unresolved issues regarding the nature and process of grounded theory which are evident throughout the literature.
For example, grounded theory at its conception was deemed to be associated as part of the positivist inquiry paradigm, a position not adopted for this doctoral study- that which is concerned with establishing objective and reliable methods of investigation. However grounded theorists approach data as constructivist, addressing social processes and meanings inherent in a shared language, composing concepts, and their mutual connections present in human interaction.

Charmaz (2006:10) states ‘in the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as emerging from the data separate from the scientific observer’. Unlike Glaser and Strauss’s position, Charmaz assumes that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, that we are all part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. Charmaz’s (2000-onwards) constructivist slant on grounded theory recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed and aims towards an interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings. Charmaz (2006:xii) states: ‘grounded theory methods foster creating an analytic edge to your work…evidence abounds that these methods can inform compelling description and telling tales’. Complete concurrence cannot be met with Charmaz’s statement here as this doctoral study aims to develop existing theory and is not purely a characterisation or an illustrative story of events. Furthermore Glaser (2002) suggests that grounded theory is about concepts not accurate descriptions; the researcher does not compose the stories, thus insisting that Charmaz has not considered the properties of conceptualization in her offer of constructivist grounded theory.

3.9.2 Reconciling elements of a grounded theory approach

There are clear tensions that exist throughout grounded theory literature which impact on this doctoral study as it utilises several data collection and analytical methods which could be interpreted by some researchers as both objective and subjective. As stated in previous chapters this doctoral study
adopts a stance associated with a relativistic ontology and constructionist epistemology. According to Crotty (1998:43) ‘from the constructionist viewpoint, meaning (or truth) cannot be described simply as ‘objective’; by the same token, it cannot be described simply as ‘subjective’; therefore constructionism is seen as both realist and relativist.

The theoretical perspective stated for this doctoral study is that of symbolic interactionism, reflecting the notion that human beings are social constructions through interactions. The assumption inherent in interactionist perspectives relates to ‘language, communication, interrelationships and community, in and out of which we come to be persons’ (Crotty, 1998:63). This doctoral study aims to offer a full conceptual description of lived phenomena and inherent within is an epistemological assumption that knowledge is constructed and understood through the lens of the living, of being in the world and impacted upon by individual’s own life experiences (Husserl, 1970).

3.9.3 Utilising elements of a grounded theory approach

According to Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) there are three ways to use and conceptualize qualitative methods, these are:

- Epistemological
- Strategic
- Intuitive

Epistemologically the type of knowledge a researcher desires to produce influences the type of data collection and analysis methods used. The strategic use of method is directed by the particular goals of the researcher rather than the epistemological motives. Whereas the intuitive method is adopted by the researcher who appears to be unclear or uncertain about the epistemology and theoretical stance related to the method and its analytical procedures. This is simply not the case with this doctoral study, leaving by elimination only epistemological and strategic motives.
Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg (2005:729) argue that ‘grounded theory is best understood as a method— a set of techniques or procedures designed to produce a certain kind of knowledge that has evolved and continues maturing during the years to come’. This in itself would seem to be an epistemological conceptualisation statement; however Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg acknowledge that due to the erosion of grounded theory one design or plan of action cannot be identified, but rather it appears that there are different strategies to utilise the analytical techniques subsumed under the grounded theory method, moving into a strategic conceptualization. Therefore it falls to each individual researcher, or team of researchers to conceptualize and design their own grounded theory framework as applicable for their study, as long as the specificity of the approach’s procedures has been elaborated in sufficient detail and the methods of data collection and analysis are a complex and multi-stage process which evolves over time.

Table 3.3 on the next page summarises key grounded theory strategies and indicates which of these strategies were utilised/not utilised in this doctoral study and offers a brief accompanying explanation. This doctoral study is therefore underpinned by “elements” of a grounded theory approach and is not to be considered as a full “traditional” grounded theory study for the reasons stated in the table (3.3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounded Theory Strategy</th>
<th>Utilised - ✓</th>
<th>Not Utilised - X</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic data collection and analysis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regular site visits were made over the course of the academic year. Data was collected in a consistent and rigorous format. Data collection and analysis ran at the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding: open, axial, and selective methods</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Detailed transcriptions enabled inductive and deductive coding. Line by line (open), clustering relationships (axial), and emergent themes (selective).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo writing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emergent themes were annotated on memos. Conceptualising components and crystallising meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant comparative method</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>New data was compared to existing data so that similar categories sat together. Triangulation was also achieved by comparing data across case studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory is emergent rather than pre-defined or tested</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>This doctoral study adopts both inductive and deductive methods and therefore does not fit the traditional notion of patterns and theories being implicit in the data waiting to be discovered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Utilised elements of a grounded theory approach

In order to avoid methodological misunderstandings and to clarify this doctoral study’s position on which adopted methods of grounded theory resonate with, and inform the research, an analytical framework has been designed following logical guidelines and a clear rationale for each stage of the data collection and analytical processes as derived from the multitude of literature as appropriate. This follows in Section 3.10 (Data Analysis).
3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Data analysis procedures

Edwards (2001:131) suggests ‘the physical sorting of data needs to start as soon as evidence starts to accumulate’; indeed this was carried out on a regular basis, starting after the first block week visit to the school. According to Edwards (2001:132) ‘qualitative analysis usually involves content analysis, that is a process of combing the evidence; the comb can be quite fine, allowing detailed analysis of the transacted interview text – for example, the type of language used to talk about children, or it can be quite broad and pick up thematic responses’; however in this complex doctoral study several types of analytical methods were used.

The data analysis model followed for this doctoral study consisted of four layers:

- **Layer One:** Framing the context
- **Layer Two:** Inductive modes of inquiry
- **Layer Three:** Deductive modes of inquiry
- **Layer Four:** Constructing theory and modelling

Each of these layers will be described in turn and have a corresponding pictorial diagram. The reader is asked to go to Appendix 1 and pull out the concertina folder to view the diagrams whilst engaging with the written accounts, (e-readers click on icon).

3.10.2 Layer One: Framing the context

Firstly, the video data from camera one (the fixed camera) was frozen at regular intervals, (every two minutes) in order to socio-grammatically map the children’s movements in the setting; i.e. with whom, or what activity they
are working near, or engaged with. Given the focus of the study it was decided that the main art areas to be observed would be the areas where materials and tools were available to the children in the classroom, these areas were: the painting easel, the mark making table, and the art and craft table. By focussing in on these areas alone, I am not suggesting that art and creativity does not happen throughout the classroom and indeed outside, the purpose of focussing in on the defined areas is for continuity purposes only. The areas were chosen to enable equitable access to all children so that the same data could be collected throughout the year, and so that it was possible for me to compare and contrast the data sets for each focus child over time.

This analysis involved all the participants, i.e. the whole class sample, however honed in on the focus sample children’s engagement with the classroom environment. Simple flow movement diagrams were drawn up using Excel by way of a coding system. The codes were as follows (see Table 3.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not present in area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Present in area, but not engaged in activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Engaged in activity alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Engaged in activity with peer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Code classification, flow of classroom movements- this doctoral study

Written notes were also made to complement the diagrams, highlighting and elaborating interesting episodes that occurred throughout the video observations, at times these involved both verbal (dialogue) and non-verbal (action data). The written notes meant that the diagrams did not stand alone (out of context within the research) and ensured later reflections, and cross data set analysis.
The peaks and troughs of the diagrams were also noted over the course of the sessions, observing the time each of the focus children spent in the designated areas, how they utilized their time there and with whom they interacted with. At the end of every three week period, or data collection phase a simple pie chart was made reflecting the collation of the above data for each of the focus children, this allowed for a cross comparison of individual cases.

This framing ground work not only gave a broad picture of events, but also opened up the possibility to further analyse data sets from episodes which demonstrated key moments of immersion, PT, and peer interaction and communication for each focus child, across all sessions at later stages of the analysis.

3.10.3 Layer Two: Inductive modes of inquiry

The inductive analysis adopted here, was undertaken over time as the project unfolded, and formed the foundations of a grounded theory approach as discussed earlier in the methodology.

According to Denscombe (2007:90) 'concepts and theories are developed out of the data through a persistent process of comparing the ideas with existing data, and improving the emergent concepts and theories by checking them against new data collected specifically for the purpose'. This means that a data trail affords researchers the opportunity to be able to trace and follow how the analysis is evolving as each phase of analysis reflects on what has been so far discovered, with new angles and avenues of enquiry emerging for further exploration. In this sense it is wise to first approach the analysis without a rigid set of ideas that will shape the focus during the investigation. Glaser and Strauss (1967) expand this notion:
To be sure, one goes out and studies an area with a particular perspective, and with a focus, a general question or a problem in mind, but the researcher can (and we believe should) also study an area without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, ‘relevancies’ in concepts and hypothesis.

Glaser and Strauss (1967:33)

This type of “bracketing” is difficult to achieve in reality when one has been working with an existing theory or concept for some years. However in this doctoral study, particular attention to “starting from scratch” was necessary in order to allow the findings to grow over time.

To start the inductive layer of analysis (layer two) I first revisited the data sets from layer one of the analysis (the fixed camera data) in order to search for and identify appropriate episodes to analyse in a more detailed way. In previous PT research, Chappell, et al. (2008:271) defined and identified an episode ‘as a video section in which a child or children were immersed in sustained focussed playful activity, where the activity was discrete and where children’s thinking was evident’. In this doctoral study the identification and selection of key episodes followed the same criteria as Chappell, et al. (2008) as above, however in addition I chose to impose another set of criteria- that episodes were selected from the close up hand held video data when there was an attempt at collaboration, or when collaboration was successful. If there were no episodes available in any particular week where the focus children attempted or engaged in collaborative creativity either with a peer, or adult, then I looked for episodes where the children were working alongside each other to look for evidence as to why collaboration was absent. Then finally I searched for any unusual behaviours and actions which had the potential to offer fresh insights into the children’s individual ways of working in the classroom.

Following selection of an episode, detailed data transcriptions of creative behaviours in action and narrative discourses between peer-to-peer, and
child-to-teacher or early years practitioner, and child-to-researcher dialogue, micro event analysis produced a set of inductive emergent codes for each episode. The process of inductive analysis is described here in more detail: Ezzy (2002:94) states: ‘coding is the process of disassembling and reassembling the data’. In grounded theory there are three types of coding, open, axial, and selective. To start with the codes are likely to be descriptive and involve labelling chunks of data in terms of its content; this stage is known as open, or initial line by line coding; a strategy adopted in this doctoral study. According to Denscombe (2007:98) ‘in grounded theory the codes are open to change and refinement as the research progresses’. Each transcript was set out in a word document in a single running column along with three additional columns (one for each research question-emergent creativity, the nurturing role of others, and identity). The separation of the data into these columns enabled me to identify which research area the different inductive codes were associated with.

As the inductive codes took shape and became refined, I started to look for relationships, links and associations between them, this enabled me to determine which codes were more crucial than others, sometimes making hierarchical links and groupings (axial, then key coding, and then collapsing into categories). Eventually I was in a position to focus attention on just the key codes and core variables, this is known as selective coding: the ones that have emerged from open and axial coding as being vital to any explanation of the complex social phenomenon, (Denscombe, 2007:98). Due to the vast amount of inductive codes per episode at times I found the process of axial coding was more manageable by manually printing the word document, and cutting each of the codes into separate pieces of paper, then re-arranging them into key codes, before finally re-inputting them back into word as defined categories.

In addition to the data from the video recorded episodes, the photographic evidence was also coded and matched to the other data sets (recorded learning episodes, interview transcripts, field notes, and other observational and journal entries) and the children’s creative journals along with
practitioner evidence. The data from these additional data sets was also subjected to open, axial, key, and selective analysis in order to provide a coherent and consistent picture of the child’s developing identity as an artist communicator over time.

To complete this layer, the writing of memos after each episode of analysis was carried out in order to conceptualise the components of the core variables associated with each of the distinctive key codes and categories that emerged. As Charmaz (2006) notes certain codes crystallise meanings and actions in the data. Moreover the use of memo writing at each stage of the analytical process permitted the exploration of ideas surrounding the development of the evolving theory through the constant comparative method associated with the latter stages of analysis in layer four: constructing theory.

3.10.4 Layer Three: Deductive modes of inquiry

Following the inductive analysis I also adopted a deductive approach, looking for direct evidence of PT, at the time of analysis this was (Burnard, et al., 2006; Cremin, et al., 2006; Chappell, et al., 2008; Craft, et al., 2012,b), however in the discussion I later refer the findings to Cremin, et al. 2013. At the point the data analysis was carried out the 2013 Cremin, et al. paper was not yet published therefore the deductive analysis did not include this framework, although it is acknowledged in the literature review and subsequent discussion, I did not engage with it prior to the analysis taking place as it was not yet in existence.

Burnard, et al. 2006; and Cremin, et al. 2006 provided the main theoretical frameworks for searching for evidence of the key features of PT: posing questions, play, immersion, innovation, risk taking, being imaginative, self determination, and intentionality. In accordance with previous PT studies the adoption of theoretical frameworks were used as a point of reference for the deductive analysis in particular relation to categorising in which identifying
feature of PT the episodes were taking place by relating, comparing, and contrasting them accordingly, and placing them within the following frameworks showing question-posing and responding, (Chappell, et al., 2008), Figure 3.1; and individual, collaborative, and communal creativity, (Craft, et al., 2012a), Figure 3.2 as displayed on the next page.

With regard to the nurturing role of others (Cremin, et al., 2006; and Craft, et al., 2012b) were the key texts used to inform the deductive analysis seeking direct evidence to contextualise the emotionally enabling context, and characterise the pedagogical stances of standing back and stepping forward to “meddle in the middle”.

![Figure 3.1: Focus of analysis Chappell, et al. (2008:270)](image-url)
3.10.5 Layer Four: Constructing theory and modelling

Layers one through to three concentrate on gathering evidence to answer the three research questions:

- **RQ1:** How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?
- **RQ2:** How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?
- **RQ3:** How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?

After the evidence gathering process was complete layer four was concerned with subjecting all of the data sets to regular analysis, in line with emergent grounded theory, noting any changes over time in order to
produce a theoretical model. Models were constructed through the processes of: constant comparative method, theoretical sampling, theoretical memo writing, and saturation—all are described here in more detail.

3.10.6 Constant comparative method

According to Cohen, et al. (2007:493) ‘the application of open, axial, and selective coding adopts the method of constant comparison’; this links directly to layer two of the analysis (inductive modes of inquiry). In constant comparison the researcher compares the new data with the existing data and categories, so that the categories achieve a perfect fit with the data. It is furthermore suggested that data are compared across a range of situations, times, groups of people, and through a range of methods—this process resonates with that of triangulation (Cohen, et al., 2007), and is achieved in this doctoral study by way of using different methods of data collection and cross case analysis. Corbin and Strauss (1990:9) suggest ‘as an incident is noted, it should be compared against other incidents for similarities and differences, the resulting concepts are labelled as such, and over time, they are compared and grouped’. Making comparisons assists the researcher in guarding against bias, for she or he is then challenging concepts with fresh data. When using a constant comparative method the properties and categories across the data are compared continuously until no more variation occurs; therefore saturation is reached (Glaser, 1996). However until the point of saturation is achieved, the researcher must be sure to obtain the best possible data to evolve the theory by way of selecting the next data to analyse—otherwise known as theoretical sampling.

3.10.7 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses data, and decides what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop the theory as it emerges. To some extent this process of data collection is
controlled by the emerging theory, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:45). Glaser and Strauss (1967) write that the basic criterion governing the selection of comparison groups for discovering theory has theoretical relevance for furthering the development of emerging categories, and therefore in this doctoral study the identification and selection of appropriate data episodes for analysis is justified according to the nature of theoretical sampling.

3.10.8 Theoretical memo writing

As previously noted in layer two: inductive modes of inquiry; the importance of memo writing was stressed as an integral part of grounded theory as it left the residue of an analytical audit trail. When constructing theory, Corbin and Strauss (1990:10) also recommend the use of theoretical memo writing ‘since the analyst cannot readily keep track of all the categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolve from the analytical process, there must be a system for doing so’. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990) theoretical memos provide a firm base for reporting on the research and its implications, if a researcher omits the memoing and moves directly from coding to writing, a great deal of conceptual detail is lost or left undeveloped and a less well elaborated, and satisfying integration of the analysis will result.

3.10.9 Saturation

When using a grounded theory approach it is rather difficult to specify timing and plan the end of the analytical process in advance as grounded theory analysts would be expected to continue validating and developing codes, categories and concepts through constant comparisons, theoretical sampling, and memo writing, until reaching the point of theoretical saturation: when additional analysis no longer contributes to discovering anything new (Strauss, 1987). However as the study is bound by the time constraints of a PhD programme, careful consideration was made allowing enough time to spend in the field collating data and subjecting it to regular analysis in order to directly answer the research questions posed, in this
sense, the point of saturation was when the last stage of data collection and subsequent analysis was completed (July 2011). At the point of saturation Denscombe (2008:100) advises ‘additional field research will tend to confirm the concepts, codes and categories that have been developed to date-serving only to confirm and verify the theory’ in this sense further research adds nothing new to the researcher’s understanding of the phenomena under study. Therefore at the point of saturation a state of validity is achievable by way of returning to the field in order to confirm and verify the data and findings before completing the final theory construction.

3.10.10 Final theory construction

Grounded theory has been in the past associated with positivist research, mainly through its lack of epistemological heritage, however where grounded theory parts company with much positivist research is in its view of theory; in positivist research the theory pre-exists its testing and the researcher deduces from the data whether the theory is robust and can be confirmed. According to Devers and Morton-Robinson (2002:243) ‘grounded theory is neither verificationist nor falsificationist in the traditional positivistic sense, the researcher does not set out to prove or dis-prove a preconceived hypothesis or notion’. Therefore careful consideration was taken when reconciling the deductive elements of the study particularly that of utilising existing PT frameworks in the latter stages of analysis after the inductive aspects had been carried out. In line with previous PT research this is deemed as an acceptable practice to engage in, in order to build on previous work and is also supported by Paechter (2000:35) who advocates ‘frameworks are used to inform the analysis, rather than to provide hypothesis to be tested’.

PT as a conceptual theory has been evolving over a number of years and this research makes a valid contribution to this field of enquiry, not by testing the existing theory, but by increasing knowledge and understanding of how young children manifest creative thinking and artistic behaviours in the nursery classroom. According to Backman and Kyngas (1999:148) ‘in the
scientific sense a model may be used to define or describe something and
to specify relationships and processes, while a theory is a systematically
related set of statements, including law-like generations, which [are] empirically testable’. Indeed Glaser and Straus (1967:102) note: ‘the
purpose of the constant comparative method of joint coding and analysis is
to generate theory; that theory is not intended to ascertain universality or the
proof of suggested causes, since no proof is involved’.

In this doctoral study I have chosen to represent my grounded theory
processes as a model, constructed over time (see Appendix 1). Reflecting
on the many stages of analysis involved in the study that resonate with what
Banks (2007:74) refers to as an iterative process which lies at the heart of
grounded theory ‘where data are gathered in stages, analysed, and used to
assess the initial hypothesis or research question, in a spiralling process
until a point is reached where further data add no further insight’. This is
illustrated in the final analysis diagram (Appendix 1.5) depicting the course
of the research as a vortex- a spiralling funnel, starting off small, building
layer after layer of data analysis, and evolving in size until its conceptual
completeness. As the reader will be aware the vortex diagram demonstrates
the analytical cycles over 7 phases. As previously mentioned in the
introduction it was my intention to collect 7 phases of data for inclusion in
this thesis (nursery, reception, and year one); however it soon became
apparent to myself and both PhD supervisors that there was enormous
scope to the study which could not be accommodated in one thesis alone.
Thus it was decided between all parties that for the purpose of the thesis the
focus would be on the nursery year alone (see Figure 3.3) which
demonstrates the bottom up approach staring with data layers in Phase 1
working upwards through to Phase 3. The remaining data will be archived
for post-doctoral work (see evolving spiral Appendix 1.5).
3.10.11 Internal validity: Member checking

Part of the final stages of this doctoral study’s theory construction is founded on validity. Corbin and Strauss (1990:11) advise: ‘as hypotheses about relationships among categories are developed they should be taken back to the field for checking out and revision as needed’. Devers and Robinson (2002) reflect on the work by Sandelowski (1986) whom commented:

“A qualitative study is credible when it presents such faithful descriptions or interpretations of a human experience that the people having the experience would immediately recognise it from those descriptions of their own.”

It was in this spirit that Devers during the course of her research shared the unfolding results of her analysis with several committed participants so they could give her feedback on the credibility of the findings. Moreover after the study was completed she asked additional individuals (non-participants) to give feedback regarding the congruence of the study results with their own experiences. Devers said that “when these individuals said these accounts were comparable with their own [experiences], they let the researcher know..."
that the results were credible”. In this doctoral study I sought reflections and professional guidance on the memos feeding into the developing theories from the Nursery Manager and Early Years Co-ordinators at the school who had close relationships with the children and thus achieved internal validity.

### 3.10.12 External validity: Peer checking

The reason for external validity in this doctoral study is the same as previously mentioned in internal validity- it is not to test the theory, but rather to ascertain the robustness of the research and the applicability of the theory across contexts by way of peer checking. ‘In peer checking, a professional colleague, skilled in data analysis, reviews the data and assesses the appropriateness and adequacy of the analysis’ (Devers and Robinson, 2002:250). In this doctoral study both PhD supervisors rigorously examined the data analysis- this was achieved in several ways.

Memo writing played a part here as through writing personal memos I could demonstrate an account of introspective processes. This is furthermore compounded by Devers and Robinson (2002:251) who advise that ‘confirmability and consistency can both be shown by detailed memos, allowing the reader access to the researcher’s thought process, concerns, and insights’.

Since the main body of analysis was completed I have engaged diverse audiences presenting some of the key findings of this doctoral study at academic conferences, welcoming professional critique and feedback. In September of 2012 the first wave of findings from this PhD was presented at Tate Modern in London as part of a panel discussion- Realising Potential: New practice with younger children, communicating artistic possibilities; collaborative creativity between nursery school children (McConnon, 2012). The conference aimed to draw together international artists, performers, gallery and museum educators, teachers, and thinkers to provoke powerful discussion about the past, present, and future of arts in learning environments to ask what is at stake for children’s cultural lives. More
recently in June of 2013 I shared the second wave of my PhD findings with other doctoral candidates and academic staff at The 6th Annual Doctoral Research Conference: Chaos, Creativity, and Connections in Social Science Research, at the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex. The title was: The day the spider went to the seaside: Communicating artistic possibilities in the early years of education; a case for meddling in the middle? (McConnon, 2013). Both papers were well received by audiences and subsequent discussions with teachers and gallery educators confirmed the findings resonated with their own experiences in practice.

3.11 Summary of Research Process

Table 3.5 (on the following page) details a summary of the research process in consecutive order from start to finish so that the reader can access a concise report of the flow of the design from conception and participant selection, through data collection and analysis, to theory construction and validation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of research process</th>
<th>Action and outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Foundational work** | Site selection.  
Access to the sample negotiated.  
Ethical clearance agreed. |
| **2. Familiarisation period** | **August-to-September**  
Staff introductions and home visits.  
Information letter and ethical consent forms distributed (whole class, 35 participants).  
Rapport building.  
Focus sample selected and invited (10 participants). |
| **3. Pilot Phase 1 data collection** | **September-to-December**  
Fixed video camera; mobile hand held camera; microphone clips; still photographs; explore journals copied; practitioner interviews; researcher diary.  
Review of data collection tools.  
First stage preliminary analysis trialled (1 episode).  
Initial findings established (1 episode).  
Microphone data excluded from analysis.  
Focus sample narrowed (3 participants). |
| **4. Phase 2 data collection** | **January-to-March**  
3 weeks, Monday to Friday spread equally throughout the term- 15 full days in total. Methods as Phase 1. |
| **5. Phase 3 data collection** | **May-to-July**  
3 weeks, Monday to Friday spread equally throughout the term- 15 full days in total. Methods as Phase 1. |
| **6. Data sorting and episode selection** | Social mapping of classroom movements.  
Episodes identified by searching for sections of video containing sustained focussed playful activity, attempted collaboration or children working alongside each other, and unusual behaviours or actions (1 key episode per week chosen for each focus child- 27 in total).  
Photographs numbered and labelled (themes). |
| **7. Transcription** | Behaviours in action and narrative discourses between children, and adults and children annotated from video files (27 episodes).  
Interviews transcribed, explore journals copied. |
| **8. Inductive analysis**  
**All Phases** | Line by line open coding (descriptive labelling).  
Axial coding (clustering relationships, links, and associations).  
Selective coding (exploring key codes and variables).  
Memoing. |
| **9. Deductive analysis**  
**All Phases** | Seeking direct evidence of PT.  
Cross-case analysis. |
| **10. Constructing theory and modelling** | End of Phase analysis exploring change over time.  
Constant comparisons made.  
Theoretical construction.  
Visual models. |
| **11. Internal validity** | Member checking. |
| **12. External validity** | Peer checking. |

**Table 3.5: Summary of research process**
3.12 Additional Points for Consideration

3.12.1 Reliability, validity, and generalizability

In order to address the strengths and limitations of the research design it is necessary to further consider the notion of reliability, validity, and generalizability. According to Burton, Brundrett, and Jones (2008:168) ‘in traditional research validity, reliability, and generalizability constitute the essential quality criteria’; however note ‘the latter of the two are difficult, if not impossible to fulfil by qualitative researchers undertaking small scale investigations’. This could however relate to the historical underpinning of the afore mentioned criteria, which have evolved directly from scientific research paradigms, therefore their applicability to this doctoral study is questioned as this type of criteria are incompatible with the basic philosophical assumptions of interpretivism. Scott and Usher (1999:150) quote Guba and Lincoln’s (1985) criteria, thought to be more appropriate for naturalistic enquiry: ‘credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability’; however Scott and Usher argue that these criterion ‘implicitly assume the same foundational principles of the criteria they were developed to replace’ and are therefore associated with positivism, which this doctoral study is not.

According to Hughes (2001:36) ‘for interpretivists, knowledge is valid if it is authentic, that is, it is the true voice of the participants’. In this doctoral study concepts of truth, coherence, and consistency are thus prevailed upon to demonstrate the authenticity of the participant’s and the researcher’s responses. Denscombe (2007:136/137) suggests ‘reliability and validity of findings can be checked by using different sources of information’ or ‘methodological triangulation; to enhance confidence’, enabling contrasting information to be compared, integrated and synthesised. This was achieved in this doctoral study as the research design not only encompassed more than one method of data collection; transcripts, findings, and memos were cross checked with teachers, and two members of my doctoral supervisory
team also had sight of DVD video clips, written transcripts, coding samples, findings, and memos - all increasing reliability and validity.

Co-constructions of knowledge are also proposed to increase reliability; however I acknowledge that the chosen methodology of ethnography did not automatically foster co-participatory research. To combat this it was hoped that by including many “voices” in the data reliability and validity were enhanced by the adoption of a reflexive stance encompassing multiple perspectives. Reflexivity was noted in the work of Epstein (1998) and Thorne (1993) concerning the researcher’s role in the classroom and playground when trying to integrate with the children in order to learn from them and try to consider experiences from their point of view. In their ethnographical writing both Epstein and Thorne give examples of a process of untangling their responses due to the many selves involved in a researcher’s identity such as being an adult female, a mother, and a teacher. Indeed this was found to be the case in this doctoral study; whilst on site multiple identity roles surfaced - that of researcher, academic advisor, play partner, friend, and female parent figure. My experiences, assumptions, and biases are explicated in the following section, however Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford (2001) suggest this be viewed as a strength of the research:

In ethnography we attempt to collect multiple representations, to show different definitions, and to present our research in a manner that is open to multiple interpretations. In so far as we are successful in this, reliability becomes more of a concern of the reader than the researcher.

Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford (2001:203)

It is anticipated that by providing a clear and explicit account of the research process in this doctoral study the reader should be able to follow my footsteps and access and engage with explanations and rationales at every stage of the process, further increasing reliability and validity.
The use of descriptive and interpretative validity is advocated by Cohen, et al. (2007:135): ‘descriptive validity: the factual accuracy of the account that it is not made up, selective or distorted’ and ‘interpretive validity: the ability of the research to catch the meaning, interpretations, terms, intentions that situations and events have for the participants’. However Cohen, et al. (2007:26) suggest ‘there is a risk in interpretive approaches that they become hermetically sealed from the world outside the participants’ theatre of activity’, which suggests that the data does not represent the wider population; it simply represents itself. This statement implies that ‘interpretivist knowledge is always “local” and specific to a particular research project conducted in particular circumstances with particular participants’ (Hughes, 2001:36). However whilst the data of this doctoral study is not intended for generalisation, I draw upon the literature to support findings and thus make theoretical inferences, and furthermore use the constant comparative method associated with grounded theory procedures to identify, develop, and relate concepts; the outcomes of which it is hoped that other researchers and early years practitioners will be able to notice similarities and explore possible transferability in their own contexts.

3.12.2 Statement of researcher's experiences, assumptions, and biases

In the introduction I made a statement of my own value stance in relation to this doctoral study. As a self-taught artist I am interested in communication through art in schools in order to investigate the potential for communicative, creative curricula. I have a belief that you can be an artist in your own right at any age- whatever your skill level and state that from my perspective art is not about the product, but rather the process of doing and thinking in action, and the narratives imbedded within the final outcome.

As a positive person I like to make sense of things through a process of unravelling and reconstructing through which I tend to take things apart and put them back together again in order to understand the past and move forward with practical, logical solutions. Evidence of such processes can be
seen in both my research work using grounded theory, and the symbolic threads that run throughout my art profile which documents aspects of deconstructing, shifting boundaries, and journey.

One particular aspect of my training and practical experience which highlights a perspective bias is that I am not a qualified teacher; I am in fact a trained playworker and have a philosophical belief in education for innovation. Moreover and most importantly I advocate children’s rights (UNCRC, 1989) and do not tolerate attitudes which undervalue children because of their perceived competencies in relation to gender, social class, cultural background or because they have additional needs. This doctoral study is embedded in children’s participatory rights and fosters a “can do” attitude which views educational experiences and practices through the eyes of a child.

### 3.13 Summary

Chapter 1 demonstrated a gap in the literature in understanding how PT manifests and changes over time. To date no other researcher has risen to the challenge of documenting PT longitudinally. This doctoral study has been designed to fill the identified gap in knowledge. The methodology has been explicated to answer the three RQs longitudinally over time. Section 3.7.2 detailed the amount of time I spent on site collecting data for week blocks (Monday through to Friday) for two full weeks in each half term. This roughly equated to time being spent on location every three weeks of the school calendar. Three weeks of data collection was then chunked into the Phases.

- Phase 1: September- December
- Phase 2: January- March
- Phase 3: May- July
Appendix 1 (Layer 5) shows the complete evolving spiral of data collection carried out for a further 4 Phases (Phase 4 to 7) covering the children’s time in their reception year and their induction into year one (September to November). It is unfortunate that the scope of this thesis is not large enough to accommodate the full 7 Phases and thus a strategic decision was made to focus solely on the nursery Year (Phases 1 to 3). However one full year working with and studying the same cohort of children still makes a landmark contribution to the field of PT research as to date this has not been achieved by any other researcher. Furthermore the “extra data” collected has been archived for post-doctoral work and thus “Communicating Possibilities” will continue with this longitudinal investigation to answer the three research questions:

RQ1: How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?

RQ2: How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?

RQ3: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?

The findings to these research questions are presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6- one chapter for each research question.
CHAPTER FOUR
Findings RQ1: Emergent PT

4.1 Introduction

Findings from Research Question 1: (How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context) are presented in two sections. The first section documents what was found to be “the core of PT” framed as the processes and actions which were inherent throughout all episodes, these features were found to be occurring every time the children engaged in art making. There were 4 main characteristics identified, these were: playful acted out explorations; fluxing drivers; self-determined sensorial infusion; and immersive action intention flow. Each of these characteristics is explained.

The second section closely details PT features in action revealed in this doctoral study which were found in addition to those discovered in the core of PT. There were 8 main categories identified, these were: aesthetic acumen and acuity; question-responding; elucidation; innovative imaginative declaration; risk taking; augmented accuracy; critiquing; and problem ownership. These features reinforced all PT characteristics as found in previous published studies, and in addition revealed some new insights which varied in strength and depth for each focus child. I provide an analysis of these findings, and consider differences where notable.

The findings in this chapter are drawn from analysis which focussed on video data (action and narrative transcripts) and accompanying notes and researcher reflections, and was supported by photographs and practitioner reflections. The method of analysis focussed on Layer Two: Inductive modes of inquiry (Appendix 1) which encompassed line by line, axial, and selective coding achieved through memos as exampled in Appendices: 4, 5, and 6. And Layer Three: Deductive modes of inquiry (Appendix 1) which sought direct evidence of PT features in action (exampled in Appendices: 5,
Once these processes were complete and saturation was achieved, modelling took place (Layer Four: Constructing theory and modelling, Appendix 1). Full and detailed explanation of these processes was documented in the methodology- Chapter Three.

The reader is offered an account of the findings by way of presented definitions, detailed categories and explanations, and vignettes intended to offer insights into the categories. The reader is informed of the data sources cited throughout the chapter. Tables are used to summarise findings, and visual models are presented demonstrating the complex construction of ideas.

4.2 Section 1: The Core of PT

This section reports the findings associated with what was found to be “the core of PT”. The characteristics of the core were found to be at the centre of art making episodes evidenced and documented in this doctoral study. The core fuelled young children’s emergent creativity and laid the foundations supporting further PT features. There were 4 main characteristics identified, these were: playful acted out explorations; fluxing drivers; self-determined sensorial infusion; and immersive action intention flow. Fluxing drivers was found to encompass process and outcome categories, each with 3 sub-categories. Process was manifest as either: unconscious, functional, or therapeutic, and outcome was manifest as either: conscious, goal orientated, or design driven. Self-determined sensorial infusion was found to have 3 categories: independence, looking for own stimulus, and gathering information through the senses. Looking for own stimulus encompassed 3 question-posing framing categories- leading, service, and follow through; and gathering information through the senses was found to have 4 sub-categories visual, textural, audial, and movement. Each of the main characteristics, categories, and sub-categories are detailed in the following sections, and to aid the reader through this process I firstly introduce the visual model of “the core of PT”.

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4.2.1 Visual model: The core of PT

A visual representation of the core of PT is shown below in Figure 4.1. The diagram shows that in this doctoral study young children’s PT was framed by playful acted out explorations which fostered the drivers of the activity, either by process or outcome, or indeed as in most cases this was found manifest as fluxing between both process and outcome. The drivers are shown as cogs at the top of the diagram and the arrows show the movement between the two cogs which drive down into fuelling question-posing which stimulated self-determined sensorial infusion shown as funnelling down and leading to immersive action intention flow which supported a range of other PT behaviours in action which will be presented in Section 2 where I will link again with this model.

Figure 4.1: Core of PT - this doctoral study
4.2.2 Playful acted out explorations

Inherent throughout this art making study was combinatory playfulness where children not only improvised and pretended, but also turned understanding into action- relating, connecting, and communicating their thinking through what could be described as a theatrical display- where children actively performed their lived experiences through playful acted out explorations. In this doctoral study children’s playful ways of being in the early years classroom were captured at the art and craft table, the mark making table, and the painting easel. The types of activities where exploratory, combinatory play was evidenced included: drawing, painting, making collages, cutting materials, folding paper, designing games and stories, junk modelling, construction work, and sensory investigation. All of these activities were documented daily on video film.

4.2.3 Fluxing drivers: Process as well as outcome

Throughout all art making episodes the children were driven by both process and outcome; sometimes it was clear that process was the driver, and sometimes the children were clearly driven by outcome. These “drivers” were often not static and during episodes the children’s activities were evidenced as fluxing between both process and outcome driving forces.

An example of which is noted here with Hot Wheels (HW) at the mark making table, the extract is taken from my reflective diary:

At the beginning of this episode Hot Wheels can be seen making what appears to be random marks on his paper- he turns around to look at what is going on behind him in the nursery and yet still carries on drawing without looking at his artwork; this appears to be an unconscious act where the functional process of moving the pencil on the paper has taken over. When HW turns back- now looking at his paper he continues by making small, up and
down vertical marks and then draws a horizontal line straight across the page, this seems much more focussed, determined, and conscious. In the latter stages of this episode HW confirms his goal orientated outcome by declaring the design of his picture is “a car” which he takes home as a gift for his dad.

Process and Outcome drivers are explained below in more detail.

4.2.4 Process: Unconscious, functional, therapeutic

A key aspect of PT was process which involved three elements: unconscious, functional, and therapeutic.

4.2.4.1 Unconscious

Unconscious processes were evident when the children acted in care free ways, for example when they were not paying attention, or seemed unaware of the impact of their actions. All of the children at different times appeared to be driven by a schematic need, often repeating patterns of behaviours which were documented as drawing the same shapes repeatedly, or doing the same things over and over again, such as encapsulating or transporting materials (Athey, 2008). Schematic behaviours were particularly evident for Box Boy who adopted a predominantly exploratory role; most of the time his activities centred on stirring and pouring water; collecting materials, wrapping, enclosing, cutting, folding, piling, rolling, and transporting paper. Rosie went through a phase of drawing people (mainly faces) over and over again in episodes, and Hot Wheels was fond of drawing in a back and forth motion.
4.2.4.2 Functional

The term functional is used to define moments where the children were engaged in art making activities where they appeared to be “going through the motions”, or rushing the activity. Hot Wheels was often found to engage in this type of behaviour, his art making episodes were often short in nature, between 3 to 5 minutes long, and he liked to take part in activities which had a pre-prescribed outcome (as set by adults) which he could follow with quick results. Every day Hot Wheels needed to make something, he liked to use art as a link to home, using his piece as a gift to give to his dad at home time.

4.2.4.3 Therapeutic

Sometimes children adopted a therapeutic stance during art making, they expressed pleasure in their processes by doing in action and explored their feelings in a variety of ways, including releasing energy through vibrant movements and spirited vocalised sounds and noises. Children also engaged in what could be described as meditative processes, for example they appeared to enjoy the feeling of covering their hands, fingers, and arms in paint, and would spend time to explore the look and sensations this gave them. Children also liked to spend long amounts of time focussed on repeating things they found enjoyable, such as cutting paper or straws into tiny pieces which gave them mastery and control. To clarify, the children’s adopted therapeutic stance in this doctoral study was not manifest to talk about painful experiences such as one would align with counselling or psychotherapy.

For the vast majority of episodes Rosie was outcome driven, having clear intentions and internalised goals, but on rare occasions she also engaged in playful process driven activities as can be seen here in an episode with Lee (a boy in her nursery class) as documented in my reflective diary:
At the art easel Rosie was painting in her usual rule driven style with brushes making careful marks, but was constantly interrupted by Lee who wanted to play with her, she was heard saying things like “he ruining my painting” before giving in to his playfulness, which concluded with both children vigorously using painting rollers across the large piece of paper, laughing as they enjoyed painting their hands and arms with bright pink paint which they smoothed and smeared over themselves and the paper. When the children were asked about their ideas Lee looked at the painting and said “I dunno”, and Rosie who usually explains her art in considerable detail was unable to articulate any meaning which in this case suggested that the children were immersed in their processes driving the activity rather than any outcome force.

4.2.5 Outcome: Conscious, goal-orientated, design

The other key aspect of PT was outcome which involved three elements: conscious, goal-orientated, and design.

4.2.5.1 Conscious

Unlike unconscious process drivers, conscious outcome drivers involved children making active engagement decisions, such as expressing a desire to take part in purposeful art making activities where they knew how to express their thinking- both physically and verbally. There seemed to be an element of importance particularly surrounding activities where there was a prescribed outcome that the children were aiming for, and responsibilities were expressed as the cultural expectations of the setting were acknowledged. This was particularly well suited to Hot Wheels who liked to be the learner in most situations, he was reliant on others (both adults and peers) to provide tools and materials for him and often mirrored the actions and language of others (mainly peers).
4.2.5.2 Goal-Orientated

During goal-orientated episodes children acted with confidence, and were seen knowing what to aim for, and knowing what they wanted, and how to get what they wanted. They also knew when their desired goal was reached by either moving their thinking forward or terminating their activity. Box Boy was a strong candidate for goal-oriented activity; he often set up activities not only for himself, but for his peers, saying things like “I'm putting these out for the children.” He knew where materials and tools were kept and how to access them, even if they were not out he would persist in asking the teachers until they got them for him to use.

4.2.5.3 Design

Children also acted in ways which demonstrated that they knew what they were making, and knew how to make it. They also knew what their designs should look like by having an internalised aesthetic vision that they were working towards, this was evident when they were perfecting their work and making their designs for a purpose, i.e. they knew what they were going to use them for: a play prop, or narrative tool.

Rosie is described as a confident artist who communicated her ideas with ease; she often made art about the environment, nature, and people, and designed art in order to document her social experiences such as celebrations, and events happening in the classroom concerning the morals of others. Excellent examples of Rosie’s conscious design work can be seen throughout the vignettes in Section 2, but are particularly evident in the category: Innovative Imaginative Declaration.
4.2.6 Self-determined sensorial infusion: Independence, looking for own stimulus, and gathering information through the senses

Synonymous with the already identified core features, self-determined sensorial infusion was evident throughout this doctoral study manifest as independence, looking for own stimulus (including question-posing), and gathering information through the senses, these characteristics of young children’s PT were evident each time children engaged in art making episodes.

4.2.6.1 Independence, looking for own stimulus

Children exercised their independence, making their own self-directed choices and decisions with impetus. Children looked for their own stimuli, posing direct possibility questions such as “what is this?” and “what can I (or we) do with this?”, and indirect or discreet questions which were imbedded in leading, service, and follow through question-posing behaviours known as question framing of which examples are given below in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questioning Framing</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>Box Boy: how can I make a shaker from these tubes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Box Boy: how can I make the right sound?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through</td>
<td>Box Boy: how can I neaten up the finished look?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Question framing examples- this doctoral study
4.2.6.2 Gathering information through the senses

Children posed questions verbally and non-verbally through enacted expression and were seen to be gathering information through all the senses: visual, textural, audial, and movement as evidenced in these short video data examples:

4.2.6.2.1 Visual- Hot Wheels finds a picture of an earwig in a nature book and his leading question manifests as how to make a visual representation of the earwig using modelling materials.

4.2.6.2.2 Textural- Box Boy searches through the junk modelling “bin” he takes a piece of cotton wool and pulls a bit of it off it, it sticks to his hand and he tries to shake it off. BB replaces the wool in the basket and continues looking through the items, he finds something plastic and says “what’s this?” Moving to the natural materials he takes a stone in his right hand and rubs it with his finger.

4.2.6.2.3 Audial- Box Boy declares he is “making a shaker” by depositing different materials into tubes, he shakes the tubes listening, and then adds more pieces to them from the shape store…he removes the feathers after discovering that they do not make a sound, replacing them instead with plastic buttons.

4.2.6.2.4 Movement- Rosie paints a colour block using large/gross body movements; her dynamic brush stokes take the motion of her painting to the top of the colour block and upwards in circular motions to the top of the page, she does this higher and higher until she can no longer reach the top of the paper, each time she does a circle she fills it in with colour before moving to the next motion.
4.2.7 Immersive action intention flow

It has already been noted that during this doctoral study children appeared to be “lost in processes and outcomes” which were driven by six elements: unconscious, functional, and therapeutic; and conscious, goal-orientated, and design. Absorbed in their actions, children appeared deep in concentration, and at times were acting with a clear purpose or goal demonstrating their intentionality, knowing what they wanted to do and when they were doing it, making active decisions which resulted in an uninterrupted constant flow of thought in action through behaviour and movement where children’s involvement was demonstrated by following through on their ideas with focussed control.

In this example taken from a video episode transcript Box Boy is working alongside Brenda at the mark making table, Box Boy has in his possession a small box (one of his fascinations) that the teacher gave him at carpet time; the box contained some butterflies that were delivered to the nursery, but Box Boy was not interested in the butterflies- only the box.

Box Boy lifts up the paper that Brenda is working on and takes a sheet from underneath hers, she says “look Box Boy I made a B and N.” BB just stares at Brenda and she puts her hand to her mouth. BB starts to fold his paper and Brenda reaches over to grab the box, she gets her hand on it, but BB takes it back over to his side of the table without saying anything. BB folds his paper into an aeroplane and throws it across the table, Brenda says again “look Box Boy I made a B and N”; again BB does not say anything, he closes the lid of the box, picks it up and walks away…returning BB takes a sheet of A4 paper and rolls it into a tube, he then flattens the tube with both hands and folds it in half, and then in half again, ending up with a small piece of folded paper. Brenda tries to engage BB again “I done 4 B” she says; BB does not say anything, he opens the lid of the box and puts his folded paper inside.
Throughout the episode Box Boy’s play was fluid, moving with ease from idea to action, and although he was interrupted by Brenda, he appeared to be immersed and focussed, often working with his head down, shutting out distractions.

4.2.8 Summarising the Core of PT

During this doctoral study children were seen to initiate playful episodes which were freely chosen, they demonstrated personally directed behaviours, and appeared motivated from within, exercising their agency they worked artistically with no external reward influencing behaviours which were original and unique to each of them. Playful acted out explorations fostered the drivers of the activity, either by process or outcome, or indeed both. Children posed their own questions which stimulated self-determined sensorial infusion, and made their own discoveries manifesting immersive action intention flow which supported a range of other PT behaviours and features in action which are presented in Section 2.

4.3 Section 2: PT Features in Action

This section reports the findings associated with “PT features in action”. There were 8 main categories identified, these were: aesthetic acumen and acuity; question-responding; elucidation; innovative imaginative declaration; risk taking; augmented accuracy; critiquing; and problem ownership. Each of these main categories were found to encompass several sub-categories. There are too many sub-categories to mention in this brief introduction- each of the main categories, and sub-categories are detailed below.
4.3.1 Aesthetic acumen and acuity: Awareness and evaluation, embodied performance, dramatic display

As documented in Section 1, the core of PT in this doctoral study the children’s art making was always fuelled by a constant input of sensory information which aided them in making keen, swift judgements about the look and feel of their work, and act their ideas out in embodied ways mixing gross and fine motor elements, this has been recorded as aesthetic acumen and acuity, showing the link between aesthetic keenness of mind and performance.

Aesthetic acumen and acuity encompasses the sub categories of: awareness and evaluation, and embodied performance and dramatic display. Two vignettes are offered below to explain these features further; both episodes concern Rosie, the most art active of all the focus participants. In the first episode Rosie is with May at the art and craft table, and then in the second works solo at the painting easel.

4.3.1.1 Awareness and evaluation

Children were seen to be working with care and attention, taking considered actions. Making material decisions, exploring qualities, accepting and discarding, evaluating and filtering out what was not liked, or needed. Children also looked for the correct tools to work with for what they had in mind, making careful selections. As episodes evolved children were able to demonstrate seeking additional materials to prolong and sustain their activities by re-starting their sensorial infusion thus enriching and extending their play.

As the study progressed it became evident that Rosie had clear ideas about the standard of her own, and others’ artwork, not only did she make choices about the materials she selected, but also attempted to instruct her peers towards making better aesthetic, practical, and functional decisions. Rosie’s sense of awareness and evaluation appeared to be the key to her artistic
way of being in the classroom as evidenced here from my reflections of a video transcript:

At the art and craft table Rosie and May are using paints and tissue paper. Rosie can be seen acting with care and attention, making sure her materials are selected and placed down in the right space and that her look is perfected. May (who is working alongside Rosie) has set out her art in exactly the same way and appears to be copying/taking the lead from Rosie. Rosie uses dramatic display which is evidenced by her choice of words and plays to the camera waving her arms around and using facial expressions saying “I’m going to make a beach ball today”, “a big one”- holding out a large scrunched ball of tissue in her hand as May looks on. Rosie continued scrunching up yellow tissue paper into balls, pressing them down on the paper into place with her fist not her fingers. Rosie seemed to be pausing after each placement waiting to see if the pieces were stuck- considering and checking the quality of her work; this continued for some time with care and attention.

4.3.1.2 Embodied performance and dramatic display

Children expressed themselves through embodied ways such as gross motor skills, demonstrating, talking, and painting/drawing at the same time, which included playing to the camera. They acted out their ideas, bringing imaginings to life, demonstrating increased energy when performing for/or with others with excitement and enthusiasm as demonstrated in this video transcript documenting an episode between Rosie and myself:

Rosie has been painting at the art easel for some time, she laughs and points to the lines that she has painted on the left side of the page..."a bridge, it's called the bridge of blue" she says. "Where’s the bridge of blue going?" I enquire? "up down" says Rosie demonstrating the action with her hand, "red on the mouth" "a bridge on it, got blue" "yellow, I got yellow" she
elaborates with excitement. Rosie starts to paint again with her right hand, using yellow paint she adds to the yellow dots on the bottom right of the paper, she sits back in her chair, observing her painting she looks perplexed and playfully scratches her head. Rosie takes the red brush in her right hand and starts to make dots on the bottom of the page in-between the lines; she presses the brush onto the paper to make the shape: "some dots, dot dot dot dot dot dot dot dot" she says. Rosie swaps to the yellow brush and again presses the brush on the paper to make a print, "some dinosaur tracks, some dinosaur tracks, HE'S COMING!" she shouts excitedly. Rosie moves up towards a red ‘lollipop shape’ she made at the start of the episode and makes some prints around the edge of the ‘lollipop’: "the flower, the flower, I MADE A FLOWER, A FLOWER!" she exclaims opening her hands at the realisation. Looking up Rosie takes the red brush and makes two dots either side of the vertical line underneath ‘the flower’: "it's a leaf"..."LEAF LEAF LEAF!" she exclaims. "I made a flower look, MWAH!" declares Rosie as she kisses her fingers and pushes them up into the air!

Additional evidence of aesthetics can be seen throughout the findings, particularly in the following sections: innovative imaginative declaration, augmented accuracy, and critiquing.

4.3.2 Question-Responding: Verbal and non-verbal investigative behaviour

Children expressed their creative thinking and PT behaviours in both verbal and non-verbal enacted forms throughout all episodes. The analysis focusing solely on video data revealed 24 sub-categories to the nine core categories of question-responding which are: testing, predicting, evaluating, undoing, compensating, repeating, accepting, rejecting, and completing, these are listed below in corresponding order (see Table 4.2). The left column shows the original question-responding category, and the right hand
The following vignettes capture the essence of each of these analytic sub-categories offering the reader detailed descriptions relating to each of the core question-responding categories. The vignettes are a composition of video transcripts and accompanying notes, and researcher reflections.
Testing was found manifest as trialling, piloting, and experimental exploration; all three vignettes for the three new sub-categories for “testing” come from Box Boy (BB).

4.3.2.1 Trialling

Box Boy has set up his own cutting activity, for some time he has engaged his peers and is immersed cutting strips off the large pieces of paper that he says he put out “for the children”…BB stands up and declares “I need to try some new paper.” Taking action he runs to the paper store and returns to the table with some blue A4 sheets of paper. BB cuts the sheet of blue paper straight down the middle in a vertical line, smiling as he reaches the end; it drops off onto the table. BB also explores the patterns of cutting achieved by using the different blades of the scissors (some straight, jagged, wavy) and invites his peers to do the same: “try them scissors, try them ones.”

4.3.2.2 Piloting

Box Boy is at the mark making table, BB starts to fold and model the paper into planes. After quickly and competently fashioning a paper plane with a series of folds he picks the plane up and throws it; it flies quite well. BB watches the plane, following its flight path and as it lands on the floor he says “I’m gonna make another one.” BB takes another sheet of paper, this time he alters the sequence of folds, making a long arrow head before folding it back on itself; he throws the plane across the classroom and selects some more paper…BB changes his folding technique again by starting the folds at the landscape end of the sheet, he makes a triangle tip with a long tail. BB throws the plane across the table, it doesn’t fly as well as the other two and lands at the far end of the table; he already has another piece of paper in his hands which he begins to fold. After each plane is thrown BB does not retrieve it, he moves his process of thinking forward by starting the
making of each plane separately, thus seemingly piloting his designs at each stage.

4.3.2.1.3 Experimental exploration

Box Boy is at the art and craft table where there are lollipop sticks, block paints, water pots (used water) and brushes. BB looks at the water pots and pours some of the brownish liquid into another pot and takes a brush… he stirs the water and puts the wet brush on the red block and then dabs it repeatedly on the yellow, BB puts the brush back in the water pot and stirs it constantly, he bends down to take a look at the water going around and around from the side of the pot. BB then takes a brush and dabs it in the green paint, then puts it back in the water letting the green dissipate out into the liquid. BB then repeats this action for all of the colours, red, yellow, and blue, each time exploring the different combinations of water and paint.

4.3.2.2 Predicting

The vignettes for the three new sub-categories of “predicting” (knowing what will happen, using knowledge to take action, and expectations) concern all three focus children: Box Boy (BB), Hot Wheels (HW), and Rosie with one other child, May.

4.3.2.2.1 Knowing what will happen

Hot Wheels (HW) is stood at a low desk, he is drawing with pencil on an A4 sheet of paper, there is a small chalk board stood upright on the desk. Rosie appears to the side of HW and says “hey” and then says “ah” as she notices a felt pen on the desk; she takes it in her hand to the chalk board and makes marks on it. HW watches. HW replaces his pencil in the tub in front of him, and in time Rosie moves to another activity. HW picks up the felt pen takes it to the exact place on the chalk board that Rosie was drawing on and moves it up and down, just as she was. HW must be aware of what will happen if he makes marks on the
chalk board with a felt pen as he has witnessed Rosie taking the same actions, but he clearly wants to try it for himself.

4.3.2.2 Using knowledge to take action
During a paper cutting episode Box Boy drops his scissors and the paper he is cutting and picks up some new scissors from the table “look, there’s some yellow scissors” he says as he tries to open the scissors, but they appear jammed- he uses both hands to try and prise them open, but is unsuccessful. Instead BB reaches across the table and takes another pair: “I’ll try them” he says. Predicting there may be a problem in advance he holds the scissors downwards in front of him and with two hands using increased strength checks to see if they will open, they do and he does this movement several times.

4.3.2.3 Expectations
Rosie and May are at the art and craft table. The teacher has provided pots of blue, white, and yellow paint, and tissue paper discs of the same colour. Rosie pauses, she holds up her hands pointing “I wanna do a blue seaside”, she takes the blue brush and paints a wiggly line across the bottom of the page, then she takes some blue tissue paper- “look tissue paper, you can rip these” she says to May as she demonstrates ripping a strip of tissue and then sticks it to her blue wiggly line- with the paint already there she begins smoothing the paper using the paint as glue. Her expectations are reinforced when she continues…scrunching some of the tissue into balls she sticks them on with yellow paint also using it as glue- “I’m going to make a beach ball today” “a big one.”

4.3.2.3 Evaluating

Two of the three vignettes illustrating the new sub-categories of “evaluating” (have “I” got it right?, comparing, and observing reaction to action) are
drawn from Rosie, the second involves Hot Wheels as well. The third episode focuses on Box Boy.

4.3.2.3.1 Have “I” got it right?
Rosie is painting at the easel with care and attention, avoiding the mixing of colours she paints in a block style keeping the colours separate. Her red brush touches the green and she says “whoopsie, sorry” holding her hand to her face she looks- waggling her fingers so as to peer through them to see if any paint is on them. Rosie is clearly working to her own internalised standards as this type of evaluating is demonstrated throughout her painting episode: when Rosie takes the green brush, she makes a dot on the red block; holding her hands to her mouth, she once again says “whoops.”

4.3.2.3.2 Comparing
Rosie is in the garden seated around a small picnic bench she and two other boys (Hot Wheels and Lee) are using pencils to draw on some paper. Rosie pauses- looking over at Hot Wheels who is seated opposite her. HW has three pencils which he is using clasped together in his hand. Rosie looks and says: “not two pencils!”, “NOT the two pencils!” Lee also stops what he is doing and tries to grab the pencils off HW attempting to snatch them from his hand. HW keeps hold of the pencils and continues to work away at his vigorous drawing. Rosie looks over at him, leans across the table and says: “you finished now!” Behaving as if she is the teacher Rosie evaluates her peer’s use of drawing tools and after comparing standards adopts an authoritative stance dictating her own internalised rules of artistic behaviour- even attempting to terminate the activity.

4.3.2.3.3 Observing reaction to action
The teacher has provided a provocation for the children- a small suitcase. When the children open it- it is full of different coloured balls, all shapes and sizes, made of different materials, plastic, wicker, sponge etc. After exploring the materials Box Boy takes a wicker ball and a bowl over to the shallow sand tray used to
encourage sensory mark making. He shuffles the sand in the tray into one corner then takes a handful of it and pours it from a height into the bowl. The sand is green and has glitter in it. BB takes the bowl of sand and pours it from a height over the top of the wicker ball that he is holding up in his hand. The sand trickles through the many holes in the wicker ball and makes a shower of glittery sand fall into the tray, BB smiles as he watches the patterns it makes, he then repeats the process using different size balls and black sand in the garden tray observing the patterns made each time.

4.3.2.4 Undoing

The vignettes for the two new sub-categories of “undoing” (erasing, and de-constructing) feature the two boys in turn: Box Boy and Hot Wheels.

4.3.2.4.1 Erasing

At the mark making table the teacher has placed a large white board on top of the table with marker pens, magnetic letters and numbers. Box Boy takes a green marker, removes the top and with his left hand and all his body starts moving the marker around in a vigorous circle. Mary who is next to BB uses her hand to rub his circle pattern out and moves his pen towards the edge of the board with a sweeping movement; BB lets her do this watching. As soon as Mary withdraws her hand he starts to draw the circles again. Brenda appears next to BB and she rubs her hand over his marks wiping them off to which he shouts “NO BRENDA!” Then BB and Brenda both use their hands to wipe Mary’s marks off the board.

4.3.2.4.2 De-constructing

The teacher has set up “big painting” seeking to encourage the children to work together, she has drawn a large butterfly shape on paper and the children have been provided with various materials to use in their own way, paint, with rollers and brushes, collage shapes and pieces, and glitter. Hot Wheels uses the rollers and
sponges to paint the area in front of him, he takes a paper shape and puts it on top of his paint; he uses the paint as glue and sticks it down, tapping it into place. The teacher places some pots of glue on the table and HW takes a spreader in his right hand...HW removes his paper shape from the painting and applies glue to it, then sticks it back down, like he does not believe paint will stick so takes his piece apart, undoing his previous actions and starts again using the glue.

4.3.2.5 Compensating

The two vignettes chosen to illustrate the new sub-categories of “compensating” (modifying for error, and replacing instead of) concern Rosie and Hot Wheels.

4.3.2.5.1 Modifying for error
Rosie is painting at the art easel. She has made a yellow circle and there are four lines emanating from the circle, she says "I'm painting the sun." Rosie makes two red 'eye' shapes and squeals with delight. She then attempts to make a smile for the sun, she puts the brush to the paper and tries to make a u shape, but the line goes up and into the sun's eye, she returns the brush to the smile and instead makes it a sad face by turning the line of the mouth down, demonstrating playing with ideas, altering plans, and building on ideas in action.

4.3.2.5.2 Replacing instead of
Hot Wheels is at the craft table which has a large box of stickle bricks on it, he has chosen to use the bricks to construct a model of some stairs. HW purposefully selects bricks according to their colour, red, yellow, and green; each shape has a specific colour and shape; square, rectangle etc. HW piles the bricks on top of each other in their groups according to their colour and shape; all the yellow squares together, all the red rectangles together etc. After checking in the box HW realises he has
run out of red rectangles, he then chooses two blue square bricks to put together to make a rectangle shape which he then continues to repeatedly select and place on top of the red rectangle stack. HW sustains his construction process by problem solving how to modify his plans and improvise using the materials available to him.

4.3.2.6 Repeating

The two vignettes chosen to illustrate the new sub-categories of “repeating”: carrying out same actions, and using same words, concern Rosie and then Hot Wheels.

4.3.2.6.1 Carrying out same actions
Rosie has a pack of post it notes and pencils, she opens up the post it notes and folds one back on itself, she takes the pencil and makes some squiggly lines across it several times. Rosie holds the ‘post its’ up to the camera; leaning back she does not say anything “ooo do you want to tell me about it?” I ask and she says “Rosie, brella, and shoe.” Rosie outlines the rules of the play telling me that the post it notes are letters and I pretend they are written in a special language and that I need Rosie to read them to me. This continues in a repeating pattern for some time with Rosie carrying out the same actions, in other words drawing notes and I pass them back for translation with themed responses: “happy birthday love from Rosie” and “I gonna say drewed birthday to you”, and “it says happy birthday from Rosie and Mummy and Daddy.” Hot Wheels also joins the table, watches, observes the patterns of behaviour, and mirrors Rosie by carrying out exactly the same actions as her in order to join in the activity- writing notes and passing them to me, and likewise expects me to repeat the same actions handing the letters back to the children for translation.
4.3.2.6.2 Using same words

Hot Wheels is at the mark making table, Tom is standing next to him. Both boys have started making coloured pencil drawings; there is a basket of pencils on the table between them. HW makes marks in a back and forth fashion, and Tom is also using the pencils in a quick sweeping motion. Tom says “I'm making colours” and HW replies “yeah me too.” “I got loads” says Tom, “I got loads of ‘m” says HW smiling...“I got loads of ‘m” says Tom. HW rummages around in the basket whilst Tom does the same...“I got loads more” says HW. Engaging in parallel play here HW and Tom use mirrored use of language...“I got loads more” says Tom as each boy tries to display dominance.

4.3.2.7 Accepting

The two vignettes to illustrate the new sub-categories of “accepting”, which encompassed agreement, confirming, and happy with result, concern Box Boy (one vignette) and Rosie (two vignettes).

4.3.2.7.1 Agreement

Box Boy is in the midst of making “his shakers” out of two tubes; Alice becomes interested in what he is doing and observes his actions. BB places his hands on the tubes and taps the top of them saying “my shakers.” BB gets some masking tape and Alice asks “can I help?” BB does not reply verbally, but when he puts the tape down Alice takes it and starts to unravel it, and breaks bits off; BB watches...The tubes are now balanced on top of each other, BB goes to put a strip of tape on the tubes and they collapse, he puts them back into place and adds his tape, Alice then follows doing the same and BB allows her to stick the tape onto the tube, thus agreeing to her actions and accepting her collaborative assistance.

4.3.2.7.2 Confirming

Rosie is drawing with a marker on a white board; Lucy is watching nearby. I enquire:
“Rosie do you want to tell us about your drawing? Do you want to tell your friends?” “OK yep” confirms Rosie, she puts down her pen and holds up the white board laughing. Rosie puts the board down on the table- she rubs her finger on the ink and notices the pen marks on her hand: “urmm…I got it on my finger”…Rosie carries on rubbing the picture at first with her finger, then with her hands until the board is clear. Rosie looks at her hands then rubs them on her jumper, then looks at her hands again: “in my hand” she confirms to herself, “you have put it in your hand, your picture it’s like magic, it’s gone in your hand” I observe, “yeah” confirms Rosie. Rosie starts to draw a circular shape half way down the board “wow that’s a really interesting pattern” I note, “it’s a spider web” she replies “a spider web?” I question “yeah” Rosie confirms.

4.3.2.7.3 Happy with result

As Rosie continues to draw and accepts me ‘meddling in the middle’ of her art making activities, she is happy to share and communicate her imaginative ideas and invites me to observe her pictures: “look, look, look, my drawing”… Rosie puts down her pen and holds up the white board laughing… she puts her pen to the board and makes careful movements; then she holds the board up to the camera… “A watering can”- “a watering can, do spiders like water?” I challenge- “yeah and I do a snail”; Rosie draws a circular spiral with a stalk, thus signifying her acceptance of her own ideas. Rosie continues to draw and adds a face to a small spider… “now you can take a picture” she instructs with confidence, happy to have her work documented, she smiles as I take the photograph.

4.3.2.8 Rejecting

The three vignettes chosen to illustrate the new sub-categories of “rejecting” featuring discarding, filtering materials, and refusing others’ ideas, concern Rosie (two vignettes) and Box Boy (one vignette).


4.3.2.8.1 Discarding
For some time Rosie has been playing her inventive “letter game”; Rosie rolls up a post it note pretending it is a letter she holds open an envelope as if she is going to put it inside, then decides to hold it out over the side of the table and drop the post it note on the floor saying “no not that one!” The discarded note stays on the floor as if it is a piece of rubbish and the game continues as Rosie makes new letters.

4.3.2.8.2 Filtering materials
Box Boy is on the floor by the shape and junk modelling store; he has found two tubes (similar shape to Pringles). He kneels up taking handfuls of paper and plastic discs from the shape store tray; he shoves the pieces into the tube and says “I’m trying to make a shaker.” BB shakes the tube with the pieces in to demonstrate his idea and then transports some of the pieces to the other tube; he shakes it listening, and then adds more pieces to it from the shape store. BB then kneels down selecting some feathers to put in one by one; he bangs the tube on the floor to make the contents go down. BB then decides to remove the feathers—placing them back in the shape store he looks in the store and instead takes a handful of plastic buttons “we need some more pieces” he says putting the buttons in one of the tubes he bangs the tubes together and says “it makes a sound, it makes a noise”, thus choosing materials for the purpose he has in mind.

4.3.2.8.3 Refusing others’ ideas
Rosie is at the mark making table she has been drawing with felt pens for some time, two boys are trying to document her work with a digital camera (Larry and Lee). Larry grabs Rosie’s shoulder, and she says “what?” Larry points using his finger to Rosie’s paper and says “blue”. “No it’s not blue it’s red!” replies Rosie…”blue” insists Larry… “NO I already told you it’s not blue it’s red!!!” retorts a perplexed Rosie. Rosie’s peers try to engage her by attempting to make an aesthetic comment on Rosie’s drawing, when Larry names the colour incorrectly Rosie gives him the correct answer,
but he repeats the incorrect observation and neither child accepts the other’s ideas. Rosie also refuses the boys’ idea to photograph her and seems confused by her peer’s behaviour and lack of understanding.

4.3.2.9 Completing

The three vignettes chosen to illustrate the new sub-categories of “completing” (concluding an action order to move forward, and terminating on own terms) concern Hot Wheels (two episodes) and Rosie (one episode).

4.3.2.9.1 Concluding an action in order to move forward

Hot Wheels initiated the making of an earwig, taking inspiration from a nature book he set about collecting the materials and tools needed to make his chosen object. HW makes several trips to the shape store; he returns again and again looking through some of the tubs. He carefully selects some shiny pieces of card and some feathers, choosing not to take pieces of paper, which he looks through and discards; “right that’s it” he says indicating the collecting stage of his work is complete and that he has everything he needs. HW then moves his thinking forward by starting the next stage (the making of the piece), taking a pre-cut butterfly shape he says “I’m going to do this bit first”, he rubs his hands together, looks at the book, points to the earwig and takes a piece of blue tissue and taps it down on the butterfly.

4.3.2.9.2 Terminating on own terms

Rosie has been painting at the easel for some time, the teacher calls for “tidy up time” and Rosie looks really disappointed, “oh no tidy up” she says out loud. Rosie carries on painting and the teacher calls again for “tidy up time.” Rosie briefly looks around then continues painting, running her brush down the edge of the paper, from top to bottom. The teacher calls again for “tidy up time” and Rosie runs her paint brush over the red block again. She then changes to the green brush and makes a quick
swirl over the green dot, which runs slightly into the red, then she takes the yellow brush and makes large sweeping movements with it over the clear white space left on the paper, Rosie then dabs the yellow brush in the same spot on the paper, returns the brush to the pot and declares: “I’ve finished now.”

4.3.2.9.3 Failure
Hot Wheels is at the art and craft table, he has his apron on and is trying to take part in a painting activity- painting a lollipop stick like a rainbow. HW has his fingers in his mouth and is looking around the room; he turns back to the table. Four other children are taking part in the painting activity. HW reaches across to the opposite side where Jane is sitting and open and shuts his hand. He says in a quiet voice “I wanna stick.” Jane does not offer up a stick and HW says again “I wanna stick” under his breath. He rubs his eyes and looks uncomfortable, he attempts to reach over again with his hands outstretched but quickly withdraws them as if he is trying to snatch, but does not. Although Hot Wheels persists in trying to get a stick he holds his hands up saying “I ain’t got one” and remains unable to take part in the activity.

4.3.2.10 Summary of question-responding

These illuminating detailed vignettes reveal more detailed categories, and deeper definitions and descriptions about the inherent nature of young children’s question-responding modalities when engaged as artist communicators in nursery school. The findings reinforce all nine core categories of question-responding as found in previous PT studies, (see Table: 4.3) and whilst the sub categories are in some cases subtle in their differences, they are all discovered for the first time with children of this age group; and all are potentially vital to the ways in which young children express modes of creative learning.
4.3.3 Comparative question-posing study

As part of the deductive analysis seeking direct evidence of PT, comparisons were made between the findings from the original question-posing and question-responding study (Chappell, et al., 2008) and the findings from this doctoral study as shown in Table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QR Feature</th>
<th>Chappell, et al. (2008)</th>
<th>This doctoral study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Exploring the interaction of physical phenomena with objects in the environment</td>
<td>Trialling</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Piloting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Action suggests child holds a prior expectation</td>
<td>Knowing what will happen</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using knowledge to take action</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Judging the merits, success, fitness for purpose of a completed action</td>
<td>Have &quot;I&quot; got it right?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observing reaction to action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undoing</td>
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<td>Erasing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>De-constructing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensating</td>
<td>Altering a sequence of action to repair an error</td>
<td>Modifying for error</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Replacing instead of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>Action performed more than once</td>
<td>Carrying out same actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Using same words</td>
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<td>Accepting</td>
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<td>Agreement</td>
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<td>Confirming</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Happy with result</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rejecting</td>
<td>Discarding an idea</td>
<td>Discarding</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Filtering materials</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Refusing others’ ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Seeing through actions to a conclusion</td>
<td>Concluding an action in order to move forward</td>
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<td>Terminating on own terms</td>
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<td>Failure</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Question-responding definitions by comparison-Chappell, et al. (2008) and this doctoral study
4.3.4 Cross case analysis of question-responding

Cross case analysis was carried out across all episodes for each of the three focus children deductively seeking direct evidence of question-responding features (see Appendix 7). The Appendix tables show the deductive process indicating the simple presence or absence of each question-responding feature evidenced during each week (1 to 9) for each child.

The findings are summarized below (Table 4.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QR Feature</th>
<th>Wk 1</th>
<th>Wk 2</th>
<th>Wk 3</th>
<th>Wk 4</th>
<th>Wk 5</th>
<th>Wk 6</th>
<th>Wk 7</th>
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<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
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√= feature found for 1 child

Table 4.4: Summary of QR cross case deductive analysis across weeks 1-9

The cross-case deductive analysis reveals that overall throughout the nursery year predicting, evaluating, repeating, accepting, and completing were found to be the strongest elements of question-responding, followed by rejecting, and testing, with undoing, and compensating found to be least evidenced. Repeating was the strongest feature of question-responding throughout. Interestingly it would seem that repeating, accepting, and
completing declined in strength throughout the year; predicting, and rejecting increased in strength between Phases 1 and 2, but fell between Phases 2 and 3, whereas testing, undoing, and compensating made steady progress and increased in strength at each of the Phases throughout the year. And evaluating remained at a consistent and moderate strength throughout.

4.3.4.1 Individual differences in question-responding

Throughout the course of this doctoral study individual differences emerged for the three focus children when displaying question-responding behaviours in action. Table 4.5 (next page) shows that Box Boy manifest all QR features in Phase 1 apart from compensating, but did display this along with all other QR features in both Phases 2 and 3. Rosie did not display undoing in either Phase 1 or 2, and did not display compensating in Phase 2, but did display all QR features in Phase 3. A similar pattern emerged for Hot Wheels who consistently did not display undoing, or compensating in either Phase 1 or 2, and did not display rejecting in Phase 1, but did display all QR features in Phase 3. Thus it would appear that undoing and compensating are confirmed as the least displayed features of question-responding in this doctoral study, however weeks 7 to 9 of the study (Phase 3), the Summer Term, appeared to be a vital time where all the focus children manifest every feature of question-responding and their PT behaviors emerged most strongly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
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R= Rosie, BB= Box Boy, HW= Hot Wheels
Phase 1= September to December (Week 1-3)
Phase 2= January to March (Week 4-6)
Phase 3= May to July (Week 7-9)

**Table 4.5: Summary of individual QR differences (deductive analysis)**

### 4.3.5 Elucidation: Planning, Explaining, Rationalising

Elucidation was characterised as including a strong element of logic where the children were constantly interpreting their behaviours into an intelligible order to illuminate, and clarify not only their own actions, but were also sometimes seen to use rational explanations to influence the actions of others by verbalising directives for progression to take place.

The vignettes chosen to illuminate the sub categories of ‘elucidation’ include one episode for Hot Wheels (planning) and one for Rosie (explaining), and Box Boy, (rationalising). The vignettes are drawn from my reflective diary.
4.3.5.1 Planning

Planning encompassed forward thinking where children were seen to be considering what comes next, thinking in the present for forward action, which included a logical order, acknowledging difficulties where necessary in the process ahead. Projecting was found as verbalising intentions, children demonstrating knowing what they were going to do, and what they needed to take part-building on actions and making progression.

This first episode contains a rare occasion for Hot Wheels where he instigates his own learning by finding a picture of an earwig in a book that he wants to make; a clear tangible stimulus is used rather than working from his imagination. The vignette is taken from my reflective diary:

HW was seen going through different stages: first he finds a stimulus, (the picture), then he sets about collecting his materials- a pre-cut butterfly shape, some shredded cardboard, tissue paper, feathers, sequins, and buttons, he declares “that’s it” when he has enough parts, then refers to the book before commencing the making of the piece. HW says “I’m going to do this bit first”, rubbing his hands together, he looks at the book, points to the earwig and takes a piece of blue tissue and taps it down on the butterfly shape. There appears to be a logical order to the planning of the earwig and the making of the piece which HW plays out in his actions.

4.3.5.2 Explaining

Children verbalised their logical ideas, made connections, and told others how to solve problems. They described features, and details of their pieces, sometimes verbalising the qualities of materials, or simply the colours. A notable feature for some of the children was saying what could be seen, for example they would say “it is a…”, thus stating facts, or naming parts of their artwork, whereas others progressed to forms of observation, evaluation and
communication, documented in latter sections: innovative imaginative declaration, and critiquing. The following vignette is composed of video transcript narrative and my reflective diary notes.

At the mark making table Rosie can be seen making marks on a post it note, (some squiggly lines). Rosie holds the post it up to the camera, leaning back she does not say anything, but when I ask “ooo” “do you want to tell me about it?” she explains “it says Rosie, brella, and shoe.” This episode turned into a game between Rosie and myself where Rosie writes little notes for me and I pretend I can’t read them as they are written “in a special language” and hand them back to Rosie for her to translate as she is the expert player. Not only did Rosie explain the narrative of the translated notes, she further explained the game as it went along, saying things like “uh scuse me that’s a letter” and “you got to open it” and “I post” as she put the notes in an envelope. This game continued for quite some time and Hot Wheels joined in the play mirroring Rosie’s actions of the game.

4.3.5.3 Rationalising

Children communicated their processes undertaken, including logical reasoning of their own actions, making reinforcing statements to support actions, and knowing when envisioned ideas are nearly complete. They were able to argue effectively “why” their wants and needs were important and tell others “why” their actions were causing problems, with the intentions of trying to influence their outcomes. The following vignette is composed of video transcript narrative and my reflective diary notes.

At the art and craft table Box Boy explains his actions declaring: “I’m putting the paper out for the children”, indicating that he is planning his chosen activity, he also used the statement to support his actions, and then proceeded to ask the teachers for scissors to carry out his plan of preparing a cutting activity. Throughout the
cutting episode BB included his peers by inviting them to join him shouting things like “here are scissors” “we got scissors”, it appears that BB is reinforcing the value of the activity to support his actions, especially as scissors are not freely available for the children to use. BB was also seen to explain things to his peers “look there are yellow scissors” and when faced with challenges, for example when he could not open a pair of scissors, he rationally reached across the table, and taking another pair explained “I’ll try them.” BB’s logic follows through in his actions, predicting there may be a repeat occurrence of scissors that won’t open; he holds the scissors downwards in front of him and with two hands checks to see if they will open. BB also takes time to explain to Kate how to cut by saying things like “you can cut like that” “that’s it.” Following logic here, BB plans his activity, explains the process, and rationalises his outcomes with clear judgement.

4.3.6 Innovative imaginative declaration: Original and unique outcome/behaviour, artistic storytelling, experimental exploration, play props

Innovative imaginative declarations and demonstrations were found to encompass both verbal, and non-verbal internal to external unique behaviours and actions or expressive communicated statements which included making ideas come to life which were not necessarily logical, and therefore were documented as distinct from elucidated forms of communication. In this doctoral study there appeared to be three ways that innovative imaginative declarations stood out, namely through storytelling, experimental exploration, and making play props.
4.3.6.1 Artistic storytelling

Children engaged in making imaginative, individualised depictions, and communicated their associated narratives which held an element of intellectual property or ownership for them. Children were keen to verbalise their pictorial expressions (Rosie), whereas Hot Wheels in particular struggled at times preferring to explain the story of his artwork through physical non-verbal movements such as tracing the path of his paintbrush with his finger. Children communicated personal narratives verbally especially when they were stimulated to document what they had seen, heard or experienced; for example Rosie liked to make art about social experiences such as celebrations, and events happening in the classroom concerning the morals of others (“the naughty boys will go to jail for drawing on the school computer and wall”).

Throughout the latter part of the year (during Phases 2 and 3) Rosie in particular developed an aptitude for storytelling imaginative narratives brought to life through her art, beyond verbalising pictorial realism (saying what could be seen) she told stories as if they were happening there and then at that moment in time, verbalising expressions of visual representation in action. Rosie was able to going beyond the realist vision by creating and humanising characters, including “their narratives” melding them with artistic behaviours, and could set the scene for these characters, which sometimes included going on a journey. This developed further in Phase 3 where Rosie sustained story telling narratives by adding suspense.

As the strongest artist communicator Rosie’s narrative: ‘The day the spider went to the seaside’ is used as an exemplary case supporting artistic storytelling. This story is told through the voice of Rosie using the using the narrative method; the approach captures the emotion of the moment described, rendering the event active rather than passive, and is infused with Rosie’s own words spoken whilst communicating through the medium of drawing.
The day the spider went to the seaside

Told by Rosie Aged 4

In nursery I notice some of my friends are drawing, I say out loud “I want to draw.” I take a white board and a red marker pen. I make slow, calm, thoughtful movements; I draw a circular face with long lines coming out from it. I add arms and legs, and I laugh. Then I draw a jagged frame around the edge of the board. I want others to notice my artwork; “Look! Look! Look!” I hold up my drawing and laugh. “I’m gonna make a big spider”, I draw lots of lines coming from the circle; “I done a big spider”, “it got wings”, “no legs”, “spider.” I draw three circles over and over, round and round, “I’m going to do the clouds”, “I doing the sun.” I carefully draw a sun in the top right hand corner, and then I draw a circular shape half way across the board; “it’s a spider web.” I use my pen and go round and round, over and over, the shape gets larger and larger; “it get big and big, like that!” I continue talking; “yeah he go round and round and round builds like that”, “spider web.” “Right now I do square for bed yeah.” “I need urm”- I pause and take my time. I put my pen to the board and make careful drawing movements. I hold the board up- “a watering can”, “yeah and I do a snail”; I draw a circular spiral with a stalk. I make up a story about my drawing; “they gonna play games and a small spider”, I draw a little spider; “now there is the little spider.” I draw a face on the little spider. “Now you can take a picture” I say to the grown up. I add features to the big spider; “they gonna do two spiders”, “because someone spider can be”, “now this little spider he go.” I draw some wavy lines at the bottom of my picture; “ah ha ha ha”, “look my spider is playing”, “oh oh oh”, “there’s the seaside!”, “the sand, the sand, and there is the seaside, the seaside.” I add to the spider’s face, “urm he saying…”- I pause- “he needs glasses, yes there you go”, “yes from the sun.” I hold my hands up! - “OH OH OH I FORGOT SOMETHING!”, “spikes.” “Now take a picture” I say to the grown up. I swap pens taking a blue one, I move it slowly around my drawings in a jagged line; “there”, “he is urm a purple footprint”, “now I gonna draw black.” I take a black marker and draw lots of spots. I point to the spots; “take a picture of these”, “he got spots.” I start to dab the marker on the board…“and he got rain”, “yeah it’s raining.” “HEY! LOOK! LOOK!” I call to the teacher holding up my drawing.
4.3.6.3 Experimental exploration

Children used prescribed materials in their own unique ways, modelling them into something else, or tried using items for a different purpose. Children made their own discoveries through carrying out experiments which were sometimes unexpected, recognising achievements through exploring qualities of combinations. “What will happen if?” questions were associated with testing, observing reaction to action, noticing differences, and checking/confirming answers. Box Boy in particular enjoyed pouring and transporting materials, often from a height and through holes, and liked mixing combinations, he was also often seen making the same thing repeatedly, but experimented with different designs.

4.3.6.4 Play props

Children instigated, designed, facilitated, and sustained their own games for themselves and invited players. This was documented and evidenced in the “post it note” game between myself, Rosie, and Hot Wheels. Children also played with their own creations, they made letters and envelopes to post, paper planes to fly, roads, tunnels, telescopes, footballs, and musical instruments such as Box Boy’s “shaker”.

All forms of artistic storytelling, experimental exploration, and making play props were evidenced daily throughout this doctoral study and documented in the video data set.

4.3.7 Risk taking: Novelty, naivety, non-conformist, and combating fears* (*Phase 3 only)

Throughout the year the children took risks which were manifest in varying ways and were associated with all dimensions of play including: physical,
intellectual, verbal, and emotional forms. Previous PT studies have categorised examples of risk taking as: ‘danger, failure, fear, or going to the edge’. This doctoral study also recognises these key elements of risk taking, and has furthermore found that these behaviours were associated and categorised as: novelty, naivety, non-conformist, and combating fears. All of these types of risk taking behaviours were evidenced throughout this doctoral study apart from combating fears which was found in Phase 3 only.

4.3.7.1 Novelty examples

The sub categories of novelty risk taking behaviours are: using materials in own way, introduced by Hot Wheels; outcome not predicted by practitioner, and trying new ways of working which are both highlighted by Box Boy in the following vignettes below, all of which are drawn directly from video transcripts.

4.3.7.1.1 Using materials and tools in own way
Risk taking in this example, manifest as not using tools and materials as prescribed/intended, using glue as paint, mixing glue and paint together, and using the glue spreader as painting tool.

Hot Wheels is at the art and craft table, the teacher has set up “big painting” of a butterfly and has placed some pots of glue on the table to use with the glitter she has also provided. HW takes a spreader in his right hand, as HW lifts the spreader out of the pot a huge long stringy piece of glue is attached to it….HW moves the glue spreader in a circular motion around the painting until the strand detaches, then he dips the spreader in the glue, then in the paint, then puts it back on his part of the butterfly painting. HW drags the spreader around and around and up and down, scraping the paint and making marks with the glue spreader.
4.3.7.1.2 Outcome not predicted by practitioner
Risk taking manifest as outcome not predicted by practitioner, in this example was found as: using paints and water for experimenting, destroying protective table covering, and not following guidelines.

The teacher has placed paints, brushes, water, and lollipop sticks on the art and craft table and has asked the children to paint a rainbow on the stick using stripes, however instead of painting Box Boy experiments pouring the paint water from cup to cup, then he mixes the paints with a brush and stirs them into the water watching the colours disperse, and then “paints” the newspaper covering the table with the water watching it get soggy and eventually tear into pieces.

4.3.7.1.3 Trying new ways of working
Risk taking manifest as trying new ways of working was found to include a fear of failure, where several attempts at new ways of working heightened an awareness of the danger associated with breaking the piece.

Box Boy is in the midst of making his shakers; he has tried several ways of constructing the shakers, using various materials to make sounds, balancing and taping the tubes. BB takes the shaker in both hands turning it upside down he shakes it, but it falls apart: “oh no” he says declaring his disappointment. BB puts the tubes back on the table and lines them up again, he adds tape around the centre point where they meet and watches Alice as she adds tape. BB warns Alice to be careful as he knows the construction is delicate and she replies saying “alright I will.” BB shakes the tubes once more, he gives them a little shake, he smiles saying “ooo”, then he then shakes the tubes in the air a little harder than before and the top one comes off spraying the contents out onto the floor.
4.3.7.2 Naivety examples

The sub categories of naivety risk taking behaviours are: not respecting boundaries, highlighted by Rosie and Hot Wheels; copying, as found in an episode between Rosie and another boy, Larry; pushing boundaries of activity, and unsure of actions which are both illustrated in vignettes concerning Box Boy, all of which are taken from video transcripts.

4.3.7.2.1 Not respecting boundaries
Risk taking manifested as not respecting boundaries in this example, was found to encompass: drawing over peer’s art uninvited and dominance over activity/materials where a child invades a peer’s personal space.

Rosie and Hot Wheels are sat at a small table; they each have their own pieces of A4 paper in front of them and are making marks on their paper with their selected felt pens. Without invite Rosie makes a mark on Hot Wheel’s paper with blue felt tip pen. She then draws another line right the way across the paper and HW does not stop her. She even says “there you go” as she wants him to hurry up and finish his picture. Rosie believes she is helping him complete a job, and is also confirming what she has already told him: “you finished now.”

4.3.7.2.2 Copying
Risk taking manifest as copying in this example was found to incorporate aspects of behaviour which could be deemed as “unacceptable” behaviours, such as painting body parts, and keeping others out of activities.

Rosie and Larry are painting at the art easel; it has taken some time and much persistence from Larry to get Rosie to allow him entry to the activity. Rosie used many tactics to keep Larry out for as long as she could- even putting her finger up and saying “stop it and go play with something else.” Rosie starts to paint the palm of her hand and Larry joins in painting the palm of his hand too. Rosie starts to paint her other hand and Larry follows. Rosie presses her palm on the paper and it leaves a print, “see” she says. Not only does Larry copy this behaviour
by printing his hand, but when another little boy appears to see what is going Larry turns his back on him and says: “you’re not painting!” also copying Rosie’s initial behaviours of refusing entry to the activity- as the boy runs off the children follow him with their eyes looking concerned (probably in case he tells the teacher).

4.3.7.2.3 Pushing boundaries of activity
Risk taking manifest as pushing the boundaries of activities in this example was found as “going out on a limb” to ask persistently for tools not accessible to children.

Box Boy has helped himself to large sheets of white paper which are usually used for painting and has covered the art and craft table with them by laying them flat in an overlapping fashion so that the whole of the top of the table is covered. “I’m putting the paper out for the children” says BB “I wanna do cutting, please can I do cutting?” he asks the teacher. BB runs over to the curtain area, behind which is a store of equipment, (this is where the scissors are kept). “Can I do cutting?”- he grabs the teacher’s top to get her attention. Another teacher notices and BB moves to the curtain area again- “I wanna do cutting scissors” he persists in asking for the scissors.

4.3.7.2.4 Unsure of actions
Risk taking manifest as being unsure of actions in this example was found to include a fear of being told off.

Box Boy is interested in some stones, he examines them for a while- after pausing BB takes a stone in his right hand and rubs it with his finger. BB drops the stone in his chosen yoghurt pot, and then he takes several in his hands at a time filling it up. When the pot is full BB lifts it with both hands and then tentatively turns around, he stands still for a few moments observing what is going on all around him…the pot tips over and the stones fall to the floor. BB crouches down low, he lays flat on the floor picking the stones up one by one and placing them in the pot. BB looks around, picks up a
stone and sits upright on the floor with his back
to the camera...he keeps looking away, sitting
still on the floor with his back to the camera and
stays there for some time.

4.3.7.3 Non-Conformist examples

The sub categories of non-conformist risk taking behaviours are: challenging
rules, and behaving in a non-permitted fashion, both demonstrated by Box
Boy; ignoring authority, concerning Rosie; not adhering to cultural norms of
practice, and remaining silent, both documented during episodes with Hot
Wheels; deflecting adults’ questions, evidenced between Rosie and another
child Rae; and terminating dialogue with adult, illuminated by Hot Wheels;
again all vignettes are drawn from video transcripts.

4.3.7.3.1 Challenging rules
Risk taking manifest during challenging rules in this example was found when
Box Boy refused to wear an apron, choosing not to conform to the cultural
rules of the practice regarding the protection of clothes.

Throughout the nursery year Box Boy refused
to wear an apron for any art and craft activity; it
is a rule of the setting that all children must
protect their clothes and wear an apron for any
gluing, painting, and water play activity. BB was
often seen wiping his hands on his jumper or on
his trousers, and was often reminded by other
children to wear an apron. Box Boy’s peers
were also heard telling practitioners that he did
not have an apron on.

4.3.7.3.2 Behaving in a non-permitted fashion
Risk taking manifest as behaving in a non-permitted fashion in this example
was found as inappropriate use of tools and materials as prescribed in the
setting.

Hot Wheels is drawing at a low cupboard, he
has already made felt pen marks on a desk top
chalkboard; he then selects a red pencil and
with his left hand starts to make small marks on some paper with an up and down movement. Whilst HW is drawing he takes another pencil and “posts” it down the back of the cupboard. The pencil is trapped in-between the cupboard and the wall from where it cannot be retrieved.

### 4.3.7.3.3 Ignoring authority
Risk taking manifest as ignoring authority in this example was found when Rosie ignored adult requests to terminate the activity and refused to stop what she was doing.

Rosie has been painting at the easel for some time with care and pays attention to the fine detail of the piece. When the teacher calls for tidy up time, Rosie refuses to stop what she is doing; she simply glances around and continues painting. The teacher continues to call for tidy up time but Rosie briefly looks around then continues painting. Even when the teacher tries to appease Rosie by suggesting that she can continue painting another time she still carries on painting.

### 4.3.7.3.4 Not adhering to cultural norms of practice
Risk taking manifest as not adhering to cultural norms of practice in this example was found as drawing on the school equipment with inappropriate materials.

Hot Wheels has a pencil in his left hand and is making a mark on his paper; he then gently takes the pencil to a chalk board which is on the work top in front of him and attempts to make a small mark on it...he later does this again with a felt pen after watching Rosie do the same.

### 4.3.7.3.5 Remaining silent
Risk taking manifest as remaining silent in this example was found as not responding verbally to adults’ questions or comments.

Hot Wheels is at the painting easel, he uses the blue paint to make some dabbing motions, two red blobs at the bottom of the page completes the picture and HW pulls at his apron to take it off. “Are you finished Hot Wheels? Do you want
to tell me about your idea?” I ask. HW looks at me and I move the camera to the picture rather than focussing on him. HW carefully uses his finger-pointing he retraces all of the steps that he made in order to paint the picture, moving up and down, around and around. “Wow” I say and Hot Wheels stands still in silence.

4.3.7.3.6 Deflecting adult’s questions
Risk taking found during deflecting adult’s questions in this example was evidenced as a fear of being seen copying ideas, which included an element of deception, where Rosie did not want to admit her actions.

Rae is at the art easel; Rosie cajoles her into finishing her painting quickly as she wants to paint a picture, she hounds her until she finishes and leaves the easel. Rosie pulls up a chair and starts to paint; she makes a yellow circle with four lines emanating from it. Just before Rosie started painting Rae was seen painting a picture of the sun. "I'm painting the sun" says Rosie, “you are painting the sun as well?” I reply, “yeah” she says. "Is this your idea or someone else’s idea?” I enquire, "yeah" says Rosie. "Whose idea is it?” I probe; "oh it doesn’t matter, wah wah wah don’t worry" insists Rosie closing down this line of inquiry.

4.3.7.3.7 Terminating dialogue with adult
Risk taking manifest here when Hot Wheels terminated dialogue with an adult in this example was found as ignoring the adult, and walking off without saying anything.

As Hot Wheels draws at the paper store he offers me an insight into his picture: “it’s a car” he says. He continues to draw and looks around the room and out of the window, and then he moves away from the paper store taking his picture with him. HW starts walking to the door and I ask: “how’s the picture Hot Wheels?”, HW does not respond, nor look around at me, he leaves the nursery classroom and walks all the way to the outside gate where he stands holding his picture looking through the gates.
4.3.7.4 Combating fears examples (Phase 3 Only)

The sub categories of combating fears risk taking behaviours are: evaluating risk, and overriding self-preservation, both of these sub categories were evidenced in an episode concerning Box Boy; deconstructing barriers, and having a go, which were both documented with Hot Wheels; and provoking others, this was highlighted during an episode between Rosie and another boy Larry. The examples presented below are taken from my reflective diary.

4.3.7.4.1 Evaluating risk
Evaluating risk in this example was found to encompass elements of danger, where self-preservation was heightened when going to the edge, and asking oneself- do I want to do this?

During the suitcase provocation, the teacher placed unusual objects inside; unusual balls made of different materials were hidden in the case for the children to discover. Box Boy encountered some objects that he was unsure of. BB tried to think through his options when he found a spiky ball that he appeared afraid of, he stamped on the ball and kicked it away and even asked me to touch it! He also covered it up with a bowl at one point, but refused to give up continually returning to the ball to pause and assess his adopted stance of self-preservation, thinking through his options before taking action.

4.3.7.4.2 Overriding self-preservation
Risk taking manifest during overriding self-preservation in this example was seen through a personal demonstration of a fear of an object where this was overcome by tentatively touching new materials, thus going over the edge.

Leading on from the previous example of evaluating risk, Box Boy overcame his fear of the “new” object (a spiky ball) which he was afraid to touch- by persevering, returning to the object several times he eventually touched it. BB initially dismissed the “new” exploratory opportunity but he showed determination and remained calm, repeatedly returning to the
object, and through his playfulness, eventually placed a finger on the ball.

4.3.7.4.3 Deconstructing barriers
Risk taking manifest as deconstructing barriers and in this example was found as a personal overcoming of the fear of talking out loud to express imagination.

Throughout this doctoral study Hot Wheels struggled with verbalising his imaginative ideas. To begin with HW used his fingers to point to his pictures and retrace his painting or drawing paths. HW remained silent throughout the majority of his imaginative declarations. However HW was seen taking a deep breath before declaring an imaginative idea to me in the last week of the study, it must have taken a lot of courage for HW to do this. When making a model of a tower HW took a deep breath, raised is shoulders and said out loud “the stairs go bla la la la la”, he also used his fingers to demonstrate the action of walking up the stairs.

4.3.7.4.4 Having a go
Risk taking manifest as having a go in this example was found as testing actions and venturing onto new ground when not willing to risk take previously.

As previously noted, during the study for the vast majority of the time Hot Wheels spent engaged with adults he chose to remain silent, on occasion he was happy to verbalise what he could see in front of him as a physical, tangible, legible, and rational object, using elucidated forms of communication, i.e. planning, explaining, or rationalising. However HW took many risks by not answering the adults in the setting, sometimes he even walked off when they were mid-sentence. In the example above (deconstructing barriers) HW demonstrated his attempt to overcome his fears of imagining out loud and for the first time during the study took an emotional risk by reversing this trend and showed a willingness to verbalise his ideas when he has clearly been reluctant to do so in the past.
4.3.7.4.5 Provoking others
Risk taking manifest when provoking others in this example was found when children encouraged actions with an element of danger by demonstrating to their peers that “you can take risks in school”.

In Rosie’s final painting episode of this doctoral study (week 9), Larry gets an empty paint roller and pretends to roll it up and down over Rosie’s painting, he laughs as Rosie detests shouting “NO!” Larry carries on doing this and Rosie grabs the roller saying: “give me that.” Larry runs the roller down Rosie’s arm and she looks at the camera saying “he painting me.” Larry quickly reports “there no paint on it” and carries on teasing Rosie with the roller…Larry looks at Rosie and says “paint my face”; he points to his nose and says again “paint my face!” “I can’t paint your face” says Rosie looking at the camera for reassurance. Whilst Rosie carries on adding lines to her painting using a brush; Larry pretends to lick the paint, and then starts to roller himself across his jumper!

4.3.8 Cross case analysis of risk taking

Cross case analysis was carried out across all episodes for each of the three focus children deductively seeking direct evidence of risk taking behaviours. The table in Appendix 8 shows the deductive process indicating the simple presence or absence of each risk taking behaviours evidenced during each Phase (1 to 3) for each focus child. Appendix 8 summarizes these findings in terms of the strength of each risk taking category.

The summary of the deductive risk taking analysis shows that non-conformist behaviours were most evident throughout the study, (accepting the bias that this category has the largest sub-set), followed by naivety and novelty which were of comparable frequency, and finally combating fears which was only evidenced in Phase 3 during the final term of the nursery year.
In terms of strength, all three sub-categories of novelty were found to be strong features of risk taking: using materials and tools in own way, outcome not predicted by practitioner, and trying new ways of working.

All four sub-categories of naivety: not respecting boundaries, copying, pushing boundaries of activity, and unsure of actions were found as moderate features of risk taking.

Interestingly non-conformist yielded a somewhat mixed set of findings: behaving in a non-permitted fashion, not adhering to cultural norms of practice, and remaining silent were all strong features of risk taking. Challenging rules was found as a moderate feature, and ignoring authority, and deflecting adult's questions were identified as weak features of risk taking behaviours.

Finally all five sub-categories of combating fears: evaluating risk, overriding self-preservation, deconstructing barriers, having a go, and provoking others were found to be weak in comparison to the other three main categories, however this was due to the fact that it was only in the latter part of the nursery year (Phase 3) that the features of combating fears associated with risk-taking emerged for the children in the study.

The cross case analysis also yielded deeper findings beyond the summary data which revealed even further individual differences for the focus children.

### 4.3.8.1 Individual differences in risk taking

Examination of the risk taking deductive analysis revealed several differences between the three focus children.

Overall, Box Boy appeared to be taking the most risks in the nursery classroom. Appendix 8 demonstrates that out of 50 risk taking features, he
manifest 34 risks, whereas Rosie and Hot Wheels each manifest 25 risks out of the 50 features across the nursery year. These figures are not meant to be interpreted as positivist, rather by examining the simple present or absent table they are recognised as being indicative of the level of engagement that children took risks in the classroom.

Most interestingly differences also emerged between the categories for each of the children.

Novelty, and all of its sub-categories were found across the study, in every Phase for both Rosie and Box Boy, however Hot Wheels did not take any novelty risks at all during Phase 2, but did demonstrate all novelty risks during Phases 1 and 3, and was found to take both naivety and non-conformist risks during Phase 2.

Naivety risk taking behaviours appeared to have no set pattern of emergence. As previously noted all of the sub-categories manifest as moderate in strength and were inconsistently recorded for each child, a contrast indeed when compared to novelty risk taking.

Similarly non-conformist risk taking yielded mixed results, however there were some striking differences between the children. Challenging rules was evidenced for Box Boy in Phases 1 and 3, but Rosie only challenged in Phase 1, and Hot Wheels in Phase 2. Behaving in a non-permitted fashion was a strong feature for all of the children across all Phases; it was only Rosie who did not behave in a non-permitted fashion in Phase 1. Ignoring authority was only evidenced once for each child across the year, Rosie in Phase 1, Hot Wheels in Phase 2, and Box Boy in Phase 3. Not adhering to cultural norms of practice was also a strong feature for all of the children across all Phases; it was only Rosie who did not display this type of risk taking in Phase 2. Remaining silent was prevalent for the two boys, both Box Boy and Hot Wheels chose to remain silent throughout the study, whereas Rosie only did this once in Phase 2. Interestingly this confirms Rosie’s communicative skills as she was the only focus child who took the risk of
deflecting adult’s questions, she did this in Phases 1 and 3, but not in Phase 2 where she chose instead to remain silent.

The strongest case for emergent risk taking behaviours is evident in the final category of combating fears as this appeared in Phase 3 only. Again it is the two boys which are dominating the risk taking with Box Boy showing all of the combating fears sub-categories, followed closely by Hot Wheels who did not provoke others, and Rosie who learnt how to evaluate risk, deconstruct barriers, and provoke others with the aid of her peer Larry.

4.3.9 Augmented Accuracy: Modifying, Perfecting, Embellishing

Augmented accuracy manifested during sustained episodes in which children sought to enhance, enlarge, expand, and extend their ideas in action. Children were seen rectifying, altering, or changing the direction of their work through revised plans which developed the refinement and progression of their work building on ideas in action. Adhering to their own internalised standards the children extended their art making by decorating, elaborating and exaggerating. Children were also seen to demonstrate an aesthetic appreciation of their own pieces by taking their time, showing committed care and attention to what they were doing.

Augmented accuracy was found to encompass three sub categories: modifying, documented in an episode with Rosie, perfecting, demonstrated by Box Boy, and embellishing, as illustrated by Hot Wheels.

4.3.9.1 Modifying

Children modified their artwork in several ways, sometimes this was made visible by de-constructing, taking apart, or painting over their own, or other’s work. Children also altered the direction of their actions by changing their plans to make their pieces work; sometimes this involved compromising their original plans, changing or revising what they were doing, trying new ways of
working, or even changing back to their original way of working if the new direction was unsuccessful. Children also tried to convince peers to stop working “their own way” and to follow their lead instead.

Modifying was also found as a feature of question-responding (see previous examples concerning Rosie’s actions when painting the sun). A further example is offered below melded with Box Boy’s actions of perfecting.

4.3.9.2 Perfecting

Children were seen perfecting their work to their own internalised standards, taking pride in what they were doing - they neatened lines and rectified imperfections, working towards an aesthetic vision.

During the making of Box Boy’s “shaker” it became evident that he was working towards a clear goal and knew what he wanted his outcome/final product to look like, or represent. Box Boy faced several challenges in the making of the shakers, first he had to modify his choice of materials, removing the feathers he had placed inside the tube and replacing them with plastic buttons realising “it makes a sound, it makes a noise.” Then he had to deal with the tubes falling apart and spilling the contents onto the floor when he shook them to trial the sound. It is at this point that BB again modifies his plans and tries another method - that of sticking the tubes side by side instead of on top of each other. This did not work and BB reverted to his original idea and in this continuing vignette (where Alice has been allowed access as a collaborator) the tubes are now balanced on top of each other as evidenced in this video transcript:

BB takes a strip of masking tape and attempts to put it on the point where the tubes meet in the middle - the tubes collapse. BB puts them back into place and adds his tape again, Alice then follows doing the same, BB watches her closely as she does this making sure that she places her tape correctly. He also notices an imperfection that he is not happy with, “oh no it’s got paint on it” says BB looking disgusted, and he runs off wiping the paint from his hands.
on his jeans. BB returns to the table with a hand towel that he has got from the toilet area and starts wiping the paint off the tube. Once he has cleaned up the paint he replaces the tubes on top of the table...as Alice adds some sticky tape BB says “careful” and Alice responds “alright I will” but BB notices some jagged tape has been left around the tubes and is disappointed with it- “I want to cut that” says BB indicating that he wants to “tidy up” and perfect the look of the shakers, so he cuts off the excess tape with the scissors.

4.3.9.3 Embellishing

Embellishing was found on two levels, physical and verbal. Children physically decorated their artwork with collage materials, added features to paintings- enhancing and exaggerating, layering, and enlarging; and also extended their verbal ideas, building stories narrative upon narrative.

Embellishing is illustrated here during an episode concerning Hot Wheels drawn from the video data.

The teacher has covered the entire art table with paper and has drawn the shape of a huge butterfly on top calling this way of working “big painting.” The children have arranged themselves around the table, thus creating their own working spaces. Throughout the episode Hot Wheels works intensely on perfecting “his own area” of the painting. After using sponges and rollers for some time with paint HW sustains his interest in the activity by embellishing his work with glitter continuing until he is happy enough to leave his work with the desired look achieved. HW leans forward and dabs a sponge over and over in the paint tray, then he leaves it to take some gold glitter from a nearby pot which he sprinkles on top of his paint. The teacher places an additional pot of glitter on the table and HW says “green”; the comment is to himself. He takes a handful of glitter and places in top of his painting. HW takes a green sponge and dabs it in the glitter
and paint. He drops it then proceeds to take several more handfuls of glitter which he sprinkles on top of the painted area...HW picks up the blue roller and starts to rub it back and forth. He then adds several more handfuls of glitter to the same spot he has been working on.

4.3.10 Critiquing: Outcome, behaviour, of self and others

Critiquing was found manifest as verbal and non-verbal opinionated analysis and interpretation of the behaviours, actions, and outcomes of self and others which involved an evaluative critical assessment resulting in a variety of manifestations including comparing standards and superior judgements, especially where the outcome or behaviour was not as predicted or visualised, which culminated in authoritative admonishment, or action taken to remove or deal with unwanted behaviour.

The two sub-categories of ‘critiquing self and others’ are illuminated in the following vignettes concerning Rosie and another child, May who focus on outcome (video transcript), and Hot Wheels who critiques the behaviour of Adam and Aaron (reflective diary).

4.3.10.1 Outcome

Children worked to their own internalised rules of their activities including “staying in the lines” when painting or drawing, sometimes verbalising mistakes or even apologising for errors. Children knew when their pieces were finished, or complete evaluating the end result, showing pleasure and happiness associated with the admiration of their own efforts, and valued acting on their own ideas and were keen to acknowledge when their activities were self-chosen or child-initiated rather than teacher-led and directed. Children wanted others, (adults and peers) to acknowledge and appreciate their artwork and reciprocated showing admiration and appreciation for others’ art sometimes demonstrating their analytical thinking by offering a
subjective verbalised interpretation, appraisal, or opinion of what could be seen. Differences were observed and evaluated, checking peer’s work, and comparing standards of art.

4.3.10.2 Critiquing outcome

Rosie and May are at the art and craft table, the teacher has provided pots of paint and tissue paper discs. Rosie and May work alongside each other, but as the episode develops Rosie verbally critiques May’s actions which creates an impact affecting the outcome of her own artwork causing Rosie to react. Both girls are sharing pots of paint, there is a yellow pot, blue, and white pot, each pot has their own brush. Rosie is using the yellow, whilst May has the blue. Rosie has already said that she is painting the “yellow sand” and is visually shocked when May puts the blue brush in the yellow pot—telling her “no!” “don’t do that!” “May!” “don’t do paint!”; she is even more horrified when she realises that her yellow sand is now blue in parts as she has picked up May’s blue paint from the pot which has been mixed in with the yellow. Rosie is really cross; she screws her face up and makes whining sounds saying loudly: “WORSE!!!”

It is clear in this video transcript that Rosie has very fixed ideas and rules about art etiquette, sharing materials, and about the quality and look of her own work, i.e. she wants it to look like, and be a representation of what she has visualised and is not afraid of telling others what she thinks.

4.3.10.3 Behaviour

Critiquing behaviour was found during occasions when children judged the behaviours of others determining if they were acting in an acceptable manner or to an expected standard which sometimes resulted in a wariness of others especially if boundaries were being compromised or breached. Children reacted to noise, made morality judgements and used authoritative
comments which included dictating rules to peers; however there were also episodes in which children showed concern for others.

4.3.10.4 Critiquing behaviour

Throughout the study it became clear that Hot Wheels observed and evaluated the behaviour of his peers as noted here in my reflective diary:

At the mark making table the teacher has set up “big drawing” covering the whole table with paper to encourage children to engage in collaborative drawing, however HW actively made a decision to set up his own boundary by placing an individual A4 sheet of paper on the big drawing table which highlights his wariness of others, and the control and ownership he likes over his work. Two other boys are at the table, Adam, and Aaron. Adam leans across the table and starts to scribble in an erratic fashion on Hot Wheel’s paper, uninvited he stabs the page with the tip of his pencil. For a split second HW looks at Adam’s hand, then with his own pushes Adam’s hand off his page with a sweeping motion. Adam withdraws his hand. Adam and Aaron start to throw the pens across the table, HW does not verbalise his criticisms of Adam and Aaron’s behaviour, instead he makes it known to them physically that their intrusions are unwelcome by slowly and calmly pushing their hands and the pens that are being thrown across the table away from him. Towards the end of the episode HW looks up at the camera (social referencing), again indicating that he knows the behaviour is unacceptable in this environment.

4.3.11 Problem Ownership: Patience, Persistence

Children showed self-determination and a willingness to endure working through problems by keeping their behaviour in check, remaining calm, and considering alternatives thus finding solutions to solve their own problems
and acknowledging their own self-awareness with increasing confidence whilst thinking through options.

The two sub categories of “problem ownership” are explained in the following vignettes concerning Hot Wheels who exercises his patience when encountering Jane, and Rosie with another boy Lee who demonstrate persistence; both vignettes are drawn from the video data transcripts.

4.3.11.1 Patience

Patience was demonstrated and documented as pausing for reflection, which sometimes manifested when children seemed unaware of the next move - they waited as they took time to make their decisions, and then made considered choices before taking action. Occasionally children were seen to be sacrificing their own needs for others by being passive, and dealt with errors calmly with an air of self-awareness.

Hot Wheels is at the art table and for some time has been trying to work out how to get a lollipop stick to take part in the painting activity. Interestingly he does manage to verbalise that he “wants a stick” several times out loud in the direction of the camera, but at no point does he ask the teacher who is at the other end of the table to get a stick for him which indicates that he has taken ownership of the problem. HW does look uncomfortable at times; he rubs his eyes, touches his hair and rocks back and forth, but he stays calm and perseveres with trying to get a stick from Jane who is on the opposite side of the table, and has all the sticks in her hand. Even though HW shows signs of annoyance by making noises, he demonstrates his patience as he tries to work out what he can do to get a stick. HW makes a few attempts at reaching over but stops short of snatching, keeping his behaviour in check. He then makes a move towards Jane by going around the edge of the table and touches the sticks in her hand (which she snatches out of his way by keeping a tight grip on them). Hot Wheels remains calm “I wanna stick I wanna stick” he says louder.
4.3.11.2 Persistence

Children persisted in overcoming their difficulties especially when they made a mistake, slipped, or lost control of what they were doing. They were determined to carry on, did not give up and “wanted to get it right” which sometimes resulted in children starting again, or prolonging, or preserving the activity with new materials rather than giving up and terminating the activity. Children also persevered through uncomfortable situations, including managing others.

Rosie is at the painting easel and can be seen managing her own behaviour in response to that of her peer (Lee) who is desperately trying to engage with her whilst she is painting. Rosie can be heard trying to reason with Lee by asking him to “wait a minute” whilst he persists in calling her name over and over and tries telling her what to do, she even asks him to “stop” when he starts banging on the back of the easel. Rosie shows patience here when dealing with Lee and perseveres with his behaviour by persisting with her painting through his disruptions. Lee tries to over-ride Rosie’s art making by imposing his own subjective interpretation telling her “to do a house”, and criticising her painting of an eye—“that’s not an eye!” both comments Rosie ignores and sticks to her own idea telling him “no!” and looks perplexed at times. Rosie demonstrates thinking through several possibilities of what she can do, she looks at the camera asking me to “tell him to stop” she reports “he painting me” when Lee starts to run a roller over her (even bumping it into her face); she completely takes ownership of dealing with Lee and tries to take the roller off him saying “give me that!” and tells him “go play with something else.” However Lee also shows patience and perseverance and is determined to interact with Rosie at the painting easel trying to find a way to gain access to her art making activity.
To conclude this chapter a visual model of all the findings reported following thorough examination of the data concerning young children’s emergent PT is presented (see Figure 4.2 on page 215). The model synthesises the findings from Part One: The Core of PT, and Part Two: PT Features in Action. As previously mentioned in part one the core of PT laid the foundations and supported PT features in action. The reader will see on the model that PT features in action emanate from question-posing and self-determined sensorial infusion (shown as the funnel). The eight features of PT in action (Aesthetic Acumen and Acuity; Question-Responding; Elucidation; Innovative Imaginative Declaration; Risk Taking; Augmented Accuracy; Critiquing; and Problem Ownership) and their corresponding sub-themes are presented as traversing through playful acted out explorations and immersive action intention flow which framed all PT activity in this doctoral study.

Hot, warm, and cool colours correspond to the order in which the PT features in action findings have been documented throughout this chapter (see Table 4.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PT Feature (This doctoral study)</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Acumen and Acuity Question-Responding</td>
<td>Hot Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elucidation Innovative Imaginative Declaration Risk Taking Augmented Accuracy</td>
<td>Warm Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiquing Problem Ownership</td>
<td>Cool Features</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Strength of PT features- this doctoral study
The significance of the “temperature gauge” is to offer the reader an insight-determining the strength for each PT feature; the more in-depth demonstrations, observations, and documented features thus are registered as radiating more energy. This is not meant as “a measure” it is simply a way of capturing a moment in time for the children in this doctoral study in order to determine how young children’s creativity was manifest during the nursery year.

Appendix 9 demonstrates how this was achieved by showing simple illustrative star charts for each child. The greater the star, the more energy was manifest as PT behaviour. Individual differences found for each focus child will be reported during the following chapters concerning the nurturing role of others in collaboration and artistic identity.
Figure 4.2: Visual model

The core of PT and PT features in action- this doctoral study
CHAPTER FIVE

Findings RQ: 2
The Nurturing Role of Others

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analytical response to Research Question 2: How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context. Findings are presented in three main parts. The first part focuses on adults’ roles as “meddlers” (McWilliam, 2008). A range of meddling styles were found across behaviours from nursery staff and also myself as the researcher. Findings encompass five key roles: Agentic Advocate, Learner/Documenter, Equitable Participation Negotiator, Supportive Facilitator, and Play Partner.

The second part explores my adopted stance as a meddler in the middle of young children’s art, and uses examples from the spoken narratives documented during Rosie’s Spider Story as detailed in the previous findings (Chapter Four). By focussing on one sustained episode the “full” picture is explained in detail following a clear example demonstrating Rosie’s progression- moving from describing to imagining in action as stimulated by my questioning strategies.

The third part hones in on how peer-to-peer interactions nurture through “as if” roles within an emotionally enabling context, and reports on the classroom dynamics and creative relationships experienced in nursery across the academic year for the three focus children. In this doctoral study peer-to-peer collaborative creativity was evidenced as three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, Artist-Demonstrator and observer-Replicator. There was also evidence of transitional dynamics which had the potential to link individual to collaborative creativity, noted as parallel working,
and tactical engagement strategies which included: aesthetic awareness, nurturing, intrude and invite, seek out expert play partners, and use adult as gatekeeper. Tensions and blocks that hindered the movement from individual to collaborative creativity are drawn out; these were found as rejecting peers, avoidance, possessive ownership of materials, and non-negotiated roles.

The findings in this chapter are drawn from analysis which focussed on video data (action and narrative transcripts) and accompanying notes and researcher reflections, and was supported by photographs and practitioner reflections. The method of analysis focussed on Layer Two: Inductive modes of inquiry (Appendix 1) which encompassed line by line, axial, and selective coding achieved through memos as exampled in Appendices: 5, 6, and 7. Once these processes were complete and saturation was achieved modelling took place (Layer Four: Constructing theory and modelling, Appendix 1). Full and detailed explanation of these processes was documented in the methodology- Chapter Three.

The presentation of findings in this chapter offers the reader an account by way of definitions, detailed categories and explanations, and vignettes intended to offer insights into the categories. Tables are used to summarise findings, and visual models are presented demonstrating the complex construction of ideas.

### 5.2 Part 1: Adults as Meddlers

The analysis of the nurturing role of the adult in the nursery classroom focussed on teachers and early years practitioners’ practice (nursery staff, teachers, learning support assistants etc) and my adopted stance as a “meddler”. To clarify this position I draw on McWilliam (2008) who talks about changing the dominant transmission culture of teaching, new forms of social engagement, being in the thick of the action, and mutual involvement in assembling and disassembling cultural products, being a designer, editor,
assembler, and a collaborative critic and an authentic evaluator- in other words a “meddler”. This doctoral study sought to uncover the dynamics between the meddler and the young children, and how these relationships were forged, and the associated dynamics within.

5.2.1 Range of meddling: Nursery staff and researcher

A range of meddling styles were found across video data episodes including behaviours from nursery staff and also myself. Findings encompassed five key roles (see Table 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Meddling Styles</th>
<th>Agentic Advocator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner/Documenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equitable Participation Negotiator</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play Partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Range of meddling styles

Each key role clustered several sub-themes which are discussed below.

5.2.2 Agentic Advocate

The role of adults as agentic advocators was found to encompass: allowing time and space, respecting boundaries, standing back and stepping forward. Each of these sub-categories are explained here in more detail.

5.2.2.1 Allowing time and space

In the nursery setting children were given the opportunity for child-initiated free play in what the school called “Explore Time”. At the time this doctoral
study was collecting data the school was going through a period of transformation, opening up “Explore Time” across all years nursery- through to- year two. All pupils were given opportunities to take part in Explore Time which evolved from interest in the influential practices and philosophies of the pre-schools in Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy. Reggio Emilia places the child at the heart of its pedagogy educating the senses through engagement with materials which stimulates possibilities. Project work is a central aspect of the Reggio Approach; it does not follow a prescribed curriculum, but rather follows the child’s curiosities and provocations. The staff at the school in which this doctoral study is situated aims to develop learning and communication by embracing a can do philosophy which values children’s ideas supporting their natural curiosities about the world through free play and creative opportunities which gives children agency to follow their own individual interests.

Teachers and practitioners provided easily accessible open-ended materials without direct instruction which enabled agency and freedom of choice. Sometimes creative opportunities were semi-structured within the boundary of a theme, e.g. “let’s think about what we would find in the woods today”, but there was always space within activities to personalise, or individualise a piece of artwork. Teachers and practitioners allowed children the opportunity to travel freely around the physical space within the setting- inside the classroom, and outside to a decking area which afforded children agency to choose, investigate, and follow their own curiosities on their own terms.

Analysis of my narrative (transcribed video conversations during episodes with the children) also proved fruitful in terms of allowing time and creating a space for dialogue. When engaging in conversations with the children, adequate pauses were left allowing the children the opportunity to carefully think, and make considered responses. If children asked me a question, sometimes to prompt thinking I would not give them the answer, responding “I don’t know, what do you think?” affording an opening for the children to solve their own problems, answer their own questions, and work it out for themselves.
5.2.2.2 Respecting boundaries

Boundaries, both physical and personal were found to be a dominant feature of the children’s behaviours. Individual boundaries will be discussed further on in the thesis in relation to Research Question 3 which focuses on the identity of the children as artist communicators.

The role of the adult in respecting boundaries was found to be associated with acknowledging children’s personal space- Hot Wheels in particular was fond of making a space within a space; for example if there was a large piece of paper put out for shared drawing he would get a smaller piece to put on top of it and draw his own individual picture. Rather than forcing Hot Wheels to contribute to the communal piece of art, he was given the opportunity to participate in the drawing activity, but do so on his own terms.

Box Boy had equally powerful personal boundaries in place- throughout the nursery year he refused to wear an apron of any kind, and for the first few months of the study he did not want to wear his microphone. Over time I was able to desensitise Box Boy’s associated feelings of anxiety with his microphone by firstly showing him how it worked; recording funny voices and playing them back, putting the microphone on a teddy for him to carry around, then gradually progressed introducing the microphone to his personal space, at first in his trouser pocket, then at last on a clip around his neck. However Box Boy resisted any opportunity to wear an apron and the staff at the setting respected his right keep his boundary intact thus allowing him to refuse protection for his clothes.

Another main theme of respecting boundaries was highlighted when I attempted dialogue with the children. I accepted the children’s right to respond to my questions if they wanted to, letting them decide what they wanted to talk about, and choose their own words. Hot Wheels frequently did not want to engage verbally with me; however it was not just Hot Wheels, this was a common theme across all of the focus children including Rosie who also deflected my questions, and at times rejected the opportunity to engage
in dialogue choosing to remain silent, this was also noted as a feature of risk taking in the school context where it could be perceived as inappropriate to ignore, or refuse to respond to the adults in the setting.

5.2.2.3 Standing back and stepping forward

Standing back was characterised as either being in, or alongside the action, observing in silence, or watching from a distance looking at classroom dynamics and the nature of social interactions. When adults chose to step back children were afforded the possibility for risk taking, making mistakes and errors. Adults were seen to let children work through their own problems but at the same were on hand if they encountered challenges, for example stepping forward with gentle safety reminders or making suggestions - thus standing back and stepping forward each form part of the meddling role.

There were also occasions when I stepped forward as a broker between the children and the teacher. This was documented during an episode with Hot Wheels when he was stimulated by the art materials left out to provoke the children and wanted to make a creature, but appeared “stuck” as how to go about it. I explained what Hot Wheels was doing and asked the teacher for extra resources by way of a picture book in which Hot Wheels found an earwig and then set about making a model of the bug.

Part 2 of this chapter explores my adopted stance as a meddler in the middle of young children’s art, and uses examples from the spoken narratives documented during Rosie’s Spider Story as detailed in the previous findings (Chapter Four). My role associated with “meddling in the middle” documented the moment of stepping forward when inviting the children to engage in dialogue about their art. Several invitational questioning strategies were employed when stepping forward in the middle of art making, for example: “do you want to tell me about your idea?”; “what would you like to tell me about?”; “how’s the picture?” and “do you want to tell me about any of your ideas as you are going along?”
5.2.3 Learner/Documenter

The role of the learner/documenter was found to elicit inquisitive and imaginative communication of intellectual property.

I clearly demonstrated a genuine interest in the children’s art acknowledging their own, individual, and personal ideas. I opened and invited dialogue which resulted in children communicating through elucidation and imagination. I listened to descriptive statements such as: “white circle”; “there we are scrunchy balls”; “the blue all gone” and “I paint yellow for the sand”; and probed deeper when appropriate- asking for the expression of imaginative ideas. My role as a learner/documenter is explicated further on in the section below reporting the findings of “meddling in the middle” narratives.

5.2.4 Equitable Participation Negotiator

The adult nurturing role associated with being an equitable participation negotiator included promoting independent communication and collaboration between children.

Independent communication was supported by modelling language, and conversation etiquette. Adults listened sensitively when the children were talking to each other, and gently prompted or reminded the children to use good manners, for example being courteous by saying “please and thank you.” Adults also encouraged inviting and responding to dialogue: “I think you can ask him yourself”; or “perhaps it would be nice to say something back?”

Sometimes adults acted as conveyors between children, stimulating them to tell their peers what they were doing: “look Lucy is watching, perhaps she would like you to tell her what you are doing” and intervened to assist others in taking part- “would you like to get some tape for …?”; “look May is offering you some paper.”

In the nursery classroom collaborative group work was also encouraged by the provision of “big painting, drawing, and collage” activities. The teacher
would set up and cover a large table or dedicated area with a huge piece of paper, acetate, or cut out shape, and the children would work together to create a large wall hanging or display.

5.2.5 Supportive Facilitator

Guiding, reflecting, prompting, and reassuring were all identified with the role of being a supportive facilitator; each of these sub-categories is detailed below.

5.2.5.1 Guiding
Adults guided children with simple instructions: “try cutting them like this…”; “you can touch it”; “why don’t you ask one of your friends to hold that for you?” They also made suggestions about what the children could do when they were inactive or looked lost: “have you seen the new coloured sand?”; “come and have a look at these stickers”; “would you like to make a letter?”

5.2.5.2 Reflecting
Children were invited to think about their actions. Adults were often heard asking things like: “why do you think it’s not working?”; “what do you need?”; “how are you going to stop all the things flying out?”; “because she has mixed some colours, what could you do to make it better?” Reflective evaluations were also sought and stimulated with questions such as: “would you like to tell me about your idea?”; “whose idea was this”; “did you enjoy working together?”

5.2.5.3 Prompting
Adults prompted thinking responses, asking children to consider: “is it finished?”; “is it better?”, and “who do you think you could ask for help?” Adults tried to get children to expand their problem solving skills using visual art as a prompt to start talking: “is there a plan?”; “how are you going to make it?”; “what else might you need?”; “is it working?”
5.2.5.4 Reassuring
Adults offered children comfort and reassurance when things did not go to plan, affording them the confidence to keep trying and not to give up, praising efforts with positive value statements, and concurring with good ideas.

Adults also acted with sensitivity to children’s emotional well-being, often enquiring: “are you OK with that?”; “are you happy for me to watch you playing?”; and were sympathetic to children’s individual emotional needs if they were upset, comforting them, and helping them overcome separation anxieties, and to relax their boundaries. This was an important issue for collaboration especially if children were wary of others, adults would take time to reassure the children that their peers were interested in playing with them and that was a good thing, and would rationalise and explain others’ actions: “he wants to help you with that.”

5.2.6 Play Partner

In the nursery the adult role of play partner was characterised as enthusiastic and appreciative. Adults displayed a positive attitude and showed a genuine interest in young children’s play demonstrated by using excited words and noises to communicate the impressiveness of the children’s actions: “whoa!”; “look at that!”; “ooo”; “amazing!”

As well as offering praise and valuing a job well done, adults played alongside children affording them the opportunity to lead the play, accepting their invites, and play cues to join in: “is it for me?”; and followed their instructions: “shall I read it now?”

Adults respected children’s ideas and empowered them by exhibiting genuine enjoyment: “hey that’s an interesting design”; “you make good fliers”; “can you teach me how to make them?”; “I can’t wait to see what happens next”; “thank you for my picture.”
5.3 Part 2: Meddling in the Middle of Young Children’s Art Making: My Role

This section reports on my adopted stance as a meddler in the middle, and uses direct examples from the spoken narratives documented during Rosie’s Spider Story as detailed in the previous Chapter (Four). By focussing on one sustained episode the “full” picture is explained in detail following a clear example demonstrating Rosie’s progression- moving from describing to imagining in action as stimulated by my questioning strategies.

As detailed in the methodology in this doctoral study there was no evidence of “extended meddling” found from the nursery staff participants in the episodes chosen for analysis. To clarify, this is not to say that the nursery staff were not talking to the children about their art, rather that the video and narrative data reflects that I was present in all of the episodes as an “insider” collecting data via close up recording methods, and thus became enmeshed in the children’s sustained activities. Reference is made to the Methodology as stated in Chapter 3 citing Gregory and Ruby (2010:9) ‘the intrinsic aim of ethnography is to present ‘emic’ interpretations (seeing events from the participants’ point of view), however attempts to unpick the almost insoluble dilemmas of being an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’”. The benefits of collecting such rich data can be seen throughout this part of the chapter as I move from the outside of activities into the inside to “meddle”; however I acknowledge that one dilemma surfaced as a result of my insider role. When I was deeply engrossed with the children in their activities there was “no space” afforded for a second adult meddler and thus it would be unfair of me to suggest that nursery staff do not meddle, this is not the case and the lack of nursery staff meddling data shall be acknowledged as a critique of this doctoral study in the final concluding chapter.
5.3.1 Role Reversal: Child as Artist/Owner, Adult as Learner/Documenter

Meddling in the middle was found to be framed by a distinct reversal of roles. The analysis of spoken dialogue between myself and the focus children revealed that interestingly the accumulative narrative lead across all Phases was found to be taken by the focus children who were the strongest protagonists of the conversation. Dialogue was coded and classified into themes (see Appendix 10 and Table 5.2 on the following page) which demonstrates the range of narratives. Overall throughout the nursery year children were found to engage in 13 types of narrative, 7 were child-initiated, and 6 adult-prompted. I was found to engage in 6 types of narrative, 3 adult-initiated, 3 child-prompted.
# Table 5.2: Range of Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Narrative</th>
<th>Adult Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Non-verbal Invite</td>
<td><strong>Adult Initiated Verbal Invite to Communicate/Open Dialogue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Verbal Invite</td>
<td><strong>Adult Initiated Sustaining/Extending Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Spontaneous Imaginative Declaration</td>
<td><strong>Adult Initiated Challenge/Provoke Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Spontaneous Elucidation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Spontaneous Evaluation Statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Spontaneous Sustaining/Extending Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Initiated Spontaneous Challenge/Provoking Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Prompted Non-verbal Agreement to Communicate RESPONSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Prompted Verbal Agreement to Communicate RESPONSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Prompted Repeating/Confirming RESPONSE</td>
<td><strong>Child Prompted Repeating/Confirming RESPONSE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Prompted Elucidation Statement RESPONSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Prompted Imaginative Declaration RESPONSE</td>
<td><strong>Child Prompted Sustaining/Extending RESPONSE (inherent evaluation)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Prompted Evaluation RESPONSE</td>
<td><strong>Child Prompted Challenge/Provoke RESPONSE (inherent evaluation)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It appeared that the imaginative dynamics of meddling encompassed a reversal of roles in which children were viewed as the artist/owner of the intellectual property, and it was my role to learn about, and document the artists’ work. Children were heard using statements such as “my idea”; “I’m doing…”; “I want”; and directed the adult by seeking acknowledgement and recognition for their artwork—“you can take a picture now.” Watching, observing, videoing, and photographing as part of the learner/documenter role were complimented by question-posing techniques; this will be clarified further on in the chapter with palpable examples in text.

Examination of the narrative as evidenced above (Table 5.2) shows that there appears to be some kind of emergence process happening between meddler and child in terms of bouncing ideas/challenges back and forth in order to move dialogue forward. Attention is drawn to narrative themes displayed by both meddler and child: invitation, sustaining/ extending questions, challenge provoking questions, and repeating/confirming responses. Examples of the coding of comments and questions are available in Appendix 10.

In addition to these mirrored behaviours—repeating, confirming, sustaining, and extending—evaluating was found in the “Spider Episode” narrative; although from my perspective this was sometimes manifest as inherent in the nature of the questions posed.

The meddling role was classified as: making visual and verbal connections, acknowledging, challenging and provoking, and going beyond the realist vision. And child narratives offered insights into: describing imaginative ideas in action, bringing art to life through storytelling, and moving beyond what can be seen.

The following sections offer the reader snapshots of dialogue which are taken directly from the “Spider Episode” line by line video transcript to illuminate these concepts. The transcriptions are presented in box format as they are considered as raw data, not written in prose. The reader will be able to follow
the flow of conversation using the following key (C: Child, R: Researcher) and will be able to view photographs of Rosie’s artwork.

5.3.2 Mirrored Behaviours: Repeating, confirming, sustaining, extending, evaluating

5.3.2.1 Repeating
Both mine and the children’s narratives were found to incorporate repetitive words which are evidenced in Box 1- this extract of transcript was found towards the start of Rosie’s story. Interestingly this feature was also found during peer to peer dialogue which is documented in Part 3.

Box 1: Example of repeating- Rosie’s story

C: “I done a big spider”
R: “a big spider?”
R: “what’s your spider doing then Rosie?”
C: “yeah”
C: “it got wings”
R: “wings?”
C: “no legs” “spider”
C: “I’m going to do the clouds”
R: “clouds, lovely”
C: “yeah, look”
5.3.2.2 Confirming

The children and I also repeated words by way of confirming. Already noted as a feature of question-responding, children used confirming words to show agreement, or acceptance, concurring with me, and used narratives to back up or affirm their ideas in action. I also confirmed that I was observing the children by verbalising that I could see what they had done. An example of confirming is evidenced in Box: 2.

Rosie starts to draw a circular shape half way down the page
R: “wow that’s a really interesting pattern”
C: “it’s a spider web”
R: “a spider web?”
C: “yeah”
R: “is that where the spider lives?”
Rosie draws the circular shape round and round over and over- the shape gets larger and larger
C: “it get big and big, like that”
Rosie stands back and holds out her hand towards the board indicating that she wants the researcher to look at it
R: “yeah I can see, wow”
C: “yeah he go round and round and round builds like that”
C: “spider web, right now I do square for bed yeah”
R: “yeah, lovely”

Box 2: Example of confirming- Rosie’s story
5.3.2.3 Sustaining

Children were documented as sustaining my interest in what they were doing, by creating an exciting atmosphere and adding suspense, or indicating that there will be more to see and hear- “tell the story in a minute innit”; “oh oh oh I forgot something”; “wait wait!” Likewise I was equally as interested in sustaining the collaborative narrative activity by purposefully asking direct questions to stimulate further conversation and sustain the imaginative dynamic that was developing. A section of transcript taken from Rosie’s story demonstrating sustaining is available to view on the in Box: 3.

R: “what else do you think the spider might need?”
C: “I need urm”

(pause) Rosie takes her time and looks around for a moment, she puts her pen to the board and makes careful movements; she holds the board up to the camera…

C: “a watering can”
R: “a watering can, do spiders like water?”
C: “yeah and I do a snail”

Rosie draws a circular spiral with a stalk.

Box 3: Example of sustaining- Rosie’s story

5.3.2.4 Extending

Similarly to sustaining, I sought to extend children’s thinking, building on ideas in action. Children extended narratives by humanising objects, creating new characters, and developed storylines about the character’s behaviours, or placed them in a setting as documented on the following page in Box: 4.
R: “what does the spider think of the snail?”

C: “they gonna play games and a small spider”

Rosie repeats the drawing of the spider in a much smaller version

C: “now there is the little spider”

Rosie adds a face to the small spider, then adds to the big spider- two eyes, and she draws a smile, as she does this she says “and a mouth”

R: “does that mean your spider is happy?”

Rosie laughs and carries on adding more legs…and draws some wavy lines

C: “ah ha ha ha, look my spider is playing” “right that one, that one, that one, that one ah!”

C: “oh oh oh” “there’s the seaside!”

R: “that spider gets around a bit doesn’t he?”

Box 4: Example of extending- Rosie’s story

5.3.2.5 Evaluating

Children's evaluating behaviours were documented in the previous findings chapter (Four) as found during question-responding, for example when children asked have “I” got it right? They also compared standards of art, and observed and evaluated reaction to action. Evaluation was also found as an aspect of aesthetic acumen and acuity, indeed Rosie’s sense of awareness and evaluation appeared to be the key to her artistic way of being in the classroom when she demonstrated clear ideas about the standard of her own, and others’ artwork. It soon became evident to me that Rosie valued her own artwork and wanted others to admire it also. Several times throughout the spider episode Rosie stood back and held her hand out
towards the board indicating that she wanted me to look at it, she also held
the board up for me to observe. In addition to the physical displays Rosie
used direct instruction to gain recognition for her artwork, saying “now you
can take a picture”- influencing me to document her artwork.

In terms of my evaluations these were less obvious and were sometimes
manifest as inherent in the nature of the questions posed to the children. I
engaged children by demonstrating a genuine interest in what they were
doing, often offering positive value statements, and using excited noises to
communicate the impressiveness of children’s artwork, such as: “lovely”;
“aw”; “whoa”; “that’s amazing!”; but wanted to probe deeper into the
children’s imaginative worlds. Instead of assessing the children’s art by way
of aesthetics alone, i.e. drawing skill, knowledge of colours, or constructional
representation, I valued the artwork as a piece in its own right, and sought to
understand it from the child’s perspective. The reader is invited to look at
Rosie’s spider picture in its final form (Figure 5.1 on the following page) in
order to understand my rationale when evaluating young children’s art. I used
several techniques to illicit children’s artistic narratives including: “OK tell me
about it”; and sought reasons for aesthetic choices asking children to
verbalise with a rationale: “why has the spider got spots?” Instead of
assessing the visual, concrete forms, i.e. has the spider got all the correct
parts?; does that look like a snail?; is the sun yellow?- provocation and
challenge prompted imaginative responses extending expression beyond the
realist vision. Thus symbols are relevant to the artist communicator in the
conveyance of meaning through narrative, but are not assessed in terms of
representations by the meddler.
5.3.3 Child Narrative: Describing imaginative ideas in action, bringing art to life through storytelling, moving beyond what can be seen

5.3.3.1 Describing imaginative ideas in action

Children (particularly Rosie) liked to engage in verbalising their imaginative ideas as they were being depicted or constructed. For the vast majority of time the children described the features of their artwork as realist, using aesthetic awareness to verbalise what could be seen, using words like: “it is a…”; “this is…”. In the example presented on the next page (Box: 5) I try to prompt Rosie to go beyond the realist vision by asking her what the spider is saying, but after pausing Rosie turns her thinking into a concrete idea by
drawing some round marks on the spider’s face, then as she is drawing the shapes she says: “he needs glasses.”

Box: 5 Example of describing imaginative ideas in action-Rosie’s story

5.3.3.2 Bringing art to life through storytelling

As well as describing what could be seen and using physical actions to emphasise ideas: ‘Rosie draws the circular shape round and round over and over- the shape gets larger and larger’; “it get big and big, like that” “spider web… yeah he go round and round and round builds like that”- children also brought their art to life by creating stories. Throughout the spider narrative Rosie and myself developed a sense of emergence where two people bounce ideas and challenges off each other in order to move forward; however the “storyline” was created, controlled, and conveyed by Rosie. As well as creating characters, ‘the spider, the little spider, and the snail’, Rosie imagined her characters were living beings, humanising their features,
imagining what they might need, and even portrayed their behaviours. Rosie also placed her characters in settings, and took them on imaginary, but real journeys acting out her character’s story, just as if they were leaving the marks on the board and she was controlling their environment as can be seen here in Box: 6.

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**Box: 6 Example of Bringing art to life through storytelling- Rosie’s story**

Rosie swaps pens taking a dark blue/purple pen to the board she moves it slowly around her drawings in a jagged line.

R: “what is happening to the spider now then Rosie?”

C: “he is urm a purple footprint” “now I gonna draw black”

Rosie takes a black marker and draws another jagged line around the edge of the board.

R: “I can’t wait to see what happens next”

Rosie draws lots of dots and circles around and over the spider

The researcher points to the dots…

R: “can you tell me a little bit about this here?”

C: “he got spots”

R: “why has the spider got spots?”

Rosie starts to dab the marker on the board as she is speaking…

C: “and he got rain”

R: “and now it’s raining on the spider”

C: “yeah it’s raining”
5.3.3.3 Moving beyond what can be seen

The analysis of the “spider story” found that at the beginning of the episode Rosie made slow, calm, considered movements with her pen, she carefully depicted a face with long lines emanating from its perimeter; after declaring “I done a big spider” she placed her spider in a natural environment, by stating that she was drawing “clouds” and said “I doing the sun” as she carefully drew a sun in the top right hand corner of the board. After drawing the environment Rosie then furnished her spider with practical items such as a “spider web” and “a square for a bed”, and “a watering can.” Rosie then moved the story forward by building on previous imaginative ideas, she created a scenario by developing a storyline about the spider’s friends- “yeah and I do a snail”, after drawing a circular spiral with a stalk I asked “what does the spider think of the snail?” to which Rosie replied “they gonna play games and a small spider”; here Rosie is starting to move beyond what could be seen. Rosie then repeated the drawing of the spider in a much smaller version, and then proceeded to embellish the story about the spider and his friends- “now there is the little spider”, after adding a face to the small spider Rosie said “they gonna do two spiders.” “Another spider, what’s the big spider saying to the little spider?” I enquired; “because someone spider can be” “now this little spider he go” “look my spider is playing” says Rosie as she continues to express her imaginative thinking outside of literal “real” or “concrete” concepts entering more abstract ways of thinking. This type of imaginative narrative is distinct from describing ideas in action, projecting into an interpretative space that only exists in Rosie’s mind.

5.3.4 Adult Narrative: Making visual and verbal connections, acknowledging, challenging and provoking, going beyond the realist vision

Analysis of my narrative (transcribed video conversations during the spider episodes with Rosie) found that I made visual and verbal connections, and
acknowledged, challenged, and provoked Rosie to go beyond the realist vision. Each of these findings are explored in more detail as follows.

5.3.4.1 Making visual and verbal connections

When engaged as a meddler in the middle of young children’s art I made visual and verbal connections manifest in the context of observing and listening. I was drawn in by the children and watched their actions intently noting interesting behaviours and using these as a “way in”- opening and inviting dialogue as described here: Rosie puts the board down- she rubs her finger on the ink and again notices the marks on her hand “urm…I got it on my finger” she says, “where has it gone your picture?” I enquire …“ha ha” responds Rosie as she carries on rubbing the picture at first with her finger, then with her hands until the board is empty. Rosie looks at her hands then rubs them on her jumper, then looks at her hands again. “In my hand” says Rosie, “you have put it in your hand?, your picture it is like magic, it’s gone in your hand”; “yeah” she replies. I also noticed interesting shapes and patterns: “wow that’s a really interesting pattern”; (Rosie draws a smile) “does that mean your spider is happy?”; (Rosie draws a jagged line) “what’s happened to the spider?” I also picked up on Rosie’s verbal threads: “it’s a spider web”- “a spider web?”, “yeah” “is that where the spider lives?”… “spider web, right now I do square for bed yeah” “yeah, lovely, what else do you think the spider might need?” I continue.

5.3.4.2 Acknowledging, challenging and provoking

I acknowledged children’s expressive ideas by listening to their words and repeating and confirming them back to the children thus reinforcing to the child my understanding and acceptance of their agency, and their stance as the owner of the piece. At no time did I attempt to take over, direct, or alter the path of the children’s narratives, but I did challenge and provoke the
children in order to engage in reasoning and reflection, for example: “he got spots” – “why has the spider got spots?”

There were also occasions when challenges were melded with subjective interpretation with the aim of elaborating artistic expressions: “he needs glasses, yes there you go” says Rosie– “are they his sunglasses?” I enquire making the link between the sun and the black lenses, “no!” replies Rosie– “does he need glasses to see properly?” I probe trying to understand the connection– “yes from the sun” interprets Rosie. Challenges were also documented on occasion to provoke forward thinking– “is there a plan?”, “how are you going to make this?” and to check if the piece was finished– “do you want to add anything else?” Challenges were also found during episodes in which risk taking was present, provoking children to overcome their fears and have a go at new things.

5.3.4.3 Going beyond the realist vision

The notion of questioning to “go beyond the realist vision” is paired with Rosie “moving beyond what can be seen” as featured above and found in the context of communicating imaginings, i.e. transitioning from narrative that is distinct from describing, or saying what can be seen to more abstract concepts- projecting into an interpretative space that only exists in the children’s minds. Table 5.3 (next page) shows a summary of question-posing examples found in this doctoral study. The examples include “going beyond the realist vision” where I asked Rosie to place herself in the position of others to think about a story connecting the characters in her artwork from a different perspective, and the dialogue that might occur between them.
Table 5.3: Summary of question-posing examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Question-Posing</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observing</td>
<td>Making visual and verbal connections</td>
<td>“Wow that's a really interesting pattern”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td>“What's your spider doing then Rosie?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>Acknowledging, challenging, and provoking</td>
<td>“A watering can do spiders like water?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Spikes, what do the spikes do?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining</td>
<td>Going beyond the realist vision</td>
<td>“What does the spider think of the snail?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Another spider, what's the big spider saying to the little spider?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.5 Visual model: Meddling in the middle of young children’s art

To summarise this part, a visual model of the nature of the dynamics between myself and the children that resulted from “meddling in the middle” of young children’s art is presented on the following page (Figure 5.2). The model demonstrates that children and the meddler (in this instance myself) were encompassed by a distinct reversal of roles where the child was held in esteem as the artist owner, and it was my role to learn about, and document the artist's work. There was also a distinct framing of mirrored behaviours that were evidenced for the children and the meddler- these were repeating, confirming, sustaining, extending, and evaluating and can be seen in the model on both sides of meddling in the middle. Analysis of my narrative found that I made visual and verbal connections, and acknowledged,
challenged, and provoked children to go beyond the realist vision (shown in the model as orange blocks stemming from meddling in the middle), and in response the children described their imaginative ideas in action, brought their art to life through storytelling, and moved beyond what they could see—these features are shown in the model as yellow blocks reaching up towards the child as the artist owner.

Figure 5.2: Visual model of meddling in the middle of young children’s art—this doctoral study
5.4 Part 3: Peer-to-Peer Roles and Relationships

This third and final part explores the nurturing role of others and hones in on how peer to peer interactions nurture through “as if” roles within an emotionally enabling context, and reports on the classroom dynamics and creative relationships experienced in nursery across the academic year for the three focus children. In this doctoral study peer-to-peer collaborative creativity was evidenced as three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, Artist-Demonstrator and Observer-Replicator. There was also evidence of transitional dynamics which had the potential to link individual to collaborative creativity, noted as parallel working, and tactical engagement strategies which included: aesthetic awareness, nurturing, intrude and invite, seek out expert play partners, and use adult as gatekeeper. Tensions and blocks that hindered the movement from individual to collaborative creativity are drawn out; these were found as rejecting peers, avoidance, possessive ownership of materials, and non-negotiated roles.

5.4.1 Classroom dynamics and creative relationships

Several types of social dynamics and artistic relationships were found in the nursery classroom revealing ways in which children’s agency is expressed in relation to taking part in individual, collaborative, and communal playful activities; reflecting previous PT research with children of this age group (Craft, et al., 2012b).

Chappell’s (2008, 2011) humanising perspective highlights the interconnections between all three kinds of creativity as part of an emergent story; although interconnections between individual, collaborative, and communal creativity were found in the nursery, for these young learners collaborative creativity was often temporary, and not a static feature, with many of the children choosing engage in art making alone, rather than with their peers.
5.4.2 Emotionally enabling context driven by provocation

This doctoral study reinforces the key aspects of pedagogy for PT already documented in earlier work (Cremin, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012b) where adults were seen to be standing back allowing children time and space to develop their own ideas, but gauging with sensitivity when there was a need to step forward, or to “meddle in the middle”.

Provocation was a key element of the enabling context triggering children’s interest, engagement, and imagination; deemed by the practice to be educating the senses through engagement with materials which stimulates possibilities. Practitioners left unusual objects for the children to discover, hid materials in boxes, or suitcases, mixed glitter and sand in with paints, cello-taped pieces of paper in unexpected places, cut holes in card, and used natural elements such as ice, leaves, stones, etc. The use of the term “provocation” as adopted by the school encompassed several meanings ranging from what some would describe as “normal classroom provision” as documented above, to problem solving situations such as a key frozen in a block of ice, all the tables turned up on end in the classroom, or a small doorway painted on the skirting board. As the Head Teacher noted: the setting, the classroom layout, the materials, the staff etc. are all part of the provocation, “it’s in the way you present things, shaking them up which is provoking.”

5.4.3 Communal spectatorship

Within the emotionally enabling context driven by provocation, children displayed behaviours associated with communal spectatorship. Evidence of children observing the environment was found- i.e. suspending their involvement in immersive activities to look around the classroom in order to see what other children were doing, taking an interest in aspects of classroom culture such as visitors, play in progress, tensions and
disagreements. The children also had a good sense of where the teachers and practitioners were and followed them observing and anticipating if they were going to introduce new provocations. Children also took to standing at the periphery of activities observing peers and keeping a general “eye” on what was going on, this was often seen in Hot Wheel’s behaviours. The notion of spectatorship in this sense refers to watching, but not taking part, and having an awareness of what is going on in the classroom environment.

5.4.4 Collaborative creativity

Collaborative creativity was evidenced as three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, and Artist-Demonstrator and Observer-Replicator. Each of these relationships is characterised below.

When children acted “as if” they were teachers they were authoritative towards their peers; they evaluated their work and offered praise. They took time to explain instructions to apprentices and demonstrated artistic ideas to them. Apprentices worked closely alongside their teachers, watching them and trying out their ways of working with “new” tools such as scissors, or manipulating materials in different ways through “the teacher’s” guidance.

Directors acted “as if” they were in charge, making decisions, and telling peers how to use materials and tools through direct and clear instructions. Assistants sourced and provided materials for the director, sometimes they were permitted to help in the making process by following a briefing of what to do.

Artist-demonstrators attracted many followers, their activities had an in-direct ripple effect throughout the classroom with peers watching, mirroring, and copying. Observer-Replicators mirrored the language, behaviours, and artwork of artists- copying ideas in their own way- not through direct instruction.
During all of these relationships the dynamics were top down and one way, there was no evidence of reciprocity, equality, or emergence where two people bounce ideas off each other to move forward, for example as is seen in the work of Sawyer, 2006. These characteristics of creativity have been evidenced in work with adults, but not to date with the young children in this doctoral study.

5.4.5 Individual “as if” differences

The table presented in Appendix 11 demonstrates the range and strength of each of the creative relationships listed above for the focus children across all Phases. It is Phase 2 which is highlighted as a period of change where it was noted that the focus children expanded their collaborative horizons by experiencing new relationships, interestingly the role of director was a new emergent feature for all of the focus children in Phase 2.

Overall it was found that the assumed role of being the teacher in creative relationships was strongest for the focus children, along with director, followed by artist-demonstrator and observer-replicator which were assumed to a moderate degree; assistant was weak, and apprentice not evident amongst the focus children, it was only their peers that adopted this role. Rosie’s strongest role was the teacher, Box Boy the director, and Hot Wheels the observer-replicator. Three vignettes are now presented, one for each of the focus children reflecting their preferred way of being in the classroom when engaged in collaborative relationships; these stories are told through my voice and all are taken directly from the transcribed context, actions, and dialogue of the video data.
5.4.5.1 Rosie: Teacher- and her Apprentice

‘I join Rosie and May who are sat side by side at the art and craft table. The teacher has provided pots of blue, white, and yellow paint, each with their own brush, and tissue paper discs of the same colour. The children have been provoked to represent the seaside in their own way. Rosie has painted a long yellow strip across the bottom of her page and says: “I paint yellow for the sand”; May has painted blue peaks. May puts her blue brush in the yellow pot... R: “no!” “don’t do that May!” “don’t do paint!” says Rosie lifting her finger! Rosie takes her brush and dips it in the yellow pot, she adds the collected paint to her ‘yellow sand’ and notices some blue comes off onto her painting, she screws her face up and makes whining sounds...”WORSE!!!” says Rosie slamming her hands down on the table. Rosie explains: “I start and now it’s all worse!” May dips her blue brush in the yellow pot again. R: “May! What you doing?”, “look it’s all worse” says Rosie pointing to her painting...Rosie puts her yellow brush back in the yellow pot and takes the white brush, she adds this to her yellow paint on the paper and mixes the white paint in with the yellow to cover the blue, she sits back and holds her hand out saying: “ta daa!” and explicates further: “white!” “use white!” Rosie points to her painting indicating to May that she wants her to observe the outcome “look” she says “it’s a lot better.”... Rosie paints yellow across the top of her page and says “I’m gonna make the sky yellow”, as she reaches to re-fill her brush May has her blue brush in the yellow pot again! May dips her blue brush in the yellow pot and Rosie shows her disappointment: “OH!” Rosie carries on painting in yellow, then she sits back folding her arms...after pausing, she holds up her hands pointing “I wanna do a blue seaside”, she paints a wiggly line across the bottom of the page, and takes some blue tissue paper, “look tissue paper, you can rip these” she says to May. Rosie demonstrates by ripping a strip of tissue and sticking it to her blue wiggly line. Whilst Rosie has been sticking May has also painted
a blue line at the bottom of her page, she now takes some blue tissue paper, rips it into strips and sticks it on top of the blue paint in exactly the same way as Rosie has done. Rosie scrunches up some of the tissue paper into balls and sticks them on the yellow paint using it as glue. “I’m going to make a beach ball today” “a big one” says Rosie holding out a larger scrunched ball in her hand; May looks on. “I’m scrumpy balls” Rosie says to May, but May is not looking, she takes some tissue paper and scrunches it up too and sticks her “scrunchy ball” to her painting exactly the same way as Rosie has demonstrated.’

5.4.5.2 Box Boy: Director- and his Assistant

‘Box Boy is on the floor by the shape store, he has found two tubes (similar shape to Pringles) from the junk modelling store which he is putting paper discs into with his hands...BB: “I’m trying to make a shaker”; Box Boy shakes the tube with the pieces in to demonstrate his idea. Box Boy goes to the mark making area where he gets masking tape; when he returns Tom has the tubes and is in the process of pouring the contents out. BB: “my shakers!” he shouts re-claiming the tubes, placing them back on the table. Alice is there and looks at the tubes. Box Boy places his hands on the tubes, and tapping the top says “my shakers.” Box Boy picks up the masking tape and Alice asks “can I help?”...Box Boy does not reply. When Box Boy puts the tape down Alice picks it up and starts to unravel it, breaking bits off; Box Boy watches. Box Boy turns one of the tubes on its end and places it on top of the other; Alice asks “what you making?” and Box Boy replies “shaker.” The tubes are now balanced on top of each other. Alice stands watching Box Boy as he continues constructing using the tape she has prepared. Alice has some tape left in her hand which Box Boy attempts to take from her, but Alice
says “no I want to do it” and bypassing Box Boy sticks the tape on the tube herself. Box Boy argues “I was doing it first!” To show ownership Box Boy takes back the tubes and with both hands shakes it, but much to his disappointment it falls apart, “OH NO!!!” shouts Box Boy. Box Boy puts the tubes back on the table and starts to tape them again. He lines them up and adds tape around the centre point where they meet and watches as Alice goes to add some tape, “carefull!” he insists, and she replies “alright I will.” Box Boy watches Alice placing her tape, and he points to where it should go.’

5.4.5.3 Hot Wheels: Observer-Replicator- and his Artist-Demonstrator

‘I am at the mark making table with Rosie, she has some post it notes, and has initiated a playful episode between us, she makes marks on the post it notes- horizontal, jagged, and wiggly lines, and says “I gonna say drewed birthday to you.” After the game is established and Rosie has set the rules of the play by writing and passing me notes saying “you got to open it.” I unroll the note- the post it note has lines marked on both sides “ooo” I say “it’s in a special language, what does it say, can you read it to me?” I hand the note back to Rosie and she says “happy birthday love from Rosie.” This pattern gets repeated several times and Hot Wheels joins the table. Sitting next to Rosie he takes an envelope and a pile of post it notes, the same as Rosie. Rosie holds up a rolled post it and offers it to me…Rosie shouts “quick open it, open it!” Hot Wheels watches as I take the note- and open it, “ooo another special language I can’t read it” I say and hand the note back to Rosie and she reads it: “mummy daddy happy birthday”, I reply: “wow, lovely that’s a very special language you are writing in” and Rosie puts the note in an envelope. Hot Wheels has made marks on his post it note and he too has put them in an envelope. I look at Hot Wheel’s post it
note and ask “have you done H there?” Hot Wheels uses his finger to point without speech. Rosie gives me another note to open, “thank you” I say. Hot Wheels watches and listens as Rosie explains she will read it, smiling Hot Wheels hands me a post it note folded in half. “Is that for me?” I enquire- “thank you.” I open the note, “it’s another special language that I can’t read” I say and hand the post it back, and Rosie reaches out and says that she will read it, but I say that Hot Wheels has written it and that maybe he will want to tell me about it. Looking shy and uncomfortable Hot Wheels takes the note; with his shoulders raised he holds it down low. Rosie looks at Hot Wheels waiting for the explanation which does not come, I say: “lovely…I like getting little notes.” Rosie hands me another note, then at the same time Hot Wheels also hands Rosie a note. Rosie opens the note from Hot Wheels- “it says happy birthday, thank you Hot Wheels.”

5.4.6 Tactical engagement

In order to move from individual to collaborative creativity the children used strategies defined as tactical engagement, these included: aesthetic awareness, nurturing, intrude and invite, seek out expert play partners, and use adult as gatekeeper. Each of these strategies is described below in more detail.

5.4.6.1 Aesthetic awareness
There was evidence of children using their subjective interpretations and evaluations of other’s artwork to gain access. Children were also evidenced observing and documenting the artwork of others with the digital cameras available in the classroom as a way to gain access to the artistic activity.

5.4.6.2 Nurturing
At times children were able to show concern for their peers, recognise the needs of others, and share tools and materials. At times children wanted their
peers to join in with them, or conversely reversed this strategy as a way to gain entry to collaborative activities by inviting themselves.

5.4.6.3 Intrude and invite
There was strong evidence of children intruding uninvited on the artistic activities of others; sometimes this was successful, but often unwelcome. There were also examples of peers asking if they could take part or be included by self-invite.

5.4.6.4 Seek out expert play partners
At times children were sought out as expert play partners, peers asked them to make play props and children often attracted the attention of others by what they were doing. Some simply had their own followers by way of friends and those that they had played and created with before.

5.4.6.5 Use adult as gatekeeper
There were many examples throughout all episodes of social referencing, which sometimes turned into direct consultation or seeking adult assistance to gain access to/or attempting to keep others out of the activity.

5.4.7 Individual creativity in a collaborative context through complementary parallel process

There was evidence of transitional dynamics which had the potential to link individual to collaborative creativity. The dynamics associated with individual creativity in a collaborative context consisted of children working independently on the same piece of artwork as their peers, the activities can be described as together but separate, where both children have a non-verbal acceptance of working alongside each other towards the same outcome or goal. An example can be found reflecting on Hot Wheel’s behaviours during the “big painting” butterfly episode where the teacher had facilitated an activity to encourage the children to work together; however the children took their own positions around the large butterfly and stuck to their own sections; in turn each were contributing towards a collaborative piece,
but remained statically individual artists. Another example of a parallel process could be drawing circles alongside other children who are drawing shapes. These types of dynamics mostly occurred during semi-structured or facilitated activities with a clear outcome or goal.

5.4.8 Visual model: Classroom dynamics and creative relationships

Figure 5.3 on the following page demonstrates the classroom dynamics and creative relationships experienced in the nursery between September 2010 and July 2011. The model is representative of the global findings across the academic year, by this I mean that it encompasses all aspects of the social environment that were evidenced over the course of the nursery year.

Creativity framed as PT was found manifest in an emotionally enabling environment driven by provocation where children engaged in communal spectatorship (shown as the red encompassing circle). This section of the thesis has focussed on classroom dynamics and creative relationships and the model demonstrates the children’s roles assumed through collaborative grouping (shown in the blue circle). The model also depicts two yellow arrows (individual creativity in a collaborative context and complementary parallel process). These arrows represent children working alongside or near each other in a way that does not manifest collaboration, but has the potential to move into collaboration, hence the use of arrows pointing towards the collaborative circle.

The model is not meant to be indicative that every child in nursery had the same social experiences; this will be explicated further on in the thesis in Chapter 6 reporting the findings of RQ3 How is the child's identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context. Individual creativity as part of identity will also be reported fully in Chapter 6. In this doctoral study individual creativity (green circle) was evidenced and defined by the following sub-categories:
Personality, Self-talk and talk to others, Boundaries: Physical and personal, Artistic: Style, skill, and schema, and Roles assumed. As the reader will see individual creativity has been included in Figure 5.3 I felt it was important to include individual creativity in this model as it represents a dimension of creative relationships, *demonstrating the potential* for transitioning from individual to collaborative creativity through tactical engagement (purple link) where children used their unique strategies to engage others.
5.4.9 Tensions and blocks

Not depicted in the social dynamics diagram are areas that hinder the movement from individual to collaborative creativity, these were found as: rejecting peers, avoidance, possessive ownership of materials, and non-negotiated roles. These tensions and blocks were found to be problem areas that children may need to overcome in order to move forward in the next years of their education to enhance and engage in fulfilling collaborative relationships.

5.4.9.1 Rejecting peers
It was only in Phase 1 and 3 that Rosie verbally rejected one or two of her peers. In Phase 1 this was due to peer preference and in Phase 3- due to being disturbed and getting annoyed at the behaviour and actions of others. There was no evidence of Box Boy rejecting his peers directly; instead he was able to ask them to stop doing something if it made him feel uncomfortable. Conversely Hot Wheels was rejected by one of his peers in Phase 1, but did stand his ground with a rationale explaining that he was not finished with his activity. Hot Wheels did not verbally reject his peers, but kept his physical and personal boundaries up to keep others out through non-verbal actions.

5.4.9.2 Avoidance
Some of the peers Rosie worked with, or near, averted and avoided eye contact with her, however some did try to engage Rosie, but if this was unsuccessful gave up on attempting interaction and left the scene. Box Boy often avoided conflict by averting his eyes, or leaving a situation he could not resolve. Hot Wheels avoided conflict by using adults to resolve the tensions with his peers; these were mainly over materials. Peers were also documented terminating the activity and walking away.

5.4.9.3 Possessive ownership of materials
It was only in Phase 1 that Rosie did not want to share, at one point she even removed the pencils to prevent others taking part, but there was also
evidence in this Phase of sharing, as well as Phases 2 and 3. Box Boy was very good at sharing tools and materials with friends, recognising their needs and offering them materials to take part in playful activities, however at times if he had an idea or internal vision for something, i.e. a box he had been given he would find it very hard to share the box. Throughout all Phases Hot Wheels had a strong sense of ownership, when he finished a piece he was seen to carry it around the room with the intention of taking it home. Hot Wheel's possessive ownership of materials had an impact on his ability to collaborate, for example he was heard saying “this is mine” and “I take this home” when others would try to help him and so was reluctant to share. Conversely Hot Wheels was also uncomfortable taking responsibility for sourcing materials, accepting that his peers controlled access to the materials when they were unwilling to share them with him.

5.4.9.4 Non-negotiated roles
There was limited evidence of children attempting to shift the collaborative dynamics during episodes. For example during a director-assistant collaboration the assistant tried to shift her role to that of an equitable constructor, she indicated that she could do it by attempting to stick the tape on the model rather than just simply furnish the child with it for him to stick it on. Another peer also tried to shift roles attempting to transition from the assistant to the director, telling the child what to do rather than taking direction. Neither was successful, and although the collaboration continued the roles remained static and hierarchically top down.

5.5 Summary
This chapter has presented the analytical response to Research Question 2: How is young children’s collaborative emergent creativity nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context. Findings were presented in three main parts. The first part focused on adults’ roles as “meddlers”. A range of meddling styles were presented encompassing the five key roles of: Agentic
Advocator, Learner/Documenter, Equitable Participation Negotiator, Supportive Facilitator, and Play Partner. The second part explored my adopted stance as a meddler in the middle and used examples from the spoken narratives documented during Rosie’s Spider Story demonstrating Rosie’s progression—moving from describing to imagining in action as stimulated by my questioning strategies. The third part honed in on how peer-to-peer interactions nurture through “as if” roles within an emotionally enabling context, and reported the classroom dynamics and creative relationships. Peer-to-peer collaborative creativity was evidenced as three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, Artist-Demonstrator and Observer-Replicator. Tactical engagement strategies included: aesthetic awareness, nurturing, intrude and invite, seek out expert play partners, and use adult as gatekeeper. Tensions and blocks that hindered the movement from individual to collaborative creativity were drawn out; these were found as rejecting peers, avoidance, possessive ownership of materials, and non-negotiated roles. Chapter Six now details explorations framed by the child’s identity as an artist communicator.
This chapter focuses on detailing PT manifest through the child’s identity as an artist communicator in response to RQ3: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context.

Over the course of this doctoral study it was found that PT was manifest through five individual and unique ways of being in the nursery classroom; these were: personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries (physical and personal), artistic style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed (teacher and apprentice, director and assistant, artist-demonstrator and artist replicator).

Figure 6.1 on the next page depicts part of a model as seen previously in Chapter 5 demonstrating how individual creativity is evidenced as part of classroom dynamics and has the potential to form creative relationships linked through tactical engagement. The “individual creativity” part of the model was representative of the global findings across the academic year, it was not meant to be indicative that every child in nursery had the same experiences. In this chapter individual creativity forming part of artistic identity is reported for each of the three focus children in order to characterise, explore, and understand key differences.

The aim of this chapter is to understand identity manifest through individual creativity for each of the three focus children. The findings in this chapter are drawn from analysis which focussed on video data (action and narrative transcripts), accompanying notes, researcher reflections, photographs, explore journals, and practitioner reflections. The methods of analysis focussed on Layer One: Framing the context (Appendix 1) which sought to
chart the flow of movement and engagement in the learning context. For examples see Appendix 12 (flow movement charts). Layer Two: Inductive modes of inquiry (Appendix 1) which encompassed line by line, axial, and selective coding achieved through memos as exampled in Appendices: 4, 5, and 6. Once these processes were complete and saturation was achieved modelling took place (Layer Four: Constructing theory and modelling, Appendix 1). Full and detailed explanation of these processes was documented in the methodology- Chapter Three.

The presentation of findings in this chapter offers the reader an account by way of definitions and explanations. Evidence is presented to illustrate the sub-categories of individual creativity; these examples are cross referenced in text by practitioner interviews, and practitioner field-notes reported in the children’s creative journals. Tables are used to summarise findings which include some simple timing figures and visual models are presented demonstrating the complex construction of ideas.

Figure 6.1: Identity manifest through individual creativity- this doctoral study
Each sub-category (personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries, artistic style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed) will present “a mini case study” extracted from each of the focus children’s profiles. For continuity, in every case the findings are reported in the order of Rosie, then Box Boy, and then Hot Wheels.

6.2 Personality

Each of the focus children manifest different aspects of personality in the nursery classroom. All were active children, but there were distinct differences seen particularly between Rosie and Hot Wheels. Rosie often displayed a dominant personality and was a social character in class, whereas Hot Wheels came across as a more reticent and quiet child who preferred to keep his guard up, hanging back on the edge of activities a lot of the time. Box Boy was also quiet at times, but this was mainly due to deep and intense absorption in his chosen activities rather than shyness. Both Rosie and Box Boy were able to show nurturing tendencies towards their peers, whereas Hot Wheels was more concerned with managing his wariness of others. The case study profiles offered below explore each of the focus children’s personalities in greater detail.

6.2.1 Rosie

My initial observations of Rosie’s personality were manifest as someone who was driven by rules and for whom morality was of great importance. She came across as a little girl who was authoritative, dominant, directive, and sometimes controlling. The lead teacher concurred with these observations in an interview: “she can be quite challenging.”

Rosie’s internalised standards were demonstrated in her interactions with others and were also shown in her artwork which was carried out to her ‘perfectionist’ rules. Rosie sometimes got a little frustrated if the visual standard of her art was not high enough, for example I heard Rosie loudly
saying: “Oh I don’t like drips, my painting is ruined!” This way of being was also confirmed in the practitioner journal:

“Rosie is helping to paint a large jungle picture, whilst painting Rosie stays within the lines.”

Rosie wanted recognition of her art and liked others to admire her work; she enjoyed talking about her ideas and valued being the centre of attention. The practitioners noted this several times in their journal:

“Rosie used a range of different writing implements to produce marks on the paper; she gave meaning to her marks by chatting about what she had drawn.”

“Rosie has drawn a picture, she says “it’s a tortoise, Princess Rosie, my name” and another picture “dinosaur tadpole.”

“Rosie often chooses to do mark making, she chats about what she has drawn and tries to write her name.”

Humorous and happy Rosie was extremely enthusiastic and social; she enjoyed the company of adults and liked to laugh at things that amused her. The lead teacher also noticed similar behaviours:

“At carpet time Rosie will sit as near to the grown-ups as possible. She likes the song basket and is focused when adults are reading stories to her.”

Energetic, absorbed and immersed- Rosie clearly enjoyed all the activities she engaged in either alone or with her peers. She was able to demonstrate some patience and passivity with her peers, and often showed concern for others, nurturing them, and telling the teacher when she thought they had been wronged or mistreated.

6.2.2 Box Boy
Box Boy seemed calm, nurturing, willing to share, patient, passive, and permissive- very rarely did I observe him expressing annoyance.
In Phase 1 Box Boy was observed setting up a cutting activity for himself which he extended to his peers—“I’m putting these out for the children” he said as he laid the paper out and then proceeded to ask the teacher for scissors (which he gained)—demonstrating his mature and responsible attitude as perceived by the teacher (scissors are not openly accessible in this setting).

Box Boy was at times an intensely deep thinker and was very much what Piaget would describe as “the lone scientist”; he really enjoyed exploring materials and experimenting—a curious and inquisitive little boy who liked to pose his own questions and experience feelings of personal success. The practitioner journal also documented Box Boy’s curiosities:

“Investigating water colour paints.”

“Envelope investigation, BB’s love of envelopes has grown over the last few months! He often fills them with folded paper, and likes to make his own envelopes of different sizes.”

The lead teacher recorded Box Boy’s transition into nursery and his obvious love of learning:

“He was fine leaving Mum and Dad, in fact it was more the opposite, trying to get him to go home was the problem.”

Enthusiasm, excitement, and enjoyment were often displayed through Box Boy’s play as he demonstrated an appreciation and valuation of his own ideas, and taking pride in his own work made him a happy little boy.

6.2.3 Hot Wheels
Hot Wheels came across as someone who was shy, quiet, and at times sensitive; often he would make a physical boundary to hide his work from others and did not like too much attention.

Hot Wheels appeared uncomfortable at times in social situations; the teacher also mentioned this in an interview with me:
“Hot Wheels found it quite hard initially to socialise...”

Hot Wheels used pacifying behaviours, sucking his fingers and rocking back and forth, and sometimes demonstrated his frustrations by getting quite annoyed; the teacher also sensed this and recorded it in her initial reflections after the settling in period:

“He was cross with us that Mum and Dad weren’t coming to get him straight away if he was upset.”

Hot Wheels was also happy and enthusiastic depending on the context he found himself in; he engaged with smiles and used excited sounds some of which were recorded in the practitioner journal:

“HW is really proud of the tower he has built with the bricks- “I did it, I did it, I did it!”

6.3 Self-talk, and talk to others

Clear comparisons can be made across the case study summaries demonstrating that Rosie was the most communicative talker out of the three focus children, followed by Box Boy, and then Hot Wheels who preferred to use sounds or pointing instead of words.

6.3.1 Rosie

Rosie was able to articulate her ideas and communicate effectively; she used her imagination and made links to language that extended beyond what she could see- using her art as a narrative for storytelling as documented at length in the previous chapter.

Rosie showed an awareness of the pragmatics of language, pausing to allow her peers time to respond; interestingly whilst I noticed the social aspects of communication the lead teacher was looking at things from a different
perspective stating that Rosie needed support with her speech and use of language suggesting that:

“Rosie sometimes needs encouragement for the correct pronunciation.”

It was evident throughout the study that Rosie enjoyed conversing with adults more than her peers; the lead teacher concurs here noting that Rosie was “very chatty with the grown-ups, sometimes a bit too chatty…” When listening to Rosie’s narrative data I got the sense that Rosie would often open or start the conversation, then lead the dialogue with both the adults in the setting, and her peers. Rosie rarely made sounds or noises out loud, but was often heard talking out loud to herself, engaging in an internal to external constant running narrative, or monologue of her actions.

The weight of data held in Rosie’s case study files suggests that she was the most orally communicative, and artistically expressive out of all three focus children. This is determined on three counts, firstly the amount of time Rosie spent in art areas; secondly her varied and vast use of materials and the amount of artistic outcomes produced; and thirdly her use of narratives to explain her elucidations and express her innovative imaginings.

6.3.2 Box Boy
Box Boy liked to communicate verbally with others on his own terms, however he preferred instead to be lost in his own thought processes and close himself off by becoming absorbed or “lost in the moment” of what he was doing as evidenced in RQ1 in the core of PT as immersive action intention flow.

The lead teacher commented on Box Boy’s social and linguistic development:

“He was not able to become absorbed in group activities; he tended to hold back on the edge of activities to start with.”

“Box Boy was very quiet...”
“When Box Boy first started he wouldn’t say a lot, just one word answers, and still sometimes now he has got to be in the right mood to converse.”

I concur, cross referencing this to my own observations: At the beginning of the nursery year (Phase 1) I did not hear or witness Box Boy conversing with his peers very much, nor did he make noises or sounds, or talk out loud to himself to any great extent. However as Box Boy transitioned into nursery and throughout the continuing year (Phases 2 and 3) he became more verbal, and unlike Rosie, in the latter stages of the year Box Boy communicated more with his peers than with the adults in the setting.

When Box Boy did communicate with the practitioners about his art activities he made associations to realism, making connections to what could be seen as referenced in their journal:

“BB spent a long time playing with the play dough, he used both the cutters and his fingers to make the dough into small pieces, BB put his finished shapes in the frying pan- “I’m making the tea.”

“BB names the red triangle, and the blue triangle, and the yellow circle.”

When communicating with me Box Boy also extended his verbal communication to include evaluation, making reference to his own and other’s artwork- and sometimes extended his narratives to include a brief story (as documented in the first of the findings chapters, Chapter 4).

6.3.3 Hot Wheels
Hot Wheels found it difficult to communicate his artistic ideas, he often used pointing and sounds to demonstrate his painting or drawing path rather than talk about his ideas. Interestingly in the first half of the year the practitioner journal notes that when they asked Hot Wheels about his art he said things like:

“It’s for grandma.”
“I’m making my painting for my mummy and daddy.”

Rather than talking about his ideas he viewed his artwork as a functional transitional gift between nursery and home.

On the rare occasions that Hot Wheels did verbalise out loud he used closed terms, such as “it is a car.” Again the practitioner notes also support this type of talk from Hot Wheels: “this is a transformer, I made it with clay.”

Hot Wheels spent a lot of time making sounds and noises and talking out-loud to himself, some examples of this type of talk are taken from video transcripts:

“Doo doo doo”; “one two three four five six seven eight nine ten, only one two, only three four and only five and only six and only seven and only eight”; “that one there, that one there, and that one there”; “mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm”; “now mix it, tap tap tap.”

On the whole this was his preferred form of communication which is interesting considering the teacher’s evaluation of Hot Wheel’s speech and language development expressed during an interview- “comparatively OK, slightly above average for here, and he does seem to be able to express himself fairly well.”

Hot Wheels communicated with adults the least, but did converse with his peers in certain contexts (mainly when playing with construction toys, or solving jigsaw puzzles).

6.4 Boundaries: Personal and Physical

Tensions and blocks which hinder children moving from individual to collaborative creativity have already been mentioned in the previous chapter exploring the nurturing role of others. In this section consideration will be paid
to the extent to which there are “common” boundaries in place for each of the focus children. The summaries below show that all of the children displayed their own individual boundaries, both physical and personal. These were stronger for some of the focus children than others. For example Rosie’s most evident boundary was that she would only engage with others if it was on her terms; Box Boy also manifest this boundary in relation to the ownership of products, making sure that his peers knew the product belonged to him before consenting to collaborate. His strongest boundaries related to the physical preservation of self which was manifest in his refusal to wear nursery “items” and shown in his risk taking, where he was fearful of new “novel” items. Similarly to Box Boy Hot Wheels was also possessive about his artwork, and like Box Boy wanted to make sure that he had something to take home; however Hot Wheels was using his artwork as a transitional gift, whereas Box Boy wanted to continue playing with his objects at home. The greatest boundary for Hot Wheels was his reticent behaviours and his shyness and silence when communicating which were evidenced in the previous sections- personally, and self-talk, and talk to others. However it was noted throughout the study that “selective mutism” was a common theme found across all of the focus children’s data sets.

6.4.1 Rosie

Rosie- liked to engage adults on her own terms, she valued her own space and sometimes selectively rejected the opportunity to engage in dialogue choosing to remain silent; during Phase 2 she even developed strategies to deflect my questions, and rejected the subjective opinions of others during art making.

Rosie’s boundaries were evident throughout the nursery year, during Phase 1 Rosie liked to “keep clean” which sometimes hindered her taking part in art activities. She also exercised her agency refusing to allow the teacher to end her painting episode, instead she carried on until she felt it appropriate to finish, thus terminating on her own terms, and during Phase 2 started putting her hand up to me saying: “I not finished yet, don’t take a picture!”
Sometimes Rosie was wary of her peers; in Phase 1 she was seen making a physical boundary around her work to keep it a secret, and in Phase 2 this developed into blocking access to activities, and in Phase 3 rejecting her peers was prominent, she was heard telling them to stop what they were doing, or directing them to go away; acting as if she was in charge. The lead teacher also noticed these types of behaviours:

“Rosie will dictate to the other children and can’t tell sometimes if other children have had enough.”

Rosie was often observed keeping an eye on others’ behaviours, correcting them when she felt necessary and displaying her disapproval; however she was able to relax her boundaries at times and exercised some patience and passivity, allowing others the opportunity to engage in collaborative activities with her.

6.4.2 Box Boy
Box Boy manifest powerful personal boundaries in the nursery year and kept them rigidly in place throughout. He refused to wear an apron of any kind, and for the first few months of the study he did not want to wear his microphone. Over time I was able to desensitise Box Boy’s associated feelings of anxiety with his microphone by firstly showing him how it worked; recording funny voices and playing them back, putting the microphone on a teddy for him to carry around, then gradually progressed introducing the microphone to his personal space, at first in his trouser pocket, then at last on a clip around his neck. However Box Boy resisted any opportunity to wear an apron and the staff at the setting respected his right keep his boundary intact thus allowing him to refuse protection for his clothes.

The lead teacher noted some of Box Boy’s boundary issues in an interview:

“Conforming is an issue. He won’t put an apron on; there are certain things that he has to do his own way.”

“When Box Boy started he didn’t want to sit down and conform. If you asked him to sit down
he just stared at you. He was not able to become absorbed in group activities; he tended to hold back on the edge of activities to start with.”

Box Boy also liked to create his own space to work in and protected his artwork and models with the intention of taking them home; he was often seen guarding against potential loss and stating ownership “this is mine”; “my shakers”; “I’m taking this home.” Once he had stated his ownership he was happy to relax his boundary and allow his peers to assist him as long as it was on his terms and they followed his ideas and his directions.

Box Boy also frequently ignored communicative cues and often remained silent when adults were trying to communicate with him. Again this was picked up by the teacher:

“When Box Boy first started he wouldn’t say a lot, just one word answers, and still sometimes now he has got to be in the right mood to converse.”

I also witnessed Box Boy avoiding eye contact with both his peers and the adults in the setting; diverting or moving away from uncomfortable situations, and would remove himself from confrontational scenarios. Box Boy also had an acute awareness of “preservation of self” and found it difficult to overcome his fears and let down his guard to risk take in new contexts.

**6.4.3 Hot Wheels**

Throughout the course of the year Hot Wheel’s boundaries remained a consistent feature of his way of being in the nursery, in particular he was fond of making a space within a space; for example if there was a large piece of paper put out for shared drawing he would get a smaller piece to put on top of it and draw his own individual picture. And during “big painting” he would stick to his own “space” in front of him which could indicate that Hot Wheels preferred less intimidating smaller spaces which he found more manageable. Rather than forcing Hot Wheels to contribute to the communal pieces of art,
he was given the opportunity to participate in the activities, but do so on his own terms.

Hot Wheels was extremely possessive over his personal artwork, it was apparent that he needed to make a piece to take home every day and got upset if this was not achieved- this is noted in the lead teacher’s interview and the practitioner’s journal notes:

“He likes to have a picture to take home.”

“HW is drawing his dad a picture.”

“HW enjoys painting at the nursery easel and often makes paintings for his mummy and daddy.”

“HW enjoys art and craft; he creates a printing for his mummy and daddy.”

The emotional attachment and strength of ownership Hot Wheels felt with regard to his artwork sometimes hindered the opportunity for him to collaborate as this came across as a barrier to his peers; he was often heard expressing statements such as: “this is mine”; “I take this home” which showed that he liked the security of having his own personal possessions.

Hot Wheels often physically removed the arms or hands of his peers if they came too close to his boundary choosing physical action rather than explaining or verbalising why he was uncomfortable and his most noticeable boundary was manifest in his reticence to talk to others.

6.5 Artistic: Style, Skill, and Schema

All the children engaged in a range of artistic activities, their styles varied somewhat throughout the year. Some of the children were more advanced than others when it came to mastering tools such as scissors, and others clearly had their own schematic needs to fulfil. By using the term “schema” I
refer to Athey (2008). Athey carried out research based on Piaget’s 1972 stage level theory. Athey suggests:

A schema is a pattern of repeatable behaviour which experiences are assimilated and that are gradually co-ordinated. Co-ordinations lead to higher-level and more powerful schemas.

Athey (2008:50)

Bruce (2005:73) says that schemas are biological and socio-cultural, ‘they are always adjusting and changing in the light of experience’ (Bruce, 2005:73) which dovetails with the longitudinal nature of this doctoral study.

6.5.1 Rosie
Rosie made both representative realist, and abstract works of art. At first during Phase 1 Rosie had a repetitive block style; she painted in rectangles-refraining from mixing the paints- each shape had its own colour; Rosie said to me “I like painting squares.” Rosie also followed a set pattern where she would start painting from the bottom of the page and work her way up to the top, and liked to fill in her shapes using lines, dots, swirls, and spotting techniques.

To begin with a predominant feature of Rosie’s art was to identify and name the colours which could possibly have been influenced by adult expectations in the setting. The practitioners also recorded this in their journal:

“Rosie is making a firework picture using red, blue, and silver glitter, and different coloured paint, she named red, blue, and yellow paint.”

“Rosie is drawing around some shapes, she names the shapes, circle, square, rectangle, triangle, Rosie names the different colours, green, red, blue, yellow.”

Rosie’s preferred activity was painting in Phases 1 and 2, and mark making in Phases 2 and 3 where she developed the use of art to tell stories- mark making was more prevalent in Phase 2 than painting; however the lead teacher also noticed Rosie’s fascination with painting:
“Rosie likes painting on the easel every day first thing”, as did the practitioners- “Rosie chooses to paint every day. She usually paints a picture first thing and loves to take them home with her.”

However Rosie also enjoyed collage- layering, ripping, scrunching, and mixing media, i.e. paint and textural materials together.

Cross reference is made here to the fixed camera data which recorded that throughout the nursery year on the days the data was collected Rosie spent 86 minutes solely engaged in painting activities alone. Rosie did enter into a collaborative dynamic at the painting easel (14 minutes in total) but this was not her strongest collaborative area- mark making was, but again this did not manifest until Phase 2. Intestinally I also recorded a decline in Rosie’s painting activities as she transitioned through the nursery year, she developed artistic ways of being in other areas- the fixed video data will be extrapolated further in the following section (roles assumed).

Rosie often made art about the environment, nature, and people in Phase 1
The practitioner journal recorded a very busy artistic day for Rosie in Phase 1:

“Rosie is sticking coloured circles and squares onto paper- “I’m making a card for my mummy”, “I’m making a bird” she then moves to the painting area, and after completing that draws a picture “it’s mummy and daddy” then uses chalk to draw a spider…lots of creations!”

In Phase 2 Rosie expanded this to documenting her social experiences such as celebrations (birthdays) and events happening in the classroom concerning the morals of others (the naughty boys will go to jail for drawing on the nursery computer). I also documented occasions when Rosie referred to children’s popular culture:

“I paint Shrek”; “the wheels on the bus.”
In Phase 2 Rosie started to experiment with mimicking writing, she pretended to write letters and notes and made up games about posting envelopes. The practitioners noticed and documented this change:

“Rosie asked if she could draw a letter for her name, I drew the letter and she copied it.”

“Rosie is really interested in trying to write her name.”

During Phase 2 I documented Rosie as she created characters (e.g. the ghost, the humanised carpet), she often encapsulated her drawings, either with a frame, or drew circles which she turned into faces. Phase 3 documented further developments for Rosie as she expanded her art to include extended narratives, placing humanised characters into settings and making up stories about them. Finally later on in the year Rosie started exploring with paint- covering her hands and arms, increasing confidence to become more experimental.

6.5.2 Box Boy
As Box Boy took an exploratory role- a lot of his activities centred around stirring, pouring, wrapping, enclosing, cutting, folding, piling, collecting, rolling, and transporting.

Box Boy’s playful, experimental explorations were observed and documented by myself, practitioners, and teachers alike. For example I noted Box Boy mixing water and paints, and pouring sand through the holes in wicker balls; the practitioner journals records also show Box Boy: “Investigating water colour paints”; and the teacher stated that “sand and water outdoor play” was one of Box Boy’s special interests along with enjoying “the scissors and paper.”

From the onset of the study it was evident to me that Box Boy had a fascination for cutting and folding paper; later on this became noticeable as an acute interest in making letters and envelopes.

The practitioner journal records this as it manifest throughout the year:
“BB uses the scissors in his right hand, the correct way, BB has good scissor control.”

“BB is very interested in scissor work, he usually asks to do some cutting at every session, sometimes he goes on to make things with the paper he has cut up, but often he is only interested in the experience of cutting.”

“BB’s second love is envelopes! He loves to fold paper and stuff envelopes, sometimes he adds mark making to the front; sometimes he adds sticky labels or lottery ticket numbers.”

“BB has used scissors to cut up a big bit of black paper, he is then gluing some pieces together and adding some colourful bits of paper.”

“Envelope investigation, BB’s love of envelopes has grown over the last few months! He often fills them with folded paper, and likes to make his own envelopes of different sizes.”

Cross reference is made to the fixed video data to examine how Box Boy spent the majority of his time in nursery. On the days the fixed video data was captured Box Boy was mainly engaged in art and craft activity (190 minutes), followed by mark making (174 minutes), then least of all painting (14 minutes).

Box Boy painted occasionally, he was observed by me painting with brushes and rollers. When using the rollers Box Boy said “railway” and when using the brushes he started to bang them on the easel dabbing, splatting, and splashing entering into a playful, but evaluative mimicking mode- “fireworks” “this is painting for babies innit.” Interestingly these works of art were abstract in nature, but described by Box Boy in realist terms.

Box Boy also engaged in vigorous mark making, but this was not his preferred activity- he liked to use junk for modelling- again he was observed making references to transport when popping bubble wrap with his hands he said “it sounds like a train.” He also enjoyed making practical items with junk materials such as the musical “shakers.” Box Boy liked to collect things from the junk store and take them home, I observed Box Boy ripping and
gathering raffle tickets into piles in his hand before putting them in his pocket saying “I gotta take these home”, and asked me if he could take home some foam shapes from the collage material box.

Box Boy’s most foregrounded art was displayed through observable, repetitive behaviours and actions which could be explained by developing schemas. He seemed to have a need to fulfill an enveloping, enclosing and containing schema, and a travelling and transporting schema. Both schemas were reflected in his artwork which mainly consisted of wrapping materials in paper and taping them up in parcels with masking tape- (an apple, some stones), and using or making envelopes and stamps. Box Boy also constructed items for play props that incorporated travel and transport, such as telescopes, tunnels for cars, and paper planes. Box Boy’s travelling schema also manifest in his playful activities- he was often observed folding paper, storing it in a shopping basket, and liked to have a pile of newspapers which he would keep in a doll’s pushchair and wheel around the classroom.

6.5.3 Hot Wheels
Hot Wheels had a tendency to mostly make abstract art- back and forth care free pencil drawings; lines, circles, swirls, and dabbing paints; rubbing, scrunching, ripping and layering textures.

Hot Wheels also made representative models of mini beasts and animals- I saw him make an earwig (copied from a book), and the practitioners wrote in their journal:

“HW is making a monkey out of junk, HW uses masking tape and is happy to ask for help when using the masking tape.”

Hot Wheels often made towers, or piling structures and enjoyed formulaic activities- sorting and collecting items by shape and colour-

“HW is using the colour chalks, he names the colours orange, red, black, white, green” (practitioner journal).
His preferred artistic activity seemed to be mark making - using his drawings as a link to home, taking them for a gift to give his dad. During an interview with the teacher she said that Hot Wheels: “is one of the boys that quite often chooses mark making, so that is probably one of his preferred activities and he likes to have a picture to take home.” Cross reference is also made here to the fixed camera data which recorded that throughout the nursery year on the days this data was collected Hot Wheels spent 90 minutes solely engaged in mark making activities alone. On the very rare occasions when he did enter into a collaborative dynamic (6 minutes in total) this was also in the mark making area.

Hot Wheels expressed male themes through his art; some of his representations were of cars, space travel, his favourite colour blue, and constructions of buildings. The practitioners also wrote about similar observations in their journal notes:

“HW is making a tower with plasticine and places one on top of the next- “I’m making a mountain, sticking it, it breaked”.”

“HW is mark making with blue chalk- “this is my favourite colour” “some of these colours are for football teams”.”

“HW is playing with plasticine, he puts sticks and straws into the model he’s creating, - “this is a transformer, I made it with clay”.”

6.6 Roles assumed

Collaborative creativity was evidenced and reported in the previous findings chapter as three main “as if” relationships defined by the following roles assumed: teacher and apprentice, director and assistant, artist-demonstrator and observer-replicator. Whilst Chapter 5 documented the global findings of classroom dynamics and creative relationships, what this section sets out to achieve is to what extent there are observable commonalities and individual differences between the roles assumed by the case study focus children.
As a reminder: children in role as teachers were authoritative towards their peers; they evaluated their work and offered praise. They took time to explain instructions to apprentices and demonstrated artistic ideas to them. Apprentices worked closely alongside their teachers, watching them and trying out their ways of working with “new” tools such as scissors, or manipulating materials in different ways through the teacher’s guidance. Directors acted as if they were in charge, making decisions, and telling peers how to use materials and tools through direct and clear instructions. Assistants sourced and provided materials for the director, sometimes they were permitted to help in the making process by following a briefing of what to do. Artist-Demonstrators attracted many followers, their activities had an in-direct ripple effect throughout the classroom with peers watching, mirroring, and copying. Observer-Replicators mirrored the language, behaviours, and artwork of artists-copying ideas in their own way-not through direct instruction. During these relationships the dynamics were top down and one way, There was no evidence of reciprocity, equality, or emergence where two people bounce ideas off each other to move forward (Sawyer, 2006). These characteristics of creativity have been evidenced in work with adults, but not to date with the young children in this doctoral study.

6.6.1 Individual “as if” peer to peer relationship differences

The table presented in Appendix 11 demonstrates the range and strength of each of the creative relationships listed above for the focus children across all Phases. It is Phase 2 which is highlighted as a period of change where it was noted that the focus children expanded their collaborative horizons by experiencing new relationships, interestingly the role of director was a new emergent feature for all of the focus children in Phase 2.

Overall it was found that the assumed role of being the teacher in creative relationships was strongest for the focus children, along with director, followed by artist-demonstrator and observer-replicator which were assumed
to a moderate degree; assistant was weak, and apprentice not evident amongst the focus children, it was only their peers that adopted this role.

### 6.6.1.1 Rosie

Rosie seemed to have a constant notion of her own identity “as if” roles; she was a confident artist and communicated her ideas with ease, often acting as if she was the teacher a lot of the time; here the class teacher concurs- “Rosie will dictate to the other children.”

Rosie engaged in a full range of “as if” roles; her strongest and most preferred relationship role was that of the teacher, which was strongly evidenced in every Phase; then artist-demonstrator, moderately manifest in Phases 2 and 3; director, which was moderately manifest in Phase 2 only; assistant was weakly manifest throughout all Phases; and finally observer-replicator, which was the weakest “as if” role for Rosie, and was only manifest in Phase 1. Interestingly Rosie never adopted an apprentice role throughout the entire study.

Analysis of the fixed video data shows that on the days that the data was collected Rosie displayed some interesting transitional behaviours. Table 6.1 below shows that throughout the nursery year Rosie spent a total of 160 minutes at the art and craft table, 96 minutes mark making, and 86 minutes painting alone. There seems to have been an interesting shift in Rosie’s artistic behaviours throughout the year. At first during Phase 1 Rosie’s main art activity was painting (52 minutes), however in Phase 2 she only painted for 6 minutes, choosing instead to focus her art activities around mark making (52 minutes) and art and craft (118 minutes). Phase 3 recorded yet another change for Rosie when mark making was the main focus activity (42 minutes), then art and craft (32 minutes), and finally painting at (28 minutes).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Art and Craft</th>
<th>Mark Making</th>
<th>Painting Easel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time in minutes</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Time spent in art areas engaged in activity alone (Rosie)

The lead teacher and practitioners also noted in their journal Rosie’s change in focus as documented below.

**Phase 1:** “Painting on the easel every day”; “Rosie chooses to paint every day. She usually paints a picture first thing and loves to take them home with her.”

**Phase 2:** “Rosie was junk modelling, she was carefully putting the masking tape around the egg box, “I’m making a space rocket”, she then stuck a bottle on top, she spent 15 minutes doing this concentrating well.”

**Phase 3:** “Rosie asked if she could draw a letter for her name, I drew the letter and she copied it.”

Overall throughout the nursery year when the fixed video data was collected Rosie spent a total of 86 minutes of her time engaged with her peers. Interestingly there was another shift in behaviours that can be seen in the following Table 6.2. During Phase 1 Rosie was evidenced engaged for 12 minutes of creative relationship time at the painting easel, and zero minutes in the art and craft and mark making areas. In Phase 2 Rosie did not spend any minutes at the painting easel with her peers, but did spend 6 minutes engaged in collaborations at the art and craft table and 12 minutes mark making. In Phase 3 Rosie was back at the painting easel with her peers (14 minutes), and increased collaborative time in both the art and craft area (16 minutes) and mark making activities (26 minutes).

Overall Rosie demonstrated a clear developmental pathway in terms of her collaborative relationships, spending increasing amounts of time in each
Phase engaged in activities with her peers: Phase 1: 12 minutes, Phase 2: 18 minutes, Phase 3: 56 minutes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Art and Craft</th>
<th>Mark Making</th>
<th>Painting Easel</th>
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<td>Phase 1</td>
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<td>Phase 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time in minutes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: Time spent in art areas engaged in activity with peers (Rosie)

Rosie’s peer-to-peer relationships were highlighted by the lead teacher as a possible area of concern: “Rosie will dictate to the other children and can’t tell sometimes if other children have had enough.” Interestingly analysis of the fixed video report shows that not only did Rosie’s collaborative relationships develop throughout the year in terms of their length of time; but it would also seem that at first it was Rosie’s peers who sought her out as a potential collaborator as documented below:

**Week 1:** Rosie made a start on her painting, using a block style. The first peak at level 3 (engagement with peer) happened when Lee left the art and craft table to talk to Rosie at the painting easel. Lee grabbed the paint brush and made a mark on Rosie’s picture. Rosie immediately took the brush off him, and carried on painting. Lee continued to try to engage with Rosie- he moved to the junk modelling area and took a plastic tray and showed it to Rosie who looked at it briefly. Rosie carried on painting and Lee left the area.

**Week 2:** Rosie started her painting, and remained alone for 4 minutes. After this time she was joined by Katy. Katy stood next to Rosie whilst she painted, pointing and naming the colours. Katy then pointed to the paper, and tried to direct Rosie- Rosie did not respond, but Katy persisted and was heard saying “up there now.” Katy remained by Rosie’s side as she painted; she got some paper shapes from the collage store and tapped Rosie on the shoulder.
trying to show them to her. Rosie was heard saying to the practitioner “she is trying to make the rules of my picture!” Katy still persisted, offering Rosie materials, but Rosie pushed Katy’s hand away and carried on painting.

**Week 3:** The fixed video data showed that the level 3 peaks (engaged with peer) happened at 10 and 12 minutes with Rae who was painting a picture of the sun. Rosie visited the easel several times to tell her that she wanted to paint—almost cajoling Rae to hurry up and finish her painting. Later on when Rosie did get to paint, the data revealed that she too also painted a picture of the sun and deflected my questions about whose ideas it was to paint the sun.

**Week 4:** During the 40 minutes at the art and craft table Rosie had 3 level 3 peaks of interaction with her peers. The first happened when Rosie recognised the needs of others and through in-direct nurturing collaboration said to the teacher “ah scuse me she needed more paper.” During the second peak Rosie was heard on the fixed video chatting with Mary who was seated on the table nearby. In the third interaction Rosie was heard directing Carl to take the materials he has back to the other table—Carl followed Rosie’s instructions.

**Week 5:** In this session Rosie heads straight for the mark making table where she encounters Larry and Lee for a period of prolonged level 3 activity. This episode involved Larry and Lee trying to engage Rosie as she was drawing; they shadowed her, documenting what she was doing with the digital camera, and also attempted to talk to her. Larry was seen on the fixed video poking Rosie, trying to get a reaction from her which he did—Rosie responded shouting “LARRY!”, eventually the boys gave up on trying to engage with Rosie and moved away leaving her to draw on her own which she did for a significant amount of time (20 minutes). At the end of the 30 minute episode Rosie wanted to show her artwork to the teacher.
Week 6: Toward the end of this episode at the art and craft table Rosie was seen to be sitting next to Rae and Katy. Katy tried to engage Rosie in conversation by showing her “her baddie”, but Rosie ignored her and did not respond, she simply did not acknowledge the attempted interaction by Katy what so ever.

Week 7: As soon as this session got underway Rosie peaked a level 3 at the mark making table, this happened during a parallel play episode during which Rosie was drawing near Maureen, May, and Larry. Rosie was heard on the fixed video shouting “hey that’s mine!” to May. Laura and May then watched Rosie drawing from the side of the table.

Week 8: Rosie took her apron off and settled at the mark making table to draw, choosing to use a foam circle/hoop. Alan, a relatively new boy to the class was drawing opposite Rosie. Rosie was seen taking the lead during the initial interaction peaking a level 3 at minute 8 by commenting on Alan’s picture. Rosie and Alan spent 6 minutes continually interacting; initially Rosie was seen sharing the hoop with Alan, and then had to engage and enter into lengthy negotiations with Alan for the hoop’s return. At minute 20 David joined the table and attempted to take the hoop, however Rosie snatched it back and David took a seat next to Rosie and started drawing and using a stamp cutter which interested Rosie as she wanted to look at the butterfly shapes that came out of the cutter.

Week 9: Rosie started the session by having a quick look at what was on offer at the art and craft table and then settled at the mark making table. She engaged in playful chatter with Sam noting the first peak level 3 interaction 2 minutes into the session, a new girl also intervened and was heard on the fixed video saying “NO! NO! NOT LIKE THAT!”; in response Rosie briefly moved away from the table taking with her a clip board, then later returned to initiate her own game of “registers” imitating the role of the teacher. Cobi engaged
with Rosie and took the role of an apprentice copying Rosie’s idea and joining in with her play theme. Cobi got his own clip board and started to play in the same way. Rosie made sure her lead was followed by stating “I’m the teacher!” Later on Rosie also engaged with Lee at the art and craft table, here both children were seen initially creating separately with play dough- using it in their own way, then Lee became interested in what Rosie was doing and initiated contact by standing up and moving to her side of the table. Throughout, Rosie remained seated while Lee stood beside her. Both children played together engaged in creating a game involving food which lasted for 10 minutes until the session ended and the teacher called for tidy up time.

6.6.1.2 Rosie’s Summary
Throughout the study Rosie’s preferred identity role was that of “Teacher”. In total she spent 182 minutes at the art and craft table, (22 of which were collaborative), 134 minutes at the mark making table, (38 of which were collaborative), and 112 minutes at the painting easel (26 which were collaborative).

6.6.1.3 Box Boy
Similarly to Rosie- Box Boy engaged in a full range of “as if” roles; his strongest and most preferred relationship role was that of the director, which was strongly evidenced in Phases 2 and 3. Box Boy was the teacher in Phases 1 and 3, and the artist-demonstrator in Phases 2 and 3, both of which were manifested to a moderate degree. Box Boy was only the assistant and the observer-replicator in Phase 2 and both of these roles were weakly manifest. Interestingly like Rosie, Box Boy never adopted an apprentice role throughout the entire study.

Analysis of the fixed video data shows that on the days that the data was collected Box Boy displayed a clear preference for art and craft, and mark making table top activities. Table 6.3 below shows that throughout the nursery year Box Boy spent a total of 190 minutes at the art and craft table,
174 minutes mark making, and 14 minutes painting alone. There is no doubt that painting was not one of Box Boy’s preferred activities, however he did spend increasing amounts of time there as the year progressed, (Phase 1: zero, Phase 2: 2, and Phase 3: 12 minutes). Similarly mark making also appeared to increase steadily throughout the year, (Phase 1: 36, Phase 2: 66, and Phase 3: 72 minutes). Interestingly it was art and craft that started off strongly then declined in the last Phase, (Phase 1: 80, Phase 2: 80, and Phase 3: 30). It would seem that a similar pattern has emerged as was seen in Rosie’s art and craft data above also noting that she peaked during Phase 2,(118 minutes), declining in Phase 3 (32 minutes) and then an interesting shift occurred in Rosie’s artistic behaviour where she switched focus to mark making. However no such “shift” occurred here for Box Boy, although he did take more of an interest in the painting easel throughout Phase 3.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Art and Craft</th>
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<th>Painting Easel</th>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time in minutes</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Time spent in art areas engaged in activity alone (Box Boy)

Unlike Rosie, the lead teacher and practitioners did not note any change in Box Boy’s behaviours, they reported that he was still following his cutting, letter, and postage fascinations:

**Phase 1:** “BB is very interested in scissor work, he usually asks to do some cutting at every session, sometimes he goes on to make things with the paper he has cut up, but often he is only interested in the experience of cutting.”

**Phase 2:** “BB has used scissors to cut up a big bit of black paper; he is then gluing some pieces together and adding some colourful bits of paper.”

**Phase 3:** “Envelope investigation, BB’s love of envelopes has grown over the last few months!”
He often fills them with folded paper, and likes to make his own envelopes of different sizes.”

Overall throughout the nursery year when the fixed video data was collected Box Boy spent a total of 62 minutes of his time engaged with his peers. Throughout the nursery year Box Boy displayed relatively consistent amounts of time engaged in collaborative relationships with his peers that can be seen in Table 6.4.

During Phase 1 Box Boy was evidenced engaged for zero minutes of creative relationship time at the painting easel, and 4 minutes in the mark making area, and 16 minutes in the art and craft area. In Phase 2 Box Boy did not spend any minutes at the painting easel with his peers, but did spend another 4 minutes engaged in collaborations at the mark making table and 12 minutes at the art and craft table. In Phase 3 Box Boy once again did not engage in collaboration at the painting easel, however shifted his collaborative focus away from the art and craft table (6 minutes) and manifest them in the mark making area (20 minutes). This was an increase in time from Phases 1 and 2 where only 4 minutes were spent in collaborative mark making activities.

Overall the only tentative comparison to Rosie’s fixed video data is that both children steered towards mark making in the final Phase of the nursery year.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Art and Craft</th>
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<th>Painting Easel</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time in minutes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4: Time spent in art areas engaged in activity with peers (Box Boy)

Interestingly the fixed video data does not correspond with the lead teacher’s perspective on Box Boy’s social development. As the above data shows Box Boy was willing to engage his peers in collaborative activity, but
she thought that “Box Boy was very quiet, he hung back a lot; he didn’t want to join in with any group times or the other children at all.” Closer examination of the fixed video report illuminated why she had this impression of Box Boy. It would seem that throughout the nursery year Box Boy mainly took a passive stance when engaging with his peers.

**Week 1:** BB’s social movements were not sustained, but rather happened in peaks between engaging in activity alone. The level 3 peaks happened at 2, 10, and 20 minutes. During this session BB was sat at the art and craft table with Billy, Mary, and the teacher, everyone was making stamps, writing letters and putting them in envelopes. Just 2 minutes into the session BB interacted with Mary. Mary was heard on the video saying that she “can’t do writing”; so BB took a lid off a pen and uninvited started to make marks on Mary’s sticker. Mary said “hey look… Box Boy did it, he draw on my sticker.” Both children carried on with their own separate activities afterwards.

**Week 2:** Absent from school

**Week 3:** BB continues folding paper, wrapping, enfolding and making piles. The level 3 interaction at 12 minutes happens with Brenda, she moves her chair in order to sit next to BB at the top end of the mark making table, leaving the teacher’s side, Brenda leant over BB and the fixed video appears to show the two children exchange some words. Shortly after this BB moved his position to regain his preferred seat next to the teacher and Brenda followed. He left the table with a pile of paper and headed for the carpet where he joined Lee and Larry to play with the bricks.

**Week 4:** No collaborations

**Week 5:** The episode at the art and craft table was sustained in length (22 minutes), here BB partook in the bubble blowing activity that he stood and watched earlier. BB ended his time at the art and craft table by engaging in a level 3 interaction with his peers, the first
being between himself and Amy when BB can be seen on the video offering her a whisk, however she did not accept it, and the second being between himself and Tom. BB poured his mixture into Tom’s bowl, BB then tried to take the whisk from Tom, but he refused keeping the implement and the mixture so BB decided to leave the table.

**Week 6:** BB took time to observe others at the art and craft table standing to one side with his hands in his pockets, after this he then moved to the mark making table where he sorted paper disks into piles. At the art and craft table BB painted a lollipop stick and also visited the shape store to get more paper disks to sort into piles. After 6 minutes BB peaks a level 3 interaction by briefly talking to Jane. BB also engaged in conversation with Jane at the next peak (20-22 minutes) when BB was heard on the fixed video saying “put it in the middle” (referring to the water pot). Hot Wheels was sat next to BB at the art and craft table but each child made their own pile of sticks. At 28 minutes BB once again had a fleeting conversation with Jane. The rest of the time BB either ran around the nursery classroom or pushed paper piles in the pushchair. BB was also seen transporting sand around the classroom in a saucepan, and mainly engaged in activities such as sorting pens, folding paper and making paper planes. At minute 52 BB peaked a level 3 interaction with Kate On the fixed video it looked like Kate did not want BB near her at the mark making table so drew on his arm shouting “BOX BOY!” The last level 3 interaction at the very end of the session was between BB and Amy when BB was making paper planes she tried to take one after he flew it, however BB took possession of the plane, taking it back off Amy- stopping the opportunity to collaborate.

**Week 7:** Examination of the video data showed that BB started this session by looking around the art and craft table, and then decided to take a seat where a teacher led activity was taking place. The children were invited to make a mask of their choosing. BB took a
paper plate and held it to his face. He was deemed to be “off task” when a teacher noticed that he was playing with some tissue paper and was heard asking BB what he was doing? There were 7 children around the table, and all are doing their own thing, the level 3 interaction at 12 minutes was between Box Boy and David where BB sought David’s help to put a mask on the drying rack. A little later on BB moved to the mark making table and Brenda followed sitting next to him. Here the level 3 interaction happened between BB and Jane when they were overheard discussing a picture. BB was seen on the video wandering in and out of art areas, sometimes he stopped to look at other’s work (masks) or make a quick paper plane.

**Week 8:** The above flow diagram shows yet another busy session for Box Boy. BB went straight to the mark making table to get paper, here he encountered Brenda and they attempted to work together for 4 minutes. At minute 10 Tom tried to talk to BB, but BB did not want to engage with him and he moved away. BB had a small box which a teacher gave to him at the start of the session it appeared that BB wanted to retain ownership of the box and took it with him to the decking area briefly. When he returned later to the mark making table BB started to wrap the box in paper; again it was Tom who initiated a level 3 contact asking BB if he was making a present? BB, Brenda, and Tom can be seen taking an interest in the box, looking for ribbon etc, but BB retained ownership of the artefact.

**Week 9:** The last session of the final Phase of the nursery year shows that once again during this session BB spent a lot of time folding, piling, and transporting paper around the classroom. At the art and craft table (minute 22) Alan tried to engage BB by talking to him, BB did not want to converse with Alan and turned his back on him- Alan can be seen leaving the table. The prolonged 12 minutes that BB spent at the mark making table towards the end of the session was taken up by him folding, ripping, and piling raffle tickets on his own.
6.6.1.4 Box Boy’s Summary

Throughout the study Box Boy’s preferred identity role was that of “Director”. In total he spent 224 minutes at the art and craft table, (34 of which were collaborative), 202 minutes at the mark making table, (28 of which were collaborative), and 14 minutes at the painting easel (0 which were collaborative).

6.6.1.5 Hot Wheels

Hot Wheels did not engage in the full range of “as if” roles; his strongest and most preferred relationship role was the observer-replicator as he liked to be the learner in most situations. At first during Phases 1 and 2 Hot Wheels was reliant on others to provide tools and materials for him and often mirrored the actions and language of others. Towards the end of Phase 2 Hot Wheels did take the role of the director when modelling, but in Phase 3 used this as a strategy to keep a potential assisting peer out of the activity.

Analysis of the fixed video data shows that on the days that the data was collected Hot Wheels hardly interacted with his peers at all; preferring instead to engage in art making activities alone. Table 6.5 below shows that throughout the nursery year Hot Wheels spent a total of 84 minutes at the art and craft table, 90 minutes mark making, and 20 minutes painting alone. Whilst his engagement at the painting easel remained the same during Phases 1 and 2 (10 minutes), his activity time at the mark making table increased from 22 minutes in Phase 1 to 48 in Phase 2, but then decreased again in Phase 3 to 20 minutes. A similar pattern can be seen for art and craft- increasing from 10 to 58 minutes between Phase 1 and 2, but then decreasing to 16 minutes in Phase 3.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Art and Craft</th>
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<th>Painting Easel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time in minutes</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>20</td>
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**Table 6.5: Time spent in art areas engaged in activity alone (Hot Wheels)**

The practitioners also note in their journal Hot Wheel’s self-sufficiency:

“HW enjoys sticking, he is making an autumn collage, he displays strong focus and concentration and collects the autumn leaves for his collage, he works independently, and spends long amounts of time creating his collage (20 mins).”

Overall throughout the nursery year when the fixed video data was collected Hot Wheels only spent 6 minutes of his time engaged with his peers, this was on three separate occasions, and all were at the mark making table (see Table 6.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Art and Craft</th>
<th>Mark Making</th>
<th>Painting Easel</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total time in minutes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 6.6: Time spent in art areas engaged in activity with peers (Hot Wheels)**

The teacher interview highlights Hot Wheel’s social development issues:

“Hot Wheels actually started in January and was so upset parting from Mum and Dad that he had to stop coming he just cried all the time he was here. We started in half hour increments, but he never got past the half hour, so in the end they decided to keep him at home until he got a bit older. When HW started in September we still had quite a few tears but nowhere near what we thought we were going
to have. He has not had much experience of any other groups, I asked Mum in January to try him at a playgroup, but I don’t think she took him.”

The fixed video report documents Hot Wheel’s first week as he transitioned into nursery:

“HW was a little upset first thing this morning and sought comfort from the teacher who had been working with him during the settling in period. HW entered the art and craft area at 6 minutes, he followed the teacher and sat next to her, the teacher worked to encourage HW to join in the activities at the art and craft table and he did so for 8 minutes where HW did a pencil drawing and added glue to some paper. HW also enjoyed watching the teacher draw leaf shapes and cut paper, he sat next to her the whole time at the table until she left at 14 minutes, then HW followed.”

The teacher also noted that “Hot Wheels found it quite hard initially to socialise with the other children so he tended to do things on his own quite a lot.” In week 2, session 2 Hot Wheels encountered Tom and the boys worked alongside each other making pencil pictures, the interaction was brief lasting 2 minutes and the boys could be heard exchanging parallel actions and words such as: “I’m making colours”, “yeah me too”, “I got loads of um”, “I got loads of um”. Tom left the activity first and HW immediately did the same.

In week 7 session 1 another example of peer-to-peer collaborative activity was captured on the fixed video. Again this was extremely brief (2 minutes) and the episode was not instigated by Hot Wheels- “The time that he briefly spent at the mark making table he encountered a new boy (Alan) who tried to share the pens with HW, but HW got a bit anxious and he moved away.”

The fixed video reports several other key findings. Examination of the flow movement diagrams (such as the example in Appendix 12) shows that overall in comparison to the other focus children Hot Wheels is not very art
active (particularly in Phase 3). He also demonstrated a repeatable pattern of behaviour where first thing HW would make his way to the art and craft table, or mark making table to make a picture to take home - without engaging with his peers, he would complete his picture then terminate the activity taking the picture with him to carry around until home time. Week 3 session 1 exemplifies this pattern of behaviour. The narrative in the report also illuminates what Hot Wheels did after he completed his picture:

“After the 4 minute drawing was complete HW made his way to the carpet area where he spent some time with Lee looking through plastic coloured viewers and playing with construction bricks; HW did engage in the play but he spent a lot of time on the periphery of activities.”

The teacher concurs with these observations - “He found it hard to be involved as a group sometimes he didn’t want to sit down with us he wanted to hold back.”

6.6.1.6 Hot Wheel’s Summary

Throughout this doctoral study Hot Wheel’s preferred identity role was that of “ Artist-Replicator”. In total he spent 84 minutes at the art and craft table, (0 of which were collaborative), 90 minutes at the mark making table, (6 of which were collaborative), and 20 minutes at the painting easel (0 which were collaborative).

6.7 Visual Model and Summary:  

The Child’s Identity as an Artist Communicator

This chapter has presented the analytical response to Research Question 3: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context. Over the course
of this doctoral study it was found that PT was manifest through five individual and unique ways of being in the nursery classroom; these were: personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries (physical and personal), artistic style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed (teacher and apprentice, director and assistant, artist-demonstrator and artist replicator). The findings related to these individual ways of being were explained for each focus child in turn: Rosie, Box Boy, and Hot Wheels.

Figure 6.2 (on the following page) demonstrates a visual model of the most dominant aspects of identity found across the three focus children. The model views from left to right running in the same order as the findings of this chapter. The focus children displayed three main aspects of personality: authoritative, absorbed, and reticent (green sweep left hand side). Three main talking modalities were evident: socially articulate, reserved talker, and taciturn sound maker (green sphere). Three artistic ways of being: perfectionist storyteller, schematic experimenter, and formulaic mark maker (blue sphere) were documented. And three preferred identity roles were assumed: teacher, director, and artist-replicator (blue sweep right hand side). In the centre of the model boundaries physical and personal are represented by pink blocks: engages on own terms, rejects peers, product ownership, preservation of self, wary of others, and possessive product ownership. Two distinct differences were noticed between the focus children—whether they could relax their boundaries or make them permeable enough for transitioning through to allow others to engage with them in social relationships (yellow arrow, absent in rigid and blocked).
Figure 6.2: Artist communicator identities
CHAPTER SEVEN
Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The discussion chapter brings together the main findings from the three research questions and considers their significance in light of theory and early years education policy. Reference is made to the literature in Chapters One and Two where appropriate, and other relevant literature is used throughout to explore and illuminate the key themes.

The data collection and results reported in the Findings Chapters: Four, Five, and Six confirm that creativity framed as PT is indeed a complex subject area manifested and characterised by inextricably linked multiple facets. The depth of such rich findings has the potential to permit several lines of discussion for each question. Topics will be discussed in relation to key themes and concepts which exhibit value in terms of constructing evidence which contributes to existing theoretical frameworks and developing new areas of interest for future research concluding with a consideration of what the findings could mean in terms of transposition into practice, making reference to early years education policy, particularly that of the EYFS (2012).

The discussion will be presented consecutively as a summary of the findings for each of the three research questions.

7.2 Discussing RQ1: How is young children’s emergent PT manifest and evidenced in the nursery-school context?

This doctoral study has chosen to frame creativity as PT ‘which guides choices and route-finding in everyday life’; PT is described as ‘being at the
heart of little c creativity’, (Craft, 2001:49). Throughout this doctoral study children engaged in making imaginative, individualised artistic depictions and models, and communicated their associated narratives which held an element of intellectual property, or ownership for them; they used prescribed materials in their own unique ways, turning them into something else and tried using items for a different purpose. Children made their own discoveries through carrying out experiments which were sometimes unexpected, recognising achievements through exploring qualities of combinations; and instigated, designed, facilitated, and sustained their own games- for both themselves and invited players. The evidence of PT presented in this doctoral study is therefore aligned with “little c” and is not to be judged in terms of “giftedness” which dovetails with the term high creativity, or “Big C” creativity, which is reserved for those few whose innovative ideas have resulted in a significant impact on our world. As noted in the literature review if creativity is viewed from this perspective then it could be deemed as unobtainable and therefore not worthwhile in promoting among children as one could argue that the greatest works of art and acts of genius may conjure the impression of inferiority in everyday acts of creativity. Indeed this has been argued as a myth which can be overcome (Sawyer, 2006; Robinson, 2001). Fisher and Williams (2004:1) suggest ‘originality may be in relation to one’s previous experience’; not all products are required to be original to be valued, but may mean something unique to the individual that created them, and this was found to be the case for the young children taking part in this doctoral study.

This doctoral study has reported elaborate findings from micro data analysis which revealed more detailed categories, and deeper definitions and descriptions about the nature of PT and young children’s thinking and behaviours which were made visible whilst engaging in art making activities. In addition to reinforcing previous PT research and existing PT characteristics, this doctoral study has risen to the challenge of sustained documentation of PT with the same cohort of participants in order to examine potential changes over time. For the first time this doctoral study offers new
landmark sub-categories and definitions of question-responding and risk taking, and documents for the first time in the history of PT research how these features evolved and emerged during the nursery year for each of the three focus children. This doctoral study also offers new PT evidence revealed for the first time with the age group of 3-to-4 year old children manifest during art making: aesthetic acumen and acuity, elucidation, augmented accuracy, critiquing, and problem ownership.

The model of the “Core of PT and PT Features in Action” is presented on the next page as a visual aid for reference throughout the discussion (see Figure 7.1).
The core of PT and PT features in action - this doctoral study
7.2.1 Core of PT

Several key characteristics were commonly evidenced each time children were initiating and engaging in creative art making episodes, and these characteristics have been termed the “Core of PT”. The features within the centre of the core are: fluxing drivers (process and outcome), question-posing, and self-determined sensorial infusion. These core features were found to be at the centre of creativity- that which sparked PT behaviours in action, leading to immersive action intention flow which was continuously framed by playful acted out explorations.

7.2.1.1 Playful acted out explorations

Creativity needs play (Bruce, 2004; Isbell and Raines, 2007); ‘play often has been referred to as the “work” children do’, (Isbell and Raines, 2007:24). Inherent throughout this doctoral study was combinatory playfulness where children not only improvised and pretended, but also turned understanding into action- relating, connecting, and communicating their thinking through what could be described as a “theatrical display”, where children actively performed their lived experiences.

The relationship between play and creativity has been examined in many research studies and has come to be accepted as logically necessary to PT (Craft, 2011:58). In all of the studies of PT, a common feature evidenced in the enabling environments is the freedom for children’s involvement in exploratory combinatory play; and interestingly has also been evidenced in PT studies involving older children aged 9-to-11 (Craft, at al., 2012a) which demonstrates that playfulness is not an exclusive feature of early years creativity, instead play fosters imaginative thinking in which PT comes alive regardless of age or previous experience.

In this doctoral study children’s playfulness was captured at the art and craft table, the mark making table, and the painting easel. The types of activities where exploratory, combinatory play was evidenced included: drawing,
painting, making collages, cutting materials, folding paper, designing games and stories, junk modelling, construction work, and sensory investigation.

In 2011, following a change of government, the ‘Tickell Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage’ (EYFS) reinforced creativity as an important dimension of the early years curriculum; redefined as ‘Expressive Arts and Design’ acknowledging the importance of exploration and imagination with an inherent role in critical and creative thinking together with active learning and play as characteristics of young children’s engagement with the world around them (Tickell, 2011a, 2011b). This doctoral study reinforces and supports the EYFS characteristics of effective learning found when young children are creating and thinking critically. These were observed as: children having their own ideas; making links; and choosing their own individual, unique, playful ways to do things in the nursery classroom.

7.2.1.2 Fluxing drivers

Throughout all art making episodes the children were driven by both process and outcome; sometimes it was clear that process was the driver, and sometimes the children were clearly driven by outcome. These “drivers” were often not static and during episodes, the children’s activities were evidenced as fluxing between process and outcome driving forces. Process was defined as unconscious, functional, or therapeutic; and outcome as conscious, goal-orientated, or design driven.

In 2006 Burnard, et al. (2006:244) explored children’s creative experiences seeking to distinguish which aspects of PT were most evident during the process and outcome stages of creativity. The researchers reported at the time that the separation of process and outcome was not easily evidenced in practice. In later work with older children aged 9-to-11 years, (Craft, et al. 2012a) clustered PT characteristics into perspectives concerning processes and outcomes. “Process” was found to be associated with question-posing, question-responding, and immersion. The headings of self-determination, development, and intentional action were clustered under “outcome”; and
being imaginative, play, innovation, and risk taking were the reported themes of “process-outcome”. In this doctoral study process and outcome drivers were characterised differently. I have not categorised features of PT into either process or outcome, instead I have characterised the nature of the underlying behaviours driving the action.

It should also be acknowledged that in this doctoral study art played a central part in determining the driving behaviours manifest due to the fact that for the majority of the time there was “a product” involved - a model, drawing, or picture which the children were working towards. The types of drivers which were fuelled by an end product vision were found to be outcome driven; they were conscious, goal-orientated, and design driven outcomes. Process drivers were unconscious, functional, and sometimes therapeutic in nature affording children opportunities to explore feelings and release energy.

In 2004 the QCA document ‘Creativity: Find it, Promote it’ suggested that schools should value and celebrate creativity, the process as well as the outcome. Whilst this policy material is not current, it is pertinent to this discussion. This doctoral study is not primarily concerned with “outcome” in terms of a tangible product; however it was found that art played a factor in the driving forces which were steering the children’s play as they strived towards making their products. Isbell and Raines (2007) take a different view of young children’s art making:

During the first five years of life, most children are interested in the process of creation than in the product, at this time, the focus of art should be on participation and enjoyment of interesting art experiences, this means there may not be a product or display to take home.

Isbell and Raines (2007:119)

This is interesting as from the onset of this doctoral study, and continuing throughout the nursery year, children demonstrated powerful ownership over their artistic ideas and artefacts. In particular Rosie’s internalised standards were demonstrated in her interactions with others and were also shown in her artwork which was carried out to her ‘perfectionist’ rules. Rosie sometimes
got a little frustrated if the visual standard of her art was not high enough as she wanted recognition of her art and liked others to admire her work. Thus whilst this doctoral study recognises both process and outcome features as part of the core of PT driving play, issues are raised here particularly concerning the functional process driver. Functional was used to define moments where the children were engaged in art making activities where they appeared to be “going through the motions”, or rushing the activity. Hot Wheels was often found to engage in this type of behaviour, his art making episodes were often short in nature, between 3-to-5 minutes long, and he liked to take part in activities which had a pre-prescribed outcome as set by adults which he followed with quick results. Therefore perhaps it would be useful for practitioners to recognise and identify if functional types of behaviours are occurring with the children they work with in order to ask themselves:

Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas? Avoid children just reproducing someone else’s ideas.

Early Education (2012:7)

7.2.1.3 Self-determined sensorial infusion

Synonymous with the already identified core features of creativity, self-determined sensorial infusion was evident throughout this doctoral study, this was observed and documented as children exercising their independence, making their own self-directed choices and decisions with impetus, looking for their own stimuli, posing direct, possibility questions such as “what is this?” and “what can I (or we) do with this?”, and indirect or discreet questions which were imbedded in leading, service, and follow through question posing behaviours known as question framing.

In terms of the questioning inherent across the 27 episodes, the degree of possibility ranged from possibility broad, to possibility moderate, to possibility
narrow (Chappell, et al., 2008). Teachers and early years practitioners provided easily accessible open-ended materials without direct instruction which enabled agency and freedom of choice (possibility broad). Sometimes creative opportunities were semi-structured within the boundary of a theme, e.g. “let’s think about what we would find in the woods today” (possibility moderate), and other times materials and tools were provided with instructions to work towards a prototype (possibility narrow). However there was always space within activities whether broad, moderate, or narrow to personalise, or individualise a piece of artwork. Teachers and practitioners allowed children the opportunity to travel freely around the physical space within the setting- inside the classroom, and outside to a decking area which afforded children agency to choose, investigate, and follow their own curiosities on their own terms.

In this doctoral study children posed questions verbally and non-verbally and were seen to be gathering information through all the senses: visual, textural, audial, and movement. These findings align with evidence documented by Craft, et al. (2012b):

Behaviour 1: Stimulating and sustaining possibilities- Children were seen to be generating ideas, leading on possibilities, and maintaining interest, focus and ownership in the evolution of ideas; sometimes collaboratively thus sustaining their play.

Craft, et al. (2012b:54)

Reference is also made to the Reggio Emilia Approach which places the child at the heart of its philosophy of educating the senses, suggesting it is ‘the essential ingredient of children’s relationships with materials gives them multiple possibilities’ (Gandini, et al., 2005:15). According to Hewett (2001:96) this allows the children to ‘explore, observe, question, discuss, hypothesize, represent, and revisit’. The schools in Reggio Emilia have grown out of a culture that values children and ensures their voices are heard through the “100 languages” of communication. In this context children are
viewed as powerful, competent, creative, curious, full of potential and ambitious desires (Malaguzzi, 1994; Rinaldi, 1993). The notion of children acting with the right to be a protagonist - one that takes a primary and active role in determining their education and learning dovetails with this doctoral study’s findings related to self-determined sensorial infusion, and previous PT studies which found that being self-determined was manifest in learning environments which fostered agency. McLellan, Galton, Steward, and Page (2012:i) draw on literature exploring the link between motivation, creative learning, and wellbeing:

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985) the achievement of learning goals associated with developing expertise and metacognitive wisdom, result in a sense of psychological wellbeing through satisfaction of core needs (Deci and Ryan 2008). SDT suggests people’s innate needs include competence (feeling effective in one’s on-going interactions with the social environment), autonomy (being the perceived origin or source of one’s behaviour) and relatedness (having a sense of belongingness with other individuals and one’s community).

McLellan, et al. (2012:i)

This doctoral study recognises agentic learning and the features of SDT theory within the data evidenced through children exercising their independence, and making their own self-directed choices and decisions. It is not within the design or scope of this doctoral study to say whether the children’s motivations had a direct effect on their wellbeing, but what was evidenced is that children did have a sense of belonging within their community. Children’s agency was expressed in relation to taking part in individual, collaborative, and communal playful activities where there was a sense of belonging and shared practices. Communal creativity in an emotionally enabling environment will be drawn out further when discussing the role of others in nurturing collaborative creativity.
7.2.1.4 Immersive action intention flow

During this doctoral study children were seen to initiate playful episodes which were freely chosen, they demonstrated personally directed behaviours, and appeared motivated from within, they became immersed, and at times appeared to be “lost in process and outcome”- absorbed in their actions, they were deep in concentration. Leading on from SDT- Amabile (1983,1996) found that intrinsic motivation- that which prompts people to work on something with no external reward was the most critical factor influencing the creative process. Immersion and intentionality have been previously identified as key characteristics of PT (Burnard, et al., 2006; Cremin, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012a,b). In this doctoral study children acted with a clear purpose or goal demonstrating their intentionality, knowing what they wanted to do and when they were doing it, making active decisions which resulted in an uninterrupted, constant flow of thought in action through behaviour and movement where children’s involvement was demonstrated by following through on ideas with focussed control.

According to Isbell and Raines (2007:21) ‘several studies have identified that when people are involved in creative projects, they are very focussed- often losing track of time while they work’, (e.g. Kashdan and Fincham, 2002). Csikszentmihalyi (1997) refers to this intense focus as “flow”, suggesting that when a creative process is so satisfying a person would work in this way even if there was no reward for the effort. Personally meaningful activities evidenced in this doctoral study appeared to indicate states of “flow” in which children were immersed and focussed, often working with their heads down, shutting out distractions. McLellan, et al. (2012:53) suggest that Csikszentmihalyi’s “flow” is the secret to a happy life and posit- ‘to learn to get flow from as many of the things we have to do as possible’.
As the pressures on people’s time are ever expanding it seems that, by dint of losing a sense of that time and becoming fully engaged in the creative experience, things become worth doing for their own sake and the rewards are a huge sense of wellbeing and enjoyment.

McLellan, et al. (2012:53)

In terms of what this means for young learners I reflect here on my own undergraduate study that examined the effects of the learning environment on young children’s PT (McConnon, 2009). Although unpublished at present the results are worthy of anecdotal mention. Using the Leuven Involvement 1-5 Rating Scale (Laevers, 1994) three hourly sessions were offered to two groups of children (3 and 7 years old). The first hour was a free choice art session; the second was a directed prescribed art outcome taught session (teaching by transmission, Alexander, 2004); and the third was positioned as teaching as negotiation, (Alexander, 2004) in which children and artists were encouraged to work together within a theme, perhaps that which is more resonate with the meddling position taken by myself in this doctoral study. Interestingly during my undergraduate study I found that for both groups of participants their involvement levels were lowest during session 2 the directed and prescribed outcome activity dropping from an average of 4.01 to 3.06 (McConnon, 2009).

Dowling (2005:88) suggests that ‘bored children are likely to switch off any enthusiasm to learn and will become distractible and inattentive’, thus practitioners should consider the extent to which prescribed art activities are necessary? If they are, perhaps they could reflect on the position stated by Early Education in reference to the EYFS (2012:7) suggesting that practitioners ‘build on opportunities for children to play with materials before using them in planned tasks’; which would have the potential to increase enthusiasm by sparking question-posing which stimulates immersive action intention flow as found in this doctoral study.
7.2.2 PT Features in action

This doctoral study reinforces all key PT characteristics as found in previous published research situated in early years settings- (Cremin, et al., 2006; Chappell, et al., 2008; and Craft, et al., 2012b) and these features are listed below in the left hand column and are contrasted to this doctoral study (right hand column) of Table 7.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key PT Features Previous Studies</th>
<th>PT Evidence This Doctoral Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question-Posing</td>
<td>*Feature found as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Posing</td>
<td>*Self-determined Sensorial Infusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Posing</td>
<td>Core of PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Responding</td>
<td>*Feature found as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 categories</td>
<td>9 categories and 24 sub categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Playful acted out explorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>Immersive action intention flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>*Core of PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Innovative imaginative declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-Taking</td>
<td>*Feature found as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-Taking</td>
<td>*Core of PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Imaginative</td>
<td>Innovative imaginative declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Determination</td>
<td>*Feature found as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality</td>
<td>Gathering data through the senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality</td>
<td>Core of PT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Comparison of PT characteristics found in early years settings

Table 7.1 offers a comparison of PT characteristics as documented in previous studies and relates them to the categories and themes evidenced in this doctoral study. In addition to reinforcing existing PT characteristics, this doctoral study offers new landmark sub categories and definitions of
question-responding and risk taking, and documents for the first time in the history of PT research how these features evolved over time during the nursery year for each of the three focus children. This doctoral study also offers new PT evidence revealed for the first time with the age group of 3-to-4 year old children manifest during art making: aesthetic acumen and acuity, elucidation, augmented accuracy, critiquing, and problem ownership.

The remaining discussion of PT behaviours in action will follow this format: Aesthetic acumen and acuity; Question-responding; Elucidation and Innovative imaginative declaration (paired to discuss differences); Risk taking; Augmented accuracy; and Critiquing and Problem ownership (paired to discuss why least evidenced).

**7.2.2.1 Aesthetic acumen and acuity**

In this doctoral study art making was always fuelled by a constant input of sensory information which aided the children in making keen, swift judgements about the look and feel of their work. Children also acted out their ideas in embodied ways mixing gross and fine motor elements, and this was recorded as aesthetic acumen and acuity, showing the link between aesthetic keenness of mind and performance placing an emphasis on the link between thinking and doing in action during artistic episodes. Similarities can therefore be seen between this doctoral study, and Craft, et al. (2012b:55) who recorded ‘Behaviour 2: Communicating possibilities—Children communicated their ideas into action slipping with ease into narrative engagement, and embodied action and expression’.

In this doctoral study children were seen to be working with care and attention, taking considered actions; making material decisions, exploring qualities, accepting and discarding, evaluating and filtering out what was not liked, or needed. Children also looked for the correct tools to work with for what they had in mind, making careful selections. As episodes evolved Box Boy in particular was able to demonstrate the seeking of additional materials
to prolong and sustain his activities by re-starting his sensorial infusion which led to increased aesthetic acumen and acuity.

Links are made here to Reggio Emilia, as in each school there is an atelier, or art studio, these art areas contain an enormous array of natural materials, art supplies, and tools which children can use when exploring their curiosities. Some of the key themes found in this doctoral study are also reinforced through the EYFS (2012) under the title: “exploring and using media and materials”, but the EYFS offers a somewhat limited account of observation guidance, such as noticing how a child:

- Explores colour, and how colours can be changed
- Begins to use shapes to represent objects
- Uses various construction materials
- Realises tools can be used for a purpose

Early Education (2012:44)

According to Bruce (2004:73) ‘creativity begins with learning through the senses and the sixth sense of movement feedback (embodiment, which brings a sense of self and connectedness with others)’. In 2000 Toye and Prendiville suggested that children have a natural interest in play and enjoy “acting out” events. According to Isbell and Raines (2007:244) ‘the dramatic process is practical, immediate, and engages both the emotions and the intellect’. In this sense children are asked to step out of real situations and project themselves into an imaginary space to communicate ideas, images, and feelings through action (Pinciotti, 1993).

In this doctoral study children expressed themselves through embodied ways such as exercising gross motor skills, demonstrating, talking, and painting/drawing at the same time- this also included playing to the camera. They acted out their ideas, bringing imaginings to life, demonstrating increased energy when performing for/or with others exuding excitement and enthusiasm.
7.2.2.2 Question-responding

This doctoral study extends the work by Chappell, et al. (2008) by way of rich presenting illuminating vignettes which reveal more detailed categories, and deeper definitions and descriptions about the inherent nature of young children's question-responding when engaged as artist communicators in nursery school. The findings reinforce all nine core categories of question-responding as found in previous PT studies, (see Table 7.2). Whilst the sub categories are in some cases subtle in their differences, they are all discovered for the first time with children of this age group; and all potentially vital to the ways in which young children express modes of creative learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QR Feature</th>
<th>Chappell, et al. (2008)</th>
<th>This Doctoral Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Exploring the interaction of physical phenomena with objects in the environment</td>
<td>Trialling</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Piloting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experimenting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Action suggests child holds a prior expectation</td>
<td>Knowing what will happen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using knowledge to take action</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Judging the merits, success, fitness for purpose of a completed action</td>
<td>Have &quot;I&quot; got it right?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Comparing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observing reaction to action</td>
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<td>Undoing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Erasing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>De-constructing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensating</td>
<td>Altering a sequence of action to repair an error</td>
<td>Modifying for an error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Replacing instead of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>Action performed more than once</td>
<td>Carrying out same actions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Using same words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confirming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Happy with result</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rejecting</td>
<td>Discarding an idea</td>
<td>Discarding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Filtering materials</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Refusing others’ ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Seeing through actions to a conclusion</td>
<td>Concluding an action in order to move forward</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Terminating on own terms</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failure</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2: Question-responding definitions by comparison

Whilst many studies report children as posing questions in creative play, none other than Chappell, et al. (2008) has produced a taxonomy of responses to compare and contrast the findings of this doctoral study with;
neither has any other researcher taken up the challenge of sustained documentation of PT with the same cohort of participants in order to examine potential changes over time.

In this doctoral study the cross-case deductive analysis revealed that overall throughout the nursery year predicting, evaluating, repeating, accepting, and completing were found to be the strongest elements of question-responding, followed by rejecting, and testing, with undoing, and compensating found to be least evidenced. Cross case analysis confirmed that undoing and compensating were the least displayed features of question-responding in the study for all of the focus children. It is with great interest to discover that during weeks 7-to-9 of this doctoral study (Phase 3), the Summer Term, appeared to be a vital time where all the focus children manifest every feature of question-responding and their creative behaviors emerged most strongly as they prepared to make the transition into their reception year in primary school. However questions are raised as to why undoing and compensating are the least evidenced out of all the question-responding categories with this age group.

Examination of the data shows that the least evidenced categories encompass: erasing, de-constructing, modifying for error, and replacing instead of, all of which require a reversal of thinking and thus make a direct link to metacognition. Schraw (1998) suggests that three distinct types of metacognition exist: ‘declarative, procedural, and conditional’, otherwise known as ‘the how to do things, knowing the why, and the when of thinking’ (as stated in Larkin, 2009:150). In this doctoral study children aged 3-to-4 years of age were seen to be predominantly going forward with their actions rather than stopping to pause reflectively about thinking as would be required for the metacognitive how, why, and when thinking associated with undoing and compensating. According to Berk (2006:282) ‘even the attention of very young infants seems to be future oriented’; by this Berk means that children generate and follow a plan of action. ‘The development of planning illustrates how attention becomes co-ordinated with other cognitive processes, to solve
problems involving multiple steps children must postpone action in favour of weighing alternatives’ (Berk, 2006:283). Research demonstrates that this type of cognitive processing becomes more reflective and deliberate with age, (Wellman, 1990; Flavell, Green, and Flavell, 1995; Miller, Hardin, and Montgomery, 2003). Further analytical research of the “Communicating Possibilities” data bank (as stated in the methodology) following the same focus children across an additional 16 months will be able to determine if there is a change in question-responding behaviours linked to metacognition as the children progress further into their education in reception and year one of their primary schooling. Future research would also provide insights to whether this is a common phenomenon across all age groups in different educational contexts.

7.2.2.3 Elucidation and Innovative imaginative declaration

Throughout this doctoral study two distinct strands of “communication” emerged: elucidation, and innovative imaginative declaration and these strands were found as being distinct from each other. Elucidation was characterised as including a strong element of logic where the children were constantly interpreting their behaviours into an intelligible order to illuminate, and clarify not only their own actions, but were also sometimes seen to use rational explanations to influence the actions of others by verbalising directives for progression to take place. Whereas innovative imaginative declarations and demonstrations were found to encompass both verbal, and non-verbal internal to external unique behaviours and actions or expressive communicated statements which included making ideas come to life which were not necessarily logical, and therefore were documented as distinct from elucidated forms of communication. Three ways that innovative imaginative declarations stood out was during storytelling, experimental exploration, and making play props.

The evidencing of innovative imaginative declarations counteract the argument made by Piaget (1951) suggesting that ‘the child has no
imagination’ (1951:131), and further supports the notion that imagination is a key identifiable feature of creativity. According to Isbell and Raines (2007:24) ‘imagination is at its peak during the early years’, arguing that young children think with more creative freedom than older children. This is reinforced by Torrance’s (1964) suggestion that human beings are most creative at four years of age. Part of the Torrance tests of creativity is the identification of originality or uniqueness, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration characteristics relying heavily on imaginative thinking. Whilst this doctoral study supports the role of imagination in creativity, it does not attempt to answer if young children think with more creative freedom than older children. However the “Communicating Possibilities” project data could potentially hold the answer to this question determining if the focus children’s imaginative declarations manifest differently over time as they progress through the subsequent years of their education, and furthermore could potentially examine why this would be.

In this doctoral study children engaged in making imaginative, individualised depictions, and communicated their associated narratives which held an element of intellectual property, or ownership for them. Children were keen to verbalise their pictorial expressions, (in particular Rosie), whereas Hot Wheels struggled at times to talk out loud in class preferring instead to explain the story of his artwork through physical non-verbal movements such as tracing the path of his paintbrush with his finger. Duffy (2005:191) recognises that ‘creativity through the arts enables children to communicate their feelings in non-verbal and pre-verbal ways and to express their thoughts’. Lancaster and Broadbent (2003) also supports the notion that the arts have an important role for ensuring that the child’s voice is heard. However as Pavlou (2013) recognised engagement with artworks does not automatically release children’s imaginative capacities. Pavlou (2013) followed an aesthetic mode of enquiry which involved the active engagement of children, which led Pavlou to reveal that ‘viewing artworks enabled children to embrace and practice the capacities of noticing deeply, embodying, questioning, creating meaning, and taking action’, and ‘to describe in detail
what the artwork contained, to make connections, and to wonder’ (Pavlou, 2013:84). These findings link to this doctoral study’s position on elucidated forms of communication that of: planning, explaining, and rationalising. Pavlou discovered it was only when the children were asked to interpret the artwork, ‘to speculate, ask questions, to hypothesize and to uncover meaning, to close their eyes and take a magic trip into the artwork’ that the children offered narratives relating and connecting to their own past experiences. Here Pavlou noted that ‘for some of the children this was a pleasant experience whereas for others this was not’ (2013:79) - also found in this doctoral study with Hot Wheels as documented above. Pavlou’s 2013 set of findings discovered when the children were asked to close their eyes and take a magic trip into the artwork relate to this doctoral study’s interpretation of innovative imaginative declarations.

According to Craft, et al. (2012b) the role of imagination in creativity appears undisputed; it is in understanding how the seed of imagination is manifest in classroom practice that PT research seeks to make a contribution. It does so by examining how this seed comes to fruition through engagement with increasing attention over time to the social context. In the EYFS (2012) “being imaginative” is recognised a key aspect of expressive arts and design, however the guidance for enabling imagination for children aged between 30-to-50 months is scant indeed. Early Education (2012:46) suggests supporting ‘children’s excursions into imaginary worlds by encouraging inventiveness, offering support and advice on occasions and ensuring that they have experiences that stimulate their interest’. This would seem like general practical guidance relating to normal classroom provision. More helpfully Early Education continue: ‘tell stories based on children’s experiences and the people and places they know well…offer a story stimulus by suggesting an imaginary event or set of circumstances’ (2012:46). Little insight is offered as in how to encourage imaginative thinking; and moreover there is still a heavy emphasis placed on the role of the adult rather than approaching learning from a child-initiated/child-focussed perspective. This doctoral study differs in its approach to imaginative thinking and makes a unique contribution
to understanding deeper, more detailed considerations of how imagination is manifest and supported during young children’s art making. This is drawn out when discussing my adopted stance of “meddling in the middle” which sought to move children beyond realist elucidation into an imaginary space where art “comes to life” through storytelling narratives. This is discussed further in this Chapter in Section 7.3.

7.2.2.4 Risk taking

In this doctoral study children took risks which were manifest in varying ways and were associated with all dimensions of play including: physical, intellectual, verbal, and emotional forms. Little (2006) defines risk as any behaviour in which there is uncertainty about the outcomes. It involves a consideration of the benefits against the possible undesirable consequences of the behaviour, as well as the probability of success or failure. Studies of the risky nature of children’s physical play, for example those involving scariness or danger, have long been recorded and documented (Tovey, 2010; Little, Wyver, and Gibson, 2011).

Previous PT studies have categorised examples of risk taking as: ‘danger, failure, fear, or going to the edge’ (Craft, et al., 2012b). This doctoral study also recognises these key elements of risk taking, and has furthermore extended risk taking behaviours newly categorised as: novelty, naivety, non-conformist, and combating fears*. All of these types of risk taking behaviours were evidenced throughout the study (Phases 1-to-3) apart from combating fears which was found in phase three only*. This doctoral study is unique in terms of its original contribution to understanding PT risk taking between the ages of 3 and 4 years of age as to date PT studies have not categorised the types of risk taking place, and before this doctoral study nothing was known about the emergence of risk taking over time.

Craft, et al. (2012b) reported risk taking in an early years setting with four year old children and noticed two emerging themes. Firstly the risky nature of
the dynamic tension between the child and the practitioner, and the enabling space created for children to take risks with each other as mediated by the practitioner. In this doctoral study the “themes” noticed by Craft, et al. (2012b) concerning the dynamic tension between the child and the practitioner were also found in the sub categories of non-conformist risk taking behaviours, and were evidenced as: challenging rules, behaving in a non-permitted fashion, ignoring authority, not adhering to cultural norms of practice, remaining silent, deflecting adults’ questions, and terminating dialogue with adult.

Interestingly in this doctoral study the summary of the deductive risk taking analysis showed that non-conformist behaviours were most frequently evident throughout the nursery year, followed by naivety and novelty which were of comparable frequency, and finally combating fears which was only evidenced in Phase 3 during the final term when all of the children would have been 4 years old and preparing for their transitions into their reception classes. The design of previous PT studies has not attempted to document changes in risk taking behaviours over time, however Craft, et al. (2012a) documented the range of PT evidence in terms of “strength” across two research sites with children aged 9-11 years and whilst they found evidence for all PT features there was a marked absence of risk taking behaviours.

This doctoral study has been designed to capture the emergence of PT throughout the nursery year; the strength of the full range of PT behaviours in action will be discussed further at the end of this section. In terms of the “strength” of risk taking manifest in this doctoral study (novelty, naivety, non-conformist, and combatting fears) it was found that novelty was evidenced as strong; naivety was found as a moderate feature; and non-conformist yielded a somewhat mixed set of findings: behaving in a non-permitted fashion, not adhering to cultural norms of practice, and remaining silent were all strong features of risk taking, whereas challenging rules was found as a moderate feature, and ignoring authority and deflecting adult’s questions were identified as weak features of risk taking behaviours.
This doctoral study found all five sub-categories of combating fears (evaluating risk, overriding self-preservation, deconstructing barriers, having a go, and provoking others) were found to be weak in comparison to the other three main categories, however this was due to the fact that it was only in the latter part of the nursery year (Phase 3) that the features of combating fears associated with risk-taking emerged for the children in this doctoral study.

Interestingly it is the categories most associated with combating fears which are documented as “observable features” of the EYFS (2012) curriculum: ‘Playing and Exploring’ which characterises effective learning and engagement as ‘being willing to have a go’:

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a ‘can do’ attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences
- Learning by trial and error

Early Education (2012:6)

To date no other study has characterised the nature of risk taking in children’s art making thus there is a lack of literature to compare and contrast the findings of the risk taking behaviours associated with this doctoral study. Whilst risk taking was evident throughout this doctoral study with 3-to-4 year olds, Craft, et al. (2012a) found that within the age group 9-11 years there was a marked absence of risk taking which raised questions about the nature of the teacher controlling tasks, their inherent agendas, and terms of engagement in creative work, including classroom conduct. In England there is an expectation that as children move through the subsequent years of their education there will be a transition away from free play towards more formalised ways of learning. Continuing work with the “Communicating Possibilities” data bank will be able to assess if there are risk taking changes for the children in reception and year one of their education.
In the concluding remarks of the 2006 PT study Burnard, et al. noted ‘risk taking was involved at different levels and in different ways for individuals in both the process and the outcomes of possibility thinking’, suggesting that ‘children often took risks as part of the process to move their thinking forwards’ (2006:255,257). As previously mentioned risk taking in PT has not been sub-categorised before as has been achieved in this doctoral study, but according to Tovey (2010) this is not an easy task:

The concept of risk is clearly problematic. Risks are not absolutes, there is no such thing as a risk in reality, only perceptions of risk. Risk is socially constructed, and what is acceptable in one context or in one culture may be unacceptable in another. What is an acceptable risk for one child may be a hazard for another.

Tovey (2010:101)

As this doctoral study adopts a relativist stance and is interpretative in nature it is likely that not everyone will agree with the evidence presented as “risk taking behaviours”. Dowling (2005:125) suggests researchers should examine more than just the concrete or physical elements of the environment, stating that ‘creativity involves emotions’; an emotionally supportive environment can encourage the development of creativity. Support allows for mistakes and encourages experimentation, openness and risk taking. If children’s creations are viewed in a negative way, this can damage self-esteem and the creator may be reluctant to expose themselves again. Dowling (2005:125) agrees: ‘negative feelings such as anxiety; can inhibit imaginative and creative thoughts and actions’; often resulting in an individual retreating in order to feel accepted, thus stifling creative thinking. Indeed Gandini, et al. (2005:171) argue ‘it is not creative thinking that dies, but the legitimization of the creativity of thinking’, thus proposing that the interaction with the adult practitioner plays an important emotionally supportive role. Craft, et al. (2008:68) concur suggesting that evidence of PT was found in environments which were ‘safe, secure, and supportive’ and in
which the children ‘were expected to exercise independence in making decisions and their contributions were valued’.

Claxton, Edwards, and Scale-Constatinou (2006:59) make reference to creatogenic cultures in order to observe how creative mentalities might be developed by attending to the cultures that operate in schools and classrooms through a process of cultivation which strengthens creative habits and dispositions. According to Claxton, et al. (2006:60) ‘it is our hypothesis that it is sustained changes to the aspects of ‘the way we do things round here’ that makes a difference to young people’s creative mentalities’. By this Claxton, et al. refer to different facets of cultural change which can be affected by a shift in values and a commitment, such as those associated with shifting pupils’ habits, dispositions, and sources of pleasure- noting that rather than just giving them some quick techniques teachers involved the children developing curiosity, resilience, and an ability to create enjoyable learning challenges for themselves.

This dovetails with a statement made by Sternberg and Lubart (1996): ‘to a large extent, creativity is not just a matter if thinking in a certain way, but rather it is in attitude toward life’ as quoted in Sternberg (2003:333). At the time of authorship Sternberg criticised educational practices suggesting that risk taking in learning environments was being stifled:

Take sensible risks. Our education system often encourages students to play it safe. On tests they give safe answers. When they write papers they try to second-guess what their professors want to hear. But creative people always are people who are willing to risk something and, in the process, fails some of the time in order to succeed other times. Teachers need to encourage such risk taking.

Sternberg (2003:334)

point, whilst creative individuals ‘enjoy taking risks, and are willing to expose themselves to criticism and challenge’ he argues that ‘when people feel threatened, pressurised, judged, or stressed, they tend to revert to ways of thinking that are more clear cut, more tried and tested, and more conventional’.

In this doctoral study engaging in “creative risk taking” afforded children opportunities to play in ways which were uncertain and unpredictable recognising that if risk taking is minimised the implication is that children will alter their thought processes and behaviours to that which is sanctioned and valued by the practitioner. This doctoral study proposes it is therefore up to the practitioner to create an emotionally enabling space to allow risk taking to occur.

### 7.2.2.5 Augmented accuracy

In this doctoral study augmented accuracy manifested during sustained episodes in which children sought to enhance, enlarge, expand, and extend their ideas in action. The EYFS guidance produced by Early Education (2012:7) suggests that practitioners should support children to become curious thinkers and ‘encourage open-ended thinking by not settling on the first ideas: [instead asking] *What else is possible?*’. In this doctoral study children were seen rectifying, altering, or changing the direction of their work through revised plans which developed the refinement and progression of their work building on ideas in action. Adhering to their own internalised standards the children enhanced their artwork by decorating, elaborating and exaggerating. Hall (2008:7) found that ‘in terms of “decoration” it was the girls who more commonly added adornments to their drawings, such as patterns, flowers, hearts and kisses’. In this doctoral study Rosie often depicted flowers and made x marks on her work along with dots and others patterns. Hot Wheels would draw circles, but there was no such patterning theme found with Box Boy in this doctoral study, however both boys were seen to decorate their drawings and paintings with collage materials such as stickers,
or small cut out pictures of things like cakes and sweets, or faces of people from magazines. Other artistic differences are discussed in relation to RQ3 (identity) at a later point in the thesis.

In this doctoral study Rosie was the most art active child who liked to ensure that her artwork was to her own internalised standards. Rosie would take her time to ensure that her work was perfected and enjoyed verbally communicating her ideas, particularly to adults. Coates (2002:34) suggests that children can ‘seem as though they are working to a particular formula similar to that referred to by Browne (1996) and one which they had realised was acceptable to adults’. Social influences impacting on understanding pictures begins in the second year of life where infants begin to behave towards pictures according to social conventions (Callaghan, 2008). ‘As preschoolers ability to mentally represent the world expands, marks on the page take on definite meaning’, (Berk, 2006:234). Cognitive advances in the realisation that pictures can serve as symbols along with improved planning and special understanding can therefore influence the development of children’s artwork and drawings (Golomb, 2004). In this doctoral study children were not asked to make realistic forms of art, however they did strive to demonstrate an aesthetic appreciation of their own pieces by taking their time over actions, showing committed care and worked with detailed attention to what they were doing leading to increased levels of ownership and agency.

7.2.2.6 Critiquing and Problem ownership

In this doctoral study critiquing and problem ownership were found to be the least evidenced PT features throughout the nursery year with this age group of children.

Critiquing was found to manifest as verbal and non-verbal opinionated analysis and interpretation of the behaviours, actions, and outcomes of self and others. The EYFS (2012) acknowledges creating and thinking critically
as a characteristic of effective learning suggesting that children can learn to check how well their activities are going and review how well their approaches worked. In this doctoral study evaluating was found as part of question-responding behaviours: have “I” got it right?, comparing, and observing reaction to action; however critiquing as a category in its own right manifest differently as it encompassed opinionated analysis of both self and others.

Examples of children aged 3-to-4 years of age critiquing art in the literature is rare as many authors suggest that egocentric speech is a hindrance to genuine evaluations as young children have a limited view of others’ perspectives. Thompson and Bales (1991) carried out a study with five year old children in the USA and recorded examples of critiquing:

Jane grumbled to her friend Mary “I wish he would be quiet. I don’t think he has a very good drawing ’cause I looked at it.”

Thompson and Bales (1991:43)

Thompson and Bales (1991:50) concluded that ‘conversation was indeed rare among children in these classes [in their study]’ and that responses to others’ work when engaged in critical dialogues were short and succinct, e.g. “do you like my work?” - “no” (1991:51).

In this doctoral study critiquing involved an evaluative critical assessment resulting in a variety of manifestations including comparing standards and superior judgements, especially where the outcome or behaviour was not as predicted or visualised, which culminated in authoritative admonishment, or action taken to remove or deal with unwanted behaviour.

Problem ownership (including dealing with unwanted behaviour) encompassed children showing self-determination and a willingness to endure working through problems. A prime area of learning in the EYFS 2012 is Personal, Social, and Emotional Development, an aspect of which is
‘managing feelings and behaviour’ (2012:5). At the age of 30-to-50 months children are learning to be:

- Aware of their own feelings
- Begin to accept the needs of others, take turns and share resources
- Tolerant of delay when needs are not immediately addressed
- Adapt behaviour to different events, social situations and changes in events

Adapted from Early Education (2012:13)

There is an expectation that children will continue in their development of self-help and increased social skills, eventually becoming self-reliant. However Bonel and Lindon (2000:46) suggest that ‘children can be faced with mixed messages, and need to handle conflicting expectations from different settings and different people including adults and their friends’. In this doctoral study children had opportunities to practise keeping their behaviour in check, remaining calm, and considering alternatives.

As a result of improved self-reliance, reasoning skills, and evaluative feedback school-aged children gradually become able to distinguish ability, effort, and external factors in explaining their performance (Dweck, 2002). Mastery-orientated attributions are evident in children who work through problems and credit their success to ability, thus they know that events can be altered with increased effort which means that they are more likely to attempt greater challenges and less likely to display learned helplessness through internalised failure (Berk, 2006). In this doctoral study children were actively engaged in finding solutions to solve their own problems and acknowledging their own self-awareness with increasing confidence whilst thinking through options. Therefore art making activity afforded a space to develop self and social understanding skills and increase self-regulation and self-esteem.
A key theme of this discussion is observing and documenting the complex nature of children’s emergent creativity framed as PT. In addition to reinforcing previous PT research and existing PT characteristics, this doctoral study has contributed to a deeper understanding of what PT “looks like” for 3- to-4 year old children whilst engaging in art making activities in the nursery classroom. For the first time in the history of PT research this doctoral study offers new landmark sub categories and definitions of question-responding and risk taking, and documents how these features evolved and emerged during the nursery year for each of the three focus children. Key PT differences were found between the focus children and sustained documentation enabled the examination of changes over time demonstrating that Phase 3 (the summer term) appeared to be a vital time of change where the focus children developed a more expansive repertoire of PT behaviours in action. This doctoral study also offers new PT evidence manifest during art making: aesthetic acumen and acuity, elucidation, augmented accuracy, critiquing, and problem ownership and discussed the relationship between elucidation and imagination, and the least evidenced features of PT found in this doctoral study: critiquing, and problem ownership.

7.3 Discussing RQ2: How is young children’s collaborative emergent PT nurtured by the role of others in the nursery-school context?

7.3.1 Introduction

The discussion of the nurturing role of others is presented in two parts, the first of which focuses on the role of the adult, and the second part the role that peers play in classroom dynamics and creative relationships when the children manifest, or attempt to manifest collaborative emergent creativity.
7.3.2 Part One: Adults as meddlers

The analysis of the nurturing role of the adult focussed on all nursery staff participants (teachers, early years practitioners, learning support assistants) in practice, and my adopted stance as a “meddler”. To clarify the position of “meddling” I draw on McWilliam (2008) who talks about changing the dominant transmission culture of teaching, new forms of social engagement, being in the thick of the action, and mutual involvement in assembling and disassembling cultural products, being a designer, editor, assembler, and a collaborative critic and an authentic evaluator- in other words a “meddler”. This doctoral study sought to uncover the dynamics between the meddler and the young children, and how these relationships were forged, and the associated dynamics within extended meddling episodes manifest when I engaged the children in talking about their art.

In this doctoral study there was no evidence of “extended meddling” found from the nursery staff participants in the episodes chosen for analysis, this is not to say that the nursery staff were not talking to the children about their art, rather that the data reflects that I was present in all of the episodes as an “insider” collecting close up video recordings, and thus became enmeshed in the children’s sustained activities. Reference is made to the Methodology, Chapter 3 and Findings Chapter 5, citing Gregory and Ruby (2010:9) ‘the intrinsic aim of ethnography is to present ‘emic’ interpretations (seeing events from the participants’ point of view), however attempts to unpick the almost insoluble dilemmas of being an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’. Bakhtin’s (1986) notion of the ‘dialogic self’ offers a view of the self as a changing entity, constantly engaged in a dialogue. A dialogic view of language and culture thus inherently entails being responsive to others and sees the act of authoring as a creative answerability and responsibility (Gregory and Ruby, 2010) and dovetails with my positioning in this doctoral study.
7.3.2.1 Range of meddling: Nursery staff and researcher

A range of meddling styles were found across behaviours from nursery staff and also myself. Findings encompassed five key roles: Agentic Advocator, Learner/Documenter, Equitable Participation Negotiator, Supportive Facilitator, and Play Partner.

7.3.2.1.1 Agentic Advocator

The role of agentic advocator was characterised as: allowing time and space, respecting boundaries, standing back and stepping forward.

According to Siraj-Blatchford (2007:4) ‘for many of us working in the field of early childhood education, our motivations include an element of advocacy for children, we are concerned that children should be prepared for the social and emotional processes that they live through now, and for the challenges that they will face in future society’. In this doctoral study children were given the opportunity for child-initiated free play in what the school called “Explore Time”. Explore time has evolved from interest in the influential practices and philosophies of the pre-schools in Reggio Emilia. Reggio Emilia places the child at the heart of its pedagogy educating the senses- ‘the essential ingredient of children’s relationships with materials gives them multiple possibilities’ (Gandini, et al., 2005:15). Project work is a central aspect of the Reggio Approach; it does not follow a prescribed curriculum, but rather follows the child’s curiosities and provocations. The staff at the school in which this doctoral study is situated aims to develop learning and communication by embracing a can do philosophy which values children’s ideas supporting their natural curiosities about the world through free play and creative opportunities, following the children’s individual interests allowing for agency through free choice engagement.

Nursery staff provided easily accessible open-ended materials without direct instruction which enabled agency and freedom of choice. Sometimes creative opportunities were semi-structured within the boundary of a theme, e.g. “let’s
think about what we would find in the woods today”, but there was always space within activities to personalise, or individualise a piece of artwork. Teachers and practitioners allowed children the opportunity to travel freely around the physical space within the setting- inside the classroom, and outside to a decking area which afforded children agency to choose, investigate, and follow their own curiosities on their own terms.

The pedagogic practices of standing back, profiling learner agency, and creating time and space have been found in previous PT studies situated in early years settings, and were found as conducive to underpinning creative thinking and learning (Cremin, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012b).

Profiling learner agency was prioritised through the setting up of multiple opportunities in which the children could initiate their own activities, or make choices within a loosely framed activity, affording the children greater control over their learning. The learning culture in each setting also prioritised thinking time and space, key to this was the development of shared agendas by children and teachers. Learners’ ideas were taken seriously, independence encouraged and choice was given as a high priority.

Cremin, et al. (2006)

In this doctoral study standing back was characterised as either being in, or alongside the action, observing in silence, or watching from a distance looking at classroom dynamics and the nature of social interactions. When adults chose to step back children were afforded the possibility for risk taking, making mistakes and errors. Cremin, et al. (2006) recorded that standing back was distinguished by when and how often teachers positioned themselves, such as stopping and observing, and listening and noticing the nature of the learners’ engagement. In this doctoral study adults were seen to let children work through their own problems but at the same were on hand if they encountered challenges, for example stepping forward with gentle safety reminders, or making alternative suggestions. There were also occasions when I stepped forward as a broker between the children and the teacher to offer explanations, or “meddled in the middle” inviting the children to engage
in dialogue in response to their artwork. Allowing time and space, and standing back and stepping forward are also common features of the role of the teacher in Reggio Schools. Edwards (1998:185) explains: ‘the teacher sometimes works inside the group of children and at other times outside, around the group, from this vantage point the teacher observes and selectively documents the children’s words, actions, interests, experiences, and activities’.

Something not highlighted (or at least made explicit) before in previous PT studies was respecting boundaries. In this doctoral study, both physical and personal boundaries were found to be a dominant feature of the children’s behaviours. The role of the adult in respecting boundaries was found to be associated with acknowledging children’s personal space. A main theme of acknowledging space was highlighted when I attempted dialogue with the children. I accepted the children’s right to respond to my questions if they wanted to, letting them decide what they wanted to talk about, and if they did, to choose their own words. The EYFS supports this way of working in order to ‘give children time to talk and think; ensure that children have opportunities to identify and discuss boundaries so that they understand why they are there and what they intend to achieve’ (Early Education, 2012: 7,14). This was also a role found by Craft, et al. (2012b).

Practitioner Role 2: Allowing time and space for children’s responses- Here allowing time and space for children’s authentic responses involved at times setting up and creating play-spaces, stepping back, observing, holding back from interrupting, following children’s interests, and also creating a space for children’s participation.

Craft, et al. (2012b:57)

In this doctoral study when engaging in conversations with the children, adequate pauses were left by adults (nursery staff and researcher) allowing the children the opportunity to carefully think, and make considered responses. If children asked me a direct question, for example “how do I do this?”, if appropriate, to prompt thinking I would not give them the answer
responding “I don't know, what do you think?” affording an opening for the children to solve their own problems and answer their own questions and work it out for themselves, thus advocating agentic learning.

7.3.2.1.2 Learner/Documenter

The role of the adult as a learner/documenter was to elicit inquisitive and imaginative communication of intellectual property. I clearly demonstrated a genuine interest in the young children’s art acknowledging their own, individual, and personal ideas. I opened and invited dialogue which resulted in children communicating through elucidation and imagination, and documented their responses accordingly. Reference is made to key literature supporting the role of documentation as a form of art assessment in schools, (Duffy, 2005).

It is important to record and document children’s artistic development as with any other area of the curriculum, it is especially important to record the process as well as any end products, portfolios for individual children enable progress to be tracked over time and offer the children an insight into their own learning.

Duffy (2005:198)

Part of the EYFS (2012) recommendations as mentioned in the Tickell Report (2012:35,78) was to continue the documentation of evidence through the Foundation Stage Profile, by recording emerging, expected, and exceeding ‘observation of daily activities that illustrate children’s embedded learning’. However Tickell (2012:30) stressed that ‘skilled practitioners should spend most of their time interacting directly with children to guide their learning rather than writing things down’. In this doctoral study observations of children were carried out by using video, photographs, voice recordings, and a researcher diary. Children’s creative journals were also used as documentation collating photographs, artefacts, and practitioner notes. Alternatively in Reggio Schools “listening” ‘means being fully attentive to the children, and at the same time, taking responsibility for recording and
documenting what is observed, [by this] “listening” means seeking to follow and enter into the active learning that is taking place’ (Edwards, 1998:181). This stance seems similar to that of meddler as adopted by myself, being in the moment, where watching, observing, videoing, and photographing act as part of the learner/documenter role complimented by question-posing techniques (discussed further on in the thesis).

The benefits of working interactively and reflectively are positioned here by Edwards (1998:185): ‘the teacher also documents her own words and actions, such observations are needed to interpret what is happening with the children and to make predictions and projections about how to go forward’. My role as a learner/documenter is explicated further on in the section which discusses the findings of “meddling in the middle” narratives in relation to the potential implications this role holds for early years practice.

7.3.2.1.3 Equitable Participation Negotiator

The adult nurturing role of equitable participation negotiator included promoting independent communication and collaboration between children. In this doctoral study independent communication was supported by modelling language, and conversation etiquette. Adults listened sensitively when the children were talking to each other, and gently prompted or reminded the children to use good manners, for example being courteous by saying “please and thank you.” Adults also encouraged inviting and responding to dialogue: “I think you can ask him yourself”; or “perhaps it would be nice to say something back?” These behaviours are all found in the EYFS practitioner guidance notes for positive relationships, ‘Communication and language: speaking, what adults could do’.
• Model language appropriateness
• Encourage conversation with others and demonstrate appropriate conventions, e.g. turn taking, saying please and thank you
• Show children how to use language for negotiating

Early Education (2012:21)

In this doctoral study it was sometimes necessary for adults to act as conveyors between children, stimulating them to tell their peers what they were doing: “look Lucy is watching, perhaps she would like you to tell her what you are doing” and intervened to assist others in taking part- “would you like to get some tape for ...?”; “look May is offering you some paper.” Similarities can also be seen between the role of the adult as an equitable participation negotiator in this doctoral study, and Practitioner Role 4 as evidenced by Craft, et al. (2012b). Practitioner Role 4: Interventions: supporting, sustaining, and suspending play. It is the suspending play aspect which aligns with this study’s finding:

By managing the moment in terms of dynamics between children, modelling acceptable or preferred behaviours, managing frustrations, offering advice, managing space, guiding, resolving conflict.

Craft, et al. (2012b: 57)

In this doctoral study collaborative group work was also encouraged by the provision of “big painting, big drawing, and big collage” activities. The teacher would set up and cover a large table or dedicated area with a huge piece of paper, acetate, or cut out shape, and the children would work together to create a large wall hanging or display. Without such “interventions” children would not have been afforded “the possibility” of collaborative participation.
7.3.2.1.4 Supportive Facilitator

Guiding, reflecting, prompting, and reassuring were all identified with the role of being a supportive facilitator. Adults guided children with simple instructions: “try cutting them like this”; “you can touch it”; “why don’t you ask one of your friends to hold that for you?” They also made suggestions about what the children could do when they were inactive or looked lost: “have you seen the new coloured sand?”; “come and have a look at these stickers”; “would you like to make a letter?” This role is similar to that noticed by Craft, et al. (2012b)

Practitioner Role 1: Provoking possibilities-
Practitioners provided props, offered open access to materials and sought to open wide possibilities in terms of where children might take their play. They also became involved in the play by leading at times, by directing the learning at times, by introducing resources and ideas. So – this was child-initiated play in the context of an adult’s involvement.

Craft, et al. (2012b:57)

In this doctoral study children were invited to think about their actions. Adults were often heard asking things like: “why do you think it’s not working?” and “what do you need?” Reflective evaluations were also sought and stimulated with questions such as: “would you like to tell me about your idea?”; “whose idea was this?”; “did you enjoy working together?” Adults also prompted thinking responses, asking children to consider: “is it finished?”; “is it better?”, and “who do you think you could ask for help? Adults tried to get children to expand their problem solving skills using visual art as a prompt to start talking: “is there a plan?”; “how are you going to make it?”; “what else might you need?”; “is it working?” These practices are advocated by the Reggio Approach where the teacher’s goal is not so much to facilitate learning in the sense of making it smooth or easy, but rather to stimulate it by making problems more complex, involving, and arousing, asking the children what
they need in order to do experiments even when they realise that a particular approach or hypothesis is not “correct” (Edwards, 1998).

In this doctoral study adults offered children comfort and reassurance when things did not go to plan, affording them the confidence to keep trying and not to give up, praising efforts with positive value statements, and concurring with good ideas. Adults also acted with sensitivity to children’s emotional well-being, often enquiring: “are you OK with that?”; “are you happy for me to watch you playing?”; and were sympathetic to children’s individual emotional needs if they were upset, comforting them, and helping them overcome separation anxieties, and to relax their boundaries. This was an important issue for collaboration especially if children were wary of others; adults would take time to reassure the children that their peers were interested in playing with them and that was a good thing, and furthermore would rationalise and explain others’ actions: “he wants to help you with that.” These findings dovetail with the four overarching guiding principles shaping practice in the EYFS Framework (2012).

1. Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Adapted from Early Education (2012:3)

7.3.2.1.5 Play Partner

In this doctoral study the adult role of play partner was characterised as enthusiastic and appreciative. Adults displayed a positive attitude and showed a genuine interest in young children’s play demonstrated by using excited words and noises to communicate the impressiveness of the
children’s actions: “whoa!”; “look at that!”; “ooo”; “amazing!” As well as offering praise and valuing a job well done, adults played alongside children affording them the opportunity to lead the play, accepting their invites, and play cues to join in and followed their instructions. Evidence of adults acting as play partners was found by Craft, et al. (2012b):

Practitioner Role 3: Being in the moment with the children- Adults played alongside children, were evidently present ‘in the moment’, being in the thick of the action, combining observing with intervention. They were available – so this was a very active engagement with the children’s play.

Craft, et al. (2012b:57)

In this doctoral study adults also respected children’s ideas and empowered them by exhibiting genuine enjoyment: “hey that’s an interesting design”; “you make good fliers”; “can you teach me how to make them?”; “I can’t wait to see what happens next.” This is supported by Early Education (2012: 6) - ‘play with children, encourage them to explore, and show your own interest in discovering new things’. Reggio practitioners are also encouraged to join in with children’s excitement and curiosities: ‘although learning is a serious matter, the teacher must approach it in a spirit of playfulness as well as respect, the metaphor of “catching the ball that the children throw at us” is a favourite one in Reggio Emilia’ (Edwards, 1998:181).

7.3.2.1.6 Summarising meddling styles

This doctoral study makes a contribution to understanding the nature of creative pedagogy which supports children’s engagement through a range of meddling styles which were found across behaviours from nursery staff and also myself. Five key roles have been characterised, that of: Agentic Advocator, Learner/Documenter, Equitable Participation Negotiator, Supportive Facilitator, and Play Partner. The nurturing role will be discussed further by examining my questioning interventions found when meddling in the middle of young children’s art making.
7.3.2.2 Meddling in the middle of young children’s art making- my role

This section discusses my adopted stance as a meddler in the middle, and uses examples from the spoken narratives documented during “Rosie’s Spider Story” as detailed in the findings. By focussing on one sustained episode the “full” picture is explained in detail following a clear example demonstrating Rosie’s progression- moving from describing to imagining in action as stimulated by my questioning strategies.

As previously mentioned I have expressed a specific interest in the manifestation of children’s creative learning through art in reference to the Reggio Emilia Approach, which interprets the language of art into a visible means of investigation; assisting the children when tracing and revisiting their work; increasing personal ownership of their education. However what is not clearly explained in the literature is how artistic experimentation by the children in Reggio Emilia schools has the capacity to move them beyond re-creating representational products to that of combining cognitive processes and pragmatic skills enabling them to become artistic communicators. Edwards (1998:181) suggests that ‘questions about what teachers can and should do can never be finally answered, but rather must keep returning to the original problem: What kind of teachers are needed by our children- those real individuals in the classrooms of today?’. Pink (2005) argues that in the future there will be less focus on routine information-seeking, executing transactions and routine problem solving, and much more focussed on forging relationships, tackling novel challenges and synthesising “big picture” scenarios, and that the “tools” for partaking in these relationships, challenges, and scenarios are the ones that educators should be preparing children for.

In order to accomplish the forging of these new types of relationships Erica McWilliam (2008) propositioned that we will need to move beyond the binary formula of teachers as either ‘the sage on the stage’ or ‘the guide on the side’, to a new role of ‘meddler in the middle’. According to McWilliam
(2010:295) ‘meddler in the middle is a much more active and interventionist teaching role, it positions the teacher and student as mutually involved in assembling and disassembling cultural products’. Meddling is a re-positioning of teacher and student as co-directors and co-editors of their social world, in other words changing the pedagogical focus from the teacher to the learner. In this doctoral study this was evidenced as role reversal.

7.3.2.2.1 Role reversal

Meddling in the middle was found to be framed by a distinct reversal of roles. In terms of the issue of “roles” and the dynamics between the meddler and child Hendy and Toon (2001:111) suggest that ‘adults must be careful never to begin [an episode] in role without telling the children that they are doing so- “we have witnessed interventions that do not warn the children that an adult has gone into a role”…without an opening statement [informing] children of our intentions, they can become very confused’. In this doctoral study roles were never stated, and neither was a contract, or learning objective, or procedures to follow. Having initiated the episode Rosie welcomed me to naturally join in affording a space to respond to her in order to further her thinking and facilitate learning- using drawing as space for intellectual play (Wood and Hall, 2011). In “The Spider Story” Rosie was clearly the owner of the story, there was no script, and the episode was unpredictable and most definitely creative. Improvisation was the medium for the story’s emergence and my role in supporting this was ‘to manage and evaluate the dialogue and non-verbal action’ (Hendy and Toon, 2001:112).

The analysis of spoken dialogue between myself and the focus children revealed that interestingly the accumulative narrative lead across all phases was found to be taken by the focus children who were the strongest protagonists of the conversation. Dialogue was coded and classified into themes which demonstrated a range of narratives. Overall throughout the nursery year children were found to engage in 13 types of narrative, 7 were child-initiated, and 6 adult-prompted. I was found to engage in 6 types of narrative, 3 adult-initiated, 3 child-prompted. As well as children taking a lead
role in narratives it also appeared that the imaginative dynamics of meddling encompassed a reversal of roles in which children were viewed as the artist/owner of the intellectual property, and it was my role to learn about, and document the artists’ work. In this doctoral study it was found that watching, observing, videoing, and photographing as part of the learner/documenter role were complimented by question-posing techniques. In order to further understand the dynamics between meddler and child, the “narratives” are discussed below.

7.3.2.2.2 Narratives

Children (particularly Rosie) liked to engage in verbalising her ideas as they were being visually depicted and constructed. For the vast majority of the time the children described the features of their artwork as realist, using statements like: “it is a...”; “this is...”. As well as describing what could be seen children used physical actions to emphasise ideas. This sense of embodiment has already been discussed in relation PT theory as noted by Craft, et al. (2012b:55) ‘Behaviour 2: Communicating possibilities- Children communicated their ideas into action slipping with ease into narrative engagement, and embodied action and expression’. Embodiment and its connection to narrative has also been documented by Cremin, et al. (2013) defined as children’s emotional/aesthetic responses.

Cremin, et al. (2013) found that narratives within PT episodes included character/s, plot, sequence of events, significance to children and emotional aesthetic investment, interestingly noting that ‘most often children were themselves as ‘characters’ or ‘players’ within the narrative, they took part alongside representational objects and other characters’ (2013:22). In the “Spider Story” Rosie did not represent herself, or at least did not communicate this to me, but she did create characters and plots. Rosie also brought her art to life by creating stories, or as Cremin, et al. (2013) propose ‘a sequence of events’.
As well as creating characters- “the spider, the little spider, and the snail”, Rosie imagined her characters were living beings, humanising their features, imagining what they might need, and even portrayed their behaviours. Rosie also placed her characters in settings, and took them on imaginary, but real journeys acting out her character’s story, just as if they were leaving the marks on the board and she was controlling their environment. When appropriate I prompted and challenged Rosie to go beyond the realist vision by asking her to imagine what her characters were saying, but sometimes this turned thinking into concrete ideas, as evidenced here: after Rosie had created “the spider” I asked Rosie what the spider was saying- in response Rosie drew some round marks on the spider’s face, then as she was drawing the shapes she said “he needs glasses.”  

Throughout the spider narrative Rosie and myself developed a sense of emergence where two people bounce ideas and challenges off each other in order to move forward (Sawyer, 2011); however the “storyline” was created, controlled, and conveyed by Rosie. According to Jeffrey and Woods (2009) successful achievement of a high level of learner ownership and control is effective in developing the learner’s awareness of the learning process and furthermore positive teacher-learner relationships are central to the development of creative learning. This was also a key finding of the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE project) which documented pedagogic progression in sustained shared thinking (Siraj-Blatchford, 2007).  

This doctoral study found that communication entailed two distinct types of narrative, elucidation and innovative imaginative declaration. Elucidation encompassed planning, explaining, and rationalising, whereas innovative imaginative declarations and demonstrations were found to encompass both verbal, and non-verbal internal to external unique behaviours and actions or expressive communicated statements which included making ideas come to life which were not necessarily logical, and therefore were documented as distinct from elucidated forms of communication. Transitions from elucidation
to imaginative declaration were only found during sustained creative meddling episodes between myself and the children.

When engaged as a meddler in the middle of young children’s art I made visual and verbal connections manifest in the context of observing and listening. I was drawn in by the children and watched their actions intently noting interesting behaviours and using these as a “way in” - opening and inviting dialogue. I acknowledged children’s expressive ideas by listening to their words and repeating and confirming them back to the children thus reinforcing to the child my understanding and acceptance of their agency, and their stance as the owner of the piece. At no time did I attempt to take over, direct, or alter the path of the children’s narratives, but I did challenge and provoke the children in order to engage in reasoning and reflection, and encourage forward thinking. Challenges were also found during episodes in which risk taking was present, provoking children to overcome their fears and have a go at new things.

In reference to challenges, Hendy and Toon (2001:112) define this notion as “complications” - ‘the adult guides the children to and through the complications they meet on the way, either the adults or the children can introduce complications’. Furthermore Hendy and Toon (2001:120) suggest that ‘complications are important as they are the driving force of any story, if the story is to be successful, something must happen to create tension and conflict’. Interestingly Hendy and Toon postulate that during interactive story making it is the child that can overwhelm the practitioner with complications in swift succession, and that it is the role of the practitioner to channel these complications through the use of “controls” to concentrate the children’s attention to thinking, and to calm a group that is becoming over excited. In this doctoral study the only “control” was to encourage the children to attempt to go beyond the realist vision. The notion of questioning to “go beyond the realist vision” is paired with Rosie “moving beyond what can be seen” and found in the context of communicating imagination, i.e. transitioning from narrative that is distinct from describing, or saying what can be seen to more
abstract concepts—projecting into an interpretative space that only exists in the children’s minds.

As previously mentioned in the literature review there is very little attention paid to guiding the nurturance of imaginative thinking in the EYFS (2012), and the research literature documenting specific questioning types to encourage young children to talk about art is extremely old and out of date (e.g. Taunton, 1983). Discussions about the uncertainty of how to conduct discussions about art with young children are still pertinent today as many teacher training programmes continue to fail to address this issue (Ofsted, 2009, 2012). Taunton (1983) makes the suggestion that carefully planned questioning strategies can foster thinking processes which generate new insights—‘as any teacher of young children will confirm, the teacher’s response to a child’s initial answer to a question can profoundly affect the quality of the continuing conversation’ (1983:40).

Pavlou’s (2013) study of creativity in children’s thinking and art making initiated from the premise that engagement with artworks does not automatically release children’s imaginative capacities. I concur with this finding as the children in this doctoral study manifest two distinct forms of communication—elucidation and imagination, the latter mainly being that which was stimulated and sustained by meddling practice. The current study therefore makes an original contribution towards bridging the gap in the literature by offering clear guidance as to how practitioners can gain deeper insights into young children’s art making by adopting an interventionist meddling stance using the questioning strategies of: making visual and verbal connections; acknowledging, challenging and provoking; and going beyond the realist vision.
7.3.3 Part Two: Classroom dynamics and creative relationships

Several types of social dynamics and artistic relationships were found in the nursery classroom revealing ways in which children’s agency is expressed in relation to taking part in individual, collaborative, and communal playful activities; reflecting previous PT research (Craft, et al., 2012b). Chappell’s (2008, 2011) humanising perspective highlights the interconnections between all three kinds of creativity as part of an emergent story; although interconnections between individual, collaborative, and communal creativity were found in the nursery, for these young learners this was often temporary, fluxing, and not a static feature. During episodes the children’s activities and creative relationships were often evidenced as being fluid in nature meaning that the children did not have “pre-defined” roles prior to the commencement of each episode. In active live play collaboration was manifest in a variety of ways, and “dipped in and out of” according to the children’s perceived needs of the activity. This part of the thesis reports on the classroom dynamics and creative relationships experienced in nursery between September 2010 and July 2011 and discusses the global findings across the academic year for the three focus children. It is not meant to be indicative that every child in nursery had the same social experiences; this will be explicated further on in the thesis in relation to individual identities.

7.3.3.1 Emotionally enabling context driven by provocation

It has already been noted that provocation was a key element of the enabling context in this doctoral study triggering children’s interest, engagement, and imagination; deemed by school practice to be ‘the essential ingredient of children’s relationships with materials gives them multiple possibilities’ (Gandini, et al., 2005:15). Practitioners left unusual objects for the children to discover, hid materials in boxes, or suitcases, mixed glitter and sand in with paints, cello-taped pieces of paper in unexpected places, cut holes in card, and used natural elements such as ice, leaves, stones, etc. The use of the
term “provocation” as adopted by the school encompassed several meanings ranging from what some would describe as “normal classroom provision” as documented above, to problem solving situations such as a key frozen in a block of ice, all the tables turned up on end in the classroom, or a small doorway painted on the skirting board. As the Head Teacher noted in an interview: the setting, the classroom layout, the materials, the staff etc are all part of the provocation, “it’s in the way you present things, shaking them up which is provoking.” These aspects of provocation are reinforced in the EYFS (2012) practitioner guidance notes on ‘Active Learning’ through ‘Motivation’. For example: ‘children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests’ (Early Education, 2012:6).

This doctoral study has also demonstrated how it reinforces the key emotional aspects of pedagogy for PT already documented in earlier work (Cremin, et al., 2006; Craft, et al., 2012b) where adults were seen to be standing back allowing children time and space to develop their own ideas, but gauging with sensitivity when there was a need to step forward, or to “meddle in the middle”. Littleton, Taylor, and Eteläpelto (2012) make reference to socio-cultural theory suggesting that creativity always takes place in a community linked by common identities, where children’s agency is expressed in relation to taking part in individual, collaborative, and communal playful activities, a feeling of belonging, and all the shared practices which enable communication. Furthermore Searle (2004) suggests that a key factor affecting participation in any creative task is the level of trust between team members. In this doctoral study it was noted that in order to enhance creativity, a safe environment was required in which vulnerability was minimised and children felt safe to “have a go” and become engaged in playful activities. Furthermore sensitive children such as Hot Wheels required emotional support to enable verbal communication.
7.3.3.1.2 Communal spectatorship

Within the emotionally enabling context driven by provocation, the children displayed behaviours associated with communal spectatorship. By this I mean that there was evidence of children observing the environment, i.e. suspending their involvement in immersive activities to look around the classroom in order to see what other children were doing, taking an interest in aspects of classroom culture such as visitors, play in progress, tensions and disagreements.

The EYFS guidance acknowledges that part of developing positive relationships through communication and language between the ages of 30-to-50 months involves adults being ‘aware that some children may watch another child in order to know what to do, rather than understanding it themselves’ (Early Education, 2012:18). The findings of this doctoral study are juxtaposed with Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of legitimate peripheral participation: legitimate because anyone is potentially a member of the community of practice; peripheral because participants are not central but on the margins of the activity; and participation because learners are acquiring knowledge through their involvement with the community (ibid, 1991:100). Brice-Heath and Wolf (2005) note that individuals can serve as resources to one another, and their prior talk and experiences become the common distributed cognition of the entire group; arguing that improved functions of language communication moves along the group’s achievement.

In this doctoral study children appeared to have “a good sense” of where the teachers and practitioners were and followed them around the classroom observing and anticipating if they were going to introduce new provocations. Children also took to standing at the periphery of activities, observing peers, and keeping a general “eye” on what was going on. Therefore in this doctoral study the notion of spectatorship in this sense refers to watching, but not taking part, and having an awareness of what is going on in the classroom environment.
7.3.3.2 Peer-to-peer roles and relationships in collaborative creativity

In this doctoral study peer-to-peer collaborative creativity was evidenced as three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, Artist-Demonstrator and Observer-Replicator.

When children were acting “as if” they were teachers they were authoritative towards their peers; they evaluated their work and offered praise. They took time to explain instructions to apprentices and demonstrated artistic ideas to them. Apprentices worked closely alongside their teachers, watching them and trying out their ways of working with “new” tools such as scissors, or manipulating materials in different ways through the teacher’s guidance. Directors acted “as if” they were in charge, making decisions, and telling peers how to use materials and tools through direct and clear instructions. Assistants sourced and provided materials for the director, sometimes they were permitted to help in the making process by following a briefing of what to do. Artist-Demonstrators attracted many followers, their activities had an in-direct ripple effect throughout the classroom with peers watching, mirroring, and copying. Observer-Replicators mirrored the language, behaviours, and artwork of artists- copying ideas in their own way- not through direct instruction. As previously mentioned collaborative creativity for these young learners was often temporary and not always frequently evident. The children did not have “pre-defined” roles prior to the commencement of each episode, and in active live play collaboration was manifest in a variety of ways and “dipped in and out of” according to the children’s perceived needs of the activity which influenced which “as if” role they adopted and displayed.

The terminology of behaving “as if” has long been associated with imagination; for example Holland, et al. (2001:49) link “as if” to ‘imaginary worlds which can inspire new actions, or paradoxically, their alternative pleasures which can encourage escape or withdrawal from action’, suggesting that it is in these “as if” worlds that people’s identity and agency
are formed. Craft, et al. (2012b:55) recognised children acting “as if” by exercising their agency, roles, and identities finding ‘there was an initial owner or director of the possibility play, supporting peers, and/or permitted collaborators and actors, and additional peers, collaborators and observers’. Similar links were found in this doctoral study as the children manifest their preferred ways of being in the nursery class; however extends previous PT work by exploring common threads between roles and identities. This will be discussed in a later section exploring identity.

In this doctoral study it was curious that there was “a static nature” to the extent to which the focus children were engaging in collaborative activity. According to Moran and John-Steiner (2004:14) ‘collaborator’s identities can remain distinct over the course of the collaboration, contributing their particular strengths and taking the lead at different times’. In this doctoral study there was also no evidence of reciprocity, equality, or emergence where two people bounce ideas off each other to move forward (Sawyer, 2006). These characteristics of creativity have been evidenced in work with adults, but not to date with the young children in this doctoral study, instead all dynamics of peer-to peer collaborative relationships were top down and one way.

Reciprocal relationships are yet to be evidenced for the children in this doctoral study due to the static nature of roles assumed during collaborations. Moran and John-Steiner (2004) suggest that over time creative collaboration can become a vehicle for identity development allowing different aspects of identities to come to the fore, differentiate from, and integrate with other emergent identities (Bateson, 1990; Goldberger, et al., 1996). Continuing post-doctoral work with the “Communicating Possibilities” data set may well provide insights into this problem area as the children develop and mature and progress through school to their reception and year one classes. Berk (2006:264-8) notes: ‘Western children usually require extensive guidance and training in how to work together for cooperative learning to succeed’, which furthermore suggests that as well as age being a
factor; collaborative relationships may well manifest in different ways in different cultures and in different settings.

It is well documented that Vygotsky’s (1976, 1978) social learning theory stresses the importance of the social and cultural context – i.e. what children can do with other people, where learning should not only be matched to the child’s level of development, but should also take them beyond it. Duffy (2006:119) describes the scaffolding of learning on two levels, ‘the children’s actual level of development, and the potential level of development- this is the level the children can achieve if supported by a competent learner’. Reilly (2008:72) re-conceptualised the notion of group thinking to that of ‘a collective zone of proximal development’, (CZPD). However Reilly’s study focussed on the group dynamics of adults and therefore gaps in the literature remain requiring research which fully illuminates how a collective ZPD could benefit groups of young children.

In this doctoral study, displayed throughout all three distinct types of collaborative relationships there was limited evidence of what Boud, Cohen, and Sampson (2001), and Boud and Lee (2005) define as ‘peer learning’; in this sense the learning happens as a two way reciprocal activity. It is acknowledged that Boud and Lee (2005) draw their taxonomy from interviews with university research students, but this is not to say that in this doctoral study the children were not learning from each other, granted the discourse was not symbiotic; co-production happened on a different level where the children played out their own differential relations of power, authority, and expertise. Therefore the notion of ‘cognitive apprenticeship’ (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1989) and (Collins, 2006) seems best applied here. Before schools, apprenticeship was the most common means of learning, used to transmit the knowledge required for expert practice in many fields including the arts. According to Collins, et al. (1989) apprenticeship embeds the learning of skills and knowledge in the social and functional context of their use. Lave (1997) studied apprenticeships in the cultural context of a tailor shop in Africa and found the central features are a combination of observation, coaching, and practice; with guided participation
as a key aspect of coaching in particular. The dual focus on expert processes and learning in context are shared across all three collaborative relationships documented in this doctoral study to date.

A repeatable pattern found during searches for relevant academic works of young children’s creative collaborations proved difficult as there seemed to be a large proportion of work focussing on the upper primary age ranges of 6-to-11 year-old pupils. However Chappell, et al. (2008:267) reported collaborative PT events ‘sampled from two early years settings, one [being a] reception class, (4-to-5 year olds)’; as did Craft, et al. (2012b) with four year olds. And, Bancroft, Fawcett, and Hay (2005:13) also note during a kindergarten 5x5x5 project, 3 year old ‘children pulled others into the interaction’ and that ‘the children worked as a team’. Whilst acknowledging examples of collaboration in young children’s activities exist in the literature, it is not explicit in what particular sequence of events this was occurring and to what extent the process relied upon the effective practitioner’s pedagogical skills and experience. This indicates that very little is still known about young children’s creative collaborations in terms of the relationships formed. Furthermore Eteläpelto and Lahti (2008) argue that there has been a lack of studies addressing creative collaboration in long-term learning communities. The emphasis of which is placed on the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnership, through sustained and varied actions, and through the interweaving of social and individual processes where individuals are seen as part of the social environment and hence as resources for each other.

This doctoral study makes a significant contribution to the field- filling the identified gap in the literature by exploring complex dimensions of social and collaborative creativity, examining the ways in which young children become engaged in a process of “thinking and doing together”. Three defined sets of relationships were manifest (Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, and Artist-Demonstrator and Artist-Replicator). Continuing analysis of the “Communicating Possibilities” data set will be able to determine if these relationships change in terms of the range and strength for each of the focus children over time.
7.3.3.2.1 Parallel working

There was also evidence of transitional dynamics which had the potential to link individual to collaborative creativity. The dynamics associated with individual creativity in a collaborative context consisted of children working independently on the same piece of artwork as their peers, the activities can be described as together but separate, where both children have a non-verbal acceptance of working alongside each other towards the same outcome or goal. An example can be found reflecting on Hot Wheel’s behaviours during the “big painting” butterfly episode where the teacher had facilitated an activity to encourage the children to work together; however the children took their own positions around the large butterfly and stuck to their own sections; in turn each were contributing towards a collaborative piece, but remained statically individual artists. Another example of a parallel process could be drawing circles alongside other children who are drawing shapes. These types of dynamics mostly occurred during semi-structured or facilitated activities with a clear outcome or goal.

Craft, et al. (2012a) made a unique differentiation between ‘children building ideas together- rather than individuals working in relation to one another’ (2012a:19). Perhaps if more researchers strove to make a greater effort to distinguish between parallel working and authentic collaboration such as the examples detailed in this doctoral study, clearer comparisons would be able to be made as to what constitutes a creative relationship in its truest collaborative form, rather than simply observing and documenting children “working together”.

7.3.3.2.2 Tactical engagement, tensions and blocks

In order to move from individual to collaborative creativity the children used strategies defined as tactical engagement, these included: aesthetic awareness, nurturing, intrude and invite, seek out expert play partners, and use adult as gatekeeper. There were also areas that hindered the movement
from individual to collaborative creativity; these were rejecting peers, avoidance, possessive ownership of materials, and non-negotiated roles. These tensions and blocks may need to be overcome by children in order to move forward in the next years of their education to be able to enhance and engage in fulfilling collaborative relationships. In this doctoral study tensions and blocks also manifest as individual boundaries—physical and personal and will be discussed further in the following section which explores identity.

7.4 Discussing RQ3: How is the child’s identity as an artist communicator manifested through voice and learning experience in the nursery-school context?

7.4.1 Introduction

Individual creativity was evidenced and defined by the following sub-categories: personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries: physical and personal, artistic style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed. These dimensions have been observed, documented, and literature published by a plethora of academics and writers focusing on the notion of individual creative traits. As there is not scope to discuss each dimension for each focus child, individual creativity will be explicated in relation to the identity of the children as artist communicators.

7.4.2 Case study summaries

The case study summaries draw directly from Chapter 6 (Findings for RQ3). Each of the thematic areas of individual creativity (personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries: physical and personal, artistic style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed) includes cross-case discussions exploring
similarities and differences for each of the focus children, and theoretical considerations and practical implications.

7.4.2.1 Summarising personality

In Chapter 6 the focus children’s case studies demonstrated that they manifest different aspects of personality in the nursery classroom. All were active children, but there were distinct observable differences and some similarities between them. Rosie often displayed a dominant personality and was a social and authoritative character in class, whereas Hot Wheels came across as a more reticent, shy, and quiet child who preferred to keep his guard up, hanging back on the edge of activities, preferring instead to be on his own a lot of the time.

There were also some similarities between the children- like Hot Wheels, Box Boy was also quiet at times, but this was mainly due to deep and intense absorption in his chosen activities rather than shyness. Both Rosie and Box Boy were able to show nurturing tendencies towards their peers, whereas Hot Wheels was more concerned with managing his worries about interacting with others.

As highlighted in the literature review, investigations into the lives of creative people have questioned if they possess common personality traits. According to Isbell and Raines (2007:5) creative adults possess several characteristics; they are ‘curious, expressive, spontaneous, self-confident, playful, adventurous, open-minded and intrinsically motivated’; indeed one might suggest that several of these characteristics can be seen in the case studies (for example Rosie). However caution must be noted because although Hot Wheels could not be described as self-confident, the evidence documented throughout this doctoral study confirms that he was without doubt being creative in his own individual way.
Bruce (2004:50) makes an interesting point: ‘different personalities mean children have different styles of arriving’. By this Bruce means that the way in which children approach and enter the setting can influence creativity as can be seen in the following example:

Some children burst through the doors when they arrive, going straight through the indoors area out to the garden. They seem to need to move more freely before they settle into a creative focus. Other children flit from area to area, as if doing an audit of what is available. Others go straight to their favourite place, finding it to be an important start to the session.

Bruce (2004:50)

It would seem that Bruce is reporting here on making links between what she sees as “personalities” which affects children’s learning styles and abilities to engage with their environments, thus it would seem that the “classification” of a creative personality is a contentious one.

Berk (2006:411) suggests that ‘when we describe one person as cheerful and upbeat, another as active and energetic, and others as calm, cautious, persistent, or prone to angry outbursts, we are referring to temperament—early appearing, stable individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation’. It is not the aim of this doctoral study to “label” children as easy, difficult, or slow to warm up (Thomas and Chess, 1977), or to enter into the realms of the bad, mad, or sad argument (Macleod, 2006), but rather to understand the role that personality plays in voice and creative learning experience, and what aspects of the environment could help children to develop the emotional capacity to enhance social identity. Once again we look at the polarised differences between Rosie and Hot Wheels- according to Kagan (1998), extremely shy and extremely sociable children inherit a physiology that biases them toward a particular temperamental style; yet Berk (2006:415) argues that ‘heritability research indicates that genes contribute only modestly to shyness and sociability, experience too has a powerful impact’. Self-
development begins with the dawning of self-awareness in infancy and gradually evolves during early childhood which is why it is of relevance to the study of young children entering into school. Social cognition becomes better organised with age as children integrate separate behaviours into an appreciation of their own and others’ personalities and identities. Social cognition moves toward metacognitive understanding as children get older their thinking is no longer limited to the self, they also think about their own and other people’s social thoughts (Berk, 2006). Thus for inhibited children (such as Hot Wheels) to gain increased control over their reticence and develop effective social skills and rewarding relationships, classroom observations should be carried out with greater awareness on interventions to address how children come to understand their multifaceted social worlds, it is necessary to not only interpret their experiences, but to offer them guidance and emotional support.

In this doctoral study personality is viewed as a characteristic of individual identity and provides the beginning of a framework— one for seeing creativity in a more meaningful way for each individual child.

7.4.2.2 Summarising self-talk and talk to others

Comparisons across the case study summaries demonstrate that Rosie was the most communicative talker out of the three focus children, followed by Box Boy, and then Hot Wheels who preferred to use sounds or pointing instead of words.

Rosie’s talkative behaviours for example as documented in “The Spider Story” draw similarities between this doctoral study and Thompson and Bales (1990). Thompson and Bales recognised that children knew when they had attracted an attentive audience because they regaled the group with ingenious twists in their plot. Rosie also enjoyed the attention her art afforded as a mechanism for dramatizing her storytelling narratives.
Narration is referred to as a mode of thinking and understanding incorporating the key aspect of meaning making (Bruner, 1996, 2002, 2003; Egan, 2005; Lyle, 2000). According to Berk (2007:385) ‘conversations with adults about past experiences contribute to dramatic gains in children’s ability to produce well-organised, detailed, expressive narratives’. Interestingly in this doctoral study Rosie enjoyed conversing with adults more than her peers, Hot Wheels communicated with adults the least, and Box Boy became more communicative as the year progressed, however he chose to communicate more with his peers than adults. Both boys thus preferred to talk to their friends, whereas Rosie preferred the linguistics of adults.

Rosie was found to be the most communicative artist out of all three focus children even demonstrating mastery of conversational strategies and adjusting her speech to social expectations, whereas Hot Wheels was a reticent artist talker, a point discussed by Coates (2010: 23) who suggests ‘the child’s drawings are personal and [are] not intended to communicate or be shared with others’. Hot Wheels was communicating, but as Jameson (1968) says, what the child really wants to do is talk to himself in pictures. Hot Wheels spent a lot of time making sounds and noises and talking out loud to himself, this was his most desirable form of communication—however talking out loud to self was also a common feature found with all three focus children directly impacting on artistic communication. According to Berk (2007:385) ‘to communicate effectively we must produce clear verbal messages and must recognise when messages we receive are unclear so we can ask for more information; these aspects of language are called referential communication skills’.

It is suggested that evidence of spoken creativity may be more prevalent in certain types of social context and within certain types of interpersonal relationship; as it has been demonstrated the most creative language features cluster reciprocally and interactively (Carter, 2004). Littleton, Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, Rowe, and Sams (2005:180) suggest it is ‘how the learner engages and interacts with others [which] may potentially have a more
profound and enduring impact on their circumstances’ and therefore argue it is imperative for children ‘to understand themselves as the essential contributor to their own learning’ (ibid, 2005:181). Bussey and Bandura (1999:676) concur that children ‘contribute to their self-development and bring about social changes that define and structure relationships’. In this doctoral study Rosie’s ability to understand other’s perspectives, along with her mature preference for questioning through referential communication skills, and engaging in conversations with adults extended her opportunities to practice talking about her art in new ways, (for example “The Spider Story”). Box Boy and Hot Wheels did not present themselves as openly verbal, once again demonstrating the unique and individual ways of manifesting identity in the nursery classroom, however Rosie also operated on her own terms as she also displayed temporary boundaries as discussed below.

7.4.2.3 Summarising boundaries physical and personal

In this doctoral study tensions and blocks which hinder children moving from individual to collaborative creativity have already been briefly mentioned in the concluding section of the discussion exploring the nurturing role of others. In this section consideration will be paid to the extent to which there are “common” boundaries in place for each of the focus children.

The case study summaries in Chapter 6 demonstrate that all of the children had their own boundaries, both physical and personal and that these were stronger and more evident for some of the focus children than others. For example Rosie’s most evident boundary was that she would only engage with others if it was on her terms; Box Boy also manifest this boundary in relation to the ownership of products, making sure that his peers knew the product belonged to him before consenting to collaborate. Box Boy’s strongest boundary was related to the physical preservation of self which was manifest in his refusal to wear “nursery items” (e.g. aprons), and was also shown in his risk taking, where he was fearful of “novelties”. Similarly to Box Boy, Hot Wheels was also possessive about his artwork, and like Box Boy
wanted to make sure that he had something to take home; however Hot Wheels was using his artwork as a transitional gift, whereas Box Boy wanted to continue playing with his objects at home. The greatest boundary for Hot Wheels was his reticent behaviours, and his shyness and silence when communicating which was discussed in the previous section, self-talk and talk to others. However it was noted throughout this doctoral study that “selective mutism” was a common theme found across all of the focus children’s data sets. Although there are commonalities here, there are in fact distinct differences as to why this was so: for example Rosie selectively chose to ignore others and even developed avoidance and deflecting strategies; Box Boy was so immersed in his activities that he was unable to engage with others as his thinking was engaged elsewhere; whereas Hot Wheels was *too shy* to converse with others, all of which at times had an impact on the children’s abilities to enter into meaningful collaborative relationships.

Whilst there were tactics adopted by the children in order to engage in collaborative activity, there were also areas that hindered the movement from individual to collaborative creativity; these were rejecting peers, avoidance, possessive ownership of materials, and non-negotiated roles. These are tensions and blocks that children may need to overcome in order to move forward in the next years of their education to enhance and engage in fulfilling collaborative relationships. These findings furthermore enhance the notion that age could be a possible indicative factor for a lack of peer interaction, suggesting that comparatively, younger children may not have the necessary skills to enable collaboration on a deep communicative and emotional level and therefore directly links to Piaget’s notion of egocentrism. I question if Piaget’s notion of egocentrism which is said to inhibit young children’s engagement with others still holds credence today? If we are to accept Piaget’s view of the young child as egocentric, as one unable to fully engage in social creative processes with others, one would expect to see no evidence of collaboration, and this was not the case in this doctoral study as peer-to-peer relationships *were* formed.
Positive experiences during transitions into school are particularly relevant when considering peer relations. According to Peter’s (2003:46) observations:

Not only did friends play a vital role in facilitating the children’s transitions into formal schooling; they also assisted directly in facilitating the children’s learning—some examples of this were navigating, locating materials and modelling the work.

However Piaget (1951:73) would argue that ‘the child’s egocentrism is essentially a phenomenon of in-differentiation; i.e. confusion of his [or her] own point of view with that of others’; and that a lack of awareness of the point of view of others must be challenged. Therefore the key to overcoming the egocentric phase is communication and interaction with peers, through a process of exchange and overcoming, and is not simply a case of achieving the “developmental milestone” of making friends.

The implication for practice is thus that children should be given enough time to work through these tensions and blocks before transitioning into more of a “teacher-led” learning environment. The EYFS Framework (2012:6) states: ‘as children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year one’. Continuing post-doctoral work analysing the archived “Communicating Possibilities” data bank will be able to directly assess the impact of this statement in years to come as the children progress through school. However the analysis to date and the findings presented and discussed here suggest that there is still room for the focus children to grow and develop the emerging creative relationships being forged through opportunities to engage in freely chosen artistic playful activities. It is indicative that the foundations have been laid for the dynamics of collaborations to develop and emerge between these children through creative and social growth over time during the sensitive
period known as the early years, before the door is closed and formal schooling takes priority in the subsequent years of their education.

7.4.2.4 Summarising artistic style, skill, and schema

According to Tomlinson (1947:5) in generations past ‘it was generally believed that although children could of course draw and even paint, their best attempts produced only bad drawings and bad paintings; that is when these were compared with the work of adults and judged by academic standards- the only standards then generally accepted’. In this doctoral study the research is underpinned by a belief that anyone can be an artist, it is not about “judging” the end product so to speak but rather the journey of thinking, behaviours manifest, and imbued narratives within the art.

All of the children made abstract works of art, particularly Hot Wheels, but interestingly even if the works appeared visually abstract they were often described by the children as realist. Hot Wheels often liked to make quick back and forth marks, as did Box Boy who engaged in vigorous drawing, but these should not be described as “scribbles”. Perhaps Luquet’s 2001 unique take on children’s drawing development as described by Jolley (2010) may offer some interesting insights:

Children’s first experience of drawing is scribbling, or as Luquet calls it, trace making…they believe that they are making a creation when they scribble, what happens is the child begins to notice a vague resemblance between some marks they have made and something from our world, once the child believes they can represent life then this belief will characterise their subsequent drawing development.

Jolley (2010:10)

Willats (2005:18) concurs with Luquet’s perspective: ‘what children look for in their drawings is realism, and what they want to produce are what I [Willats]
have called effective representations’. By this Willats infers that children’s drawing systems incorporate an internal belief or perspective that they are representing topics and scenes from life which are communicated in a purposeful way, i.e. expressing personal knowledge and meaning about their social and cultural worlds through multi-modal representation (Kress, 2000).

In this doctoral study Rosie was the most art active communicator expressing herself in a variety of ways including storytelling. According to Jolley (2010:37) ‘in essence there are three categories of expressive techniques: literal, content, and abstract expression’. Jolley refers to literal content as expressing mood and emotion, which may be seen in children’s art as facial expressions in people, or personification of animals or other livings things, or inanimate objects. All of these were evidenced in Rosie’s art, she would often draw people, and characters which she humanised, such as the sun with a smiley face which she turned into a sad face, the spider which went to the seaside and needed sunglasses to protect his eyes, and the magic carpet that went for a walk. In content expression, Jolley asserts that a piece of art may contain a countryside scene with green rolling hills which conveys serenity, or a barren landscape, or cloud and rain which may convey a more sombre mood. Rosie often depicted natural elements in her work, and diverse environments such as the countryside, the seaside, and the jail. The final category of abstract expression was already noted as part of all the children’s art profiles, containing bright colours, uplifting lines, and dramatic movements.

According to Jolley (2010:61) ‘the literature indicates three skills or abilities may play a role in children’s expressive drawings: visual metaphor comprehension, working memory, and drawing skill’. According to Duffy (2006:95) ‘children aged 3-4 years can: name marks, experiment with a variety of mark making materials and tools, represent a “tadpole” person, and start to produce visual narratives’, all of which were found in this doctoral study. Bentley (2011:169) suggests ‘children use narrative artistry to create personally meaningful connections, children layer meaning into social norms, schemas, or realities that they may not wholly understand to deepen their
relationship to the experience’. Dewey (1902:22) identified this process as “psychologizing” information. A method by which children locate abstract knowledge within their own reference to experience, also seen in Rosie’s art when she started documenting her social experiences such as birthday celebrations and events happening in the classroom concerning the morals of others (e.g. the naughty boys will go to jail for drawing on the nursery computer) which also dovetails with the view that meanings are co-constructed around the artwork and shared across members of the community (Jordan, 2004).

Hall (2008) presented a paper at the University of Exeter titled “My brain printed it out” detailing data analysis and findings from a longitudinal study exploring the communicative potential of young children’s drawings in a mixed reception/year one class. There are several correlates with this doctoral study which are presented on the next page in Table 7.3 reflecting similarities between the children’s personal interests and experiences.
All the children produced at least one drawing featuring a person. Girls were far more likely to draw people than the boys. Children drew themselves within their drawings, accompanied by animals, or objects.

Rosie often drew pictures of people, faces, and places, but did not refer to these as “herself” rather they were of others: “Mummy, Daddy, Lindy”. Neither of the boys drew people, or named parts of their pictures as themselves.

Some of the children’s drawings featured characters from books, television or films; these were not necessarily the drawings that had the strongest narrative themes. Some drawings were like stills in an action sequence.

Rosie’s art featured characters that she had created: “the spider, the ghost, the magic carpet”, and popular cultural characters and themes: “Shrek, The Wheels on the Bus”. Neither of the boys created characters, or depicted cultural themes.

Children showed pattern shape and order in their drawings. Girls more commonly added adornments to their work, such as patterns, flowers, hearts, and kisses.

Rosie often depicted flowers and made x marks on her work along with dots and others patterns. Hot Wheels would draw circles, but there was no such patterning theme found with Box Boy in this doctoral study.

Children included writing (usually labels) in their drawings; girls were more likely to do this. Boys were more likely to include numbers.

None of the children could “write” as such in this doctoral study, but Hot Wheels did make “H” shapes in his drawings. Rosie started to mimic writing by making wavy lines, and so did Hot Wheels. Although Box Boy was interested in letters and envelopes, he was more interested in the making, and enclosing than the “written” contents which he did not engage in.

Subject matter specialists* were observed as children whose area of expertise was constantly revisited and refined. These specialists were viewed by their peers as competent artists who were able to provide inspiration. *(Thompson, 1999)

Several “ripple” effects were noticed in this doctoral study. Box Boy was deemed to be an expert by his peers who often copied his ideas, and some sought him out as an expert play partner. Other relationships included demonstrators (Rosie), and observer-replicators (Hot Wheels dominant artistic role).

Table 7.3: Comparative table of artistic representations and communications- Hall (2008) and this doctoral study

It would seem that there are some observable gender differences found between the girls and boys in Hall’s study and the boys and girl in this doctoral study; for example, self, storytelling, patterns, and writing were all found as stronger “female” elements in both studies. However it is noted that Hall had a larger participant population, and they were slightly older in age,
and this doctoral study does not have an equal gendered split; therefore any conclusions relating to gender can only be tentatively drawn. However it was clear that the children in this doctoral study did have a tendency to display individual artistic preferences, such as Rosie being the strongest storyteller. Further differences can also be seen between the two boys’ case studies in reference to their dominant “art styles”. Hot Wheels liked to be the observer-replicator in most situations, whereas Box Boy’s preferred artistic style seemed to be that of the lone scientist, or experimenter involving cutting, ripping, stirring, pouring etc. Dewey (1934) has an interesting perspective on artists as experimenters:

The artist is compelled to be an experimenter because he has to express an intensely individualised experience through means and materials that belong to the common and public world. Only because the artist operates experimentally does he open new fields of experience and disclose new aspects and qualities in familiar scenes and objects, otherwise an artist repeats himself and becomes aesthetically dead.

Dewey (1934:144)

Interestingly this is also mentioned by Bruce (2004:116) who relays similar concerns: ‘sometimes we have a clear idea which restricts our creativity’. Bruce offers this clear example which resonates with Box Boy’s artistic way of being in class:

He [the boy she is observing] decides to make an aeroplane, and carries out this very clear plan. He then paints it. But is he being creative? Probably not [suggests Bruce]. He has developed a technique for making aeroplanes, so that he can repeat the formula over and over again.

Bruce (2004:116)

It is interesting that earlier on in this thesis examples of Box Boy’s creativity were exemplified during an episode in which Box Boy was experimenting
with making and re-making paper aeroplanes. Indeed he was observed using several different folding techniques, trying and testing his designs, and altering or modifying them post-flight. Thus Box Boy was being creative during his making of the paper planes by varying his designs and innovating, even though he had made paper planes many times before.

Box Boy had other repeatable patterns of behaviours; he seemed to have a need to fulfil an enclosing and travelling schema, he liked to wrap up items such as stones, buttons, and fruit, and made piles of paper and other objects for transporting around the room, either in a shopping basket, or pushchair. Schemas were also noted with the other children: Rosie often encapsulated her drawings and paintings by making a “frame” around the edge of the paper, and Hot Wheels had a tendency to make abstract art such as back and forth pencil drawings.

This doctoral study thus highlights the potential implication of hindering innovation whilst continually playing out repeatable play themes through existing schemas (e.g. Athey, 1990). However Box Boy was the strongest schematic demonstrator and he used repeatable play patterns to help him make categorisations and to develop logical information about the world around him.

7.4.2.5 Case study summaries- roles assumed

7.4.2.5.1 Rosie

Rosie seemed to have a constant notion of her own identity “as if” roles; she was a confident artist and communicated her ideas with ease, often acting as if she was the teacher a lot of the time. Rosie engaged in a full range of “as if” roles; her strongest and most preferred relationship role was that of the teacher, which was strongly evidenced in every Phase; then artist-demonstrator, moderately manifest in Phases 2 and 3; director, which was moderately manifest in Phase 2 only; assistant was weakly manifest
throughout all Phases; and finally observer-replicator, which was the weakest “as if” role for Rosie, and was only manifest in Phase 1. Interestingly Rosie never adopted an apprentice role throughout the entire study. Analysis of the fixed video data showed that Rosie displayed some interesting transitional behaviours. Throughout the nursery year Rosie spent a total of 160 minutes at the art and craft table, 96 minutes mark making, and 86 minutes painting alone. There seems to have been an interesting shift in Rosie’s artistic behaviours throughout the year. At first during Phase 1 Rosie’s main art activity was painting (52 minutes), however in Phase 2 she only painted for 6 minutes, choosing instead to focus her art activities around mark making (52 minutes) and art and craft (118 minutes). Phase 3 recorded yet another change for Rosie when mark making was the main focus activity (42 minutes), then art and craft (32 minutes), and finally painting at (28 minutes).

Overall throughout the year when the fixed data was collected Rosie spent a total of 86 minutes of her time engaged with her peers. Interestingly there was another shift in behaviours. During Phase 1 Rosie was evidenced engaged for 12 minutes of creative relationship time at the painting easel, and zero minutes in the art and craft and mark making areas. In Phase 2 Rosie did not spend any minutes at the painting easel with her peers, but did spend 6 minutes engaged in collaborations at the art and craft table and 12 minutes mark making. In Phase 3 Rosie was back at the painting easel with her peers (14 minutes), and increased collaborative time in both the art and craft area (16 minutes) and mark making activities (26 minutes). Overall Rosie demonstrated a clear developmental pathway in terms of her collaborative relationships, spending increasing amounts of time in each Phase engaged in activities with her peers: Phase 1: 12 minutes, Phase 2: 18 minutes, Phase 3: 56 minutes.

7.4.2.5.2 Box Boy

Box Boy engaged in a full range of “as if” roles; his strongest and most preferred relationship role was that of the director, which was strongly evidenced in Phases 2 and 3. Box Boy was the teacher in Phases 1 and 3,
and the artist-demonstrator in Phases 2 and 3, both of which were manifested to a moderate degree. Box Boy was only the assistant and the observer-replicator in Phase 2 and both of these roles were weakly manifest. Interestingly Box Boy never adopted an apprentice role throughout the entire study. Analysis of the fixed video data showed that Box Boy displayed a clear preference for art and craft, and mark making table top activities. Throughout the year Box Boy spent a total of 190 minutes at the art and craft table, 174 minutes mark making, and 14 minutes painting alone. There is no doubt that painting was not one of Box Boy’s preferred activities, however he did spend increasing amounts of time there as the year progressed, (Phase 1: zero, Phase 2: 2, and Phase 3: 12 minutes). Similarly mark making also appeared to increase steadily throughout the year for Box Boy, (Phase 1: 36, Phase 2: 66, and Phase 3: 72 minutes). Interestingly it was art and craft that started off strongly then declined in the last Phase, (Phase 1: 80, Phase 2: 80, and Phase 3: 30). Therefore there was no such “shift” that occurred here for Box Boy, although he did take more of an interest in the painting easel throughout Phase 3.

Overall throughout the nursery year Box Boy spent a total of 62 minutes of his time engaged with his peers displaying relatively consistent amounts of time engaged in collaborative relationships. During Phase 1 Box Boy was evidenced engaged for zero minutes of creative relationship time at the painting easel, and 4 minutes in the mark making area, and 16 minutes in the art and craft area. In Phase 2 Box Boy did not spend any minutes at the painting easel with his peers, but did spend another 4 minutes engaged in collaborations at the mark making table and 12 minutes at the art and craft table. In Phase 3 Box Boy once again did not engage in collaboration at the painting easel, however shifted his collaborative focus away from the art and craft table (6 minutes) and manifest them in the mark making area (20 minutes). This was an increase in time from Phases 1 and 2 where only 4 minutes were spent in collaborative mark making activities.
7.4.2.5.3 Hot Wheels

Hot Wheels did not engage in the full range of ‘as if’ roles; his strongest and most preferred relationship role was the observer-replicator as he liked to be the learner in most situations. At first during Phases 1 and 2 Hot Wheels was reliant on others to provide tools and materials for him and often mirrored the actions and language of others. Towards the end of Phase 2 Hot Wheels did take the role of the director when modelling, but in Phase 3 used this as a strategy to keep a potential assisting peer out of the activity. Analysis of the fixed video data showed that Hot Wheels hardly interacted with his peers at all; preferring instead to engage in art making activities alone. Throughout the year Hot Wheels spent a total of 84 minutes at the art and craft table, 90 minutes mark making, and 20 minutes painting alone. Whilst his engagement at the painting easel remained the same during Phases 1 and 2 (10 minutes), his activity time at the mark making table increased from 22 minutes in Phase 1 to 48 minutes in Phase 2, but then decreased again in Phase 3 to just 20 minutes. A similar pattern can be seen for art and craft- increasing from 10 to 58 minutes between Phase 1 and 2, but then decreasing to just 16 minutes in Phase 3.

Overall throughout the nursery year Hot Wheels only spent 6 minutes of his time engaged with his peers, this was on three separate occasions, and all were at the mark making table. The fixed video reports several other key findings. Examination of the flow movement diagrams showed that overall in comparison to the other focus children Hot Wheels was not very art active (particularly in Phase 3). He also demonstrated a repeatable pattern of behaviour where first thing he would make his way to the art and craft table, or mark making table to make a picture to take home. Hot Wheels would avoid engaging with his peers, he would complete his picture then terminate the activity taking the picture with him to carry around until home time.

Table 7.4 compares and contrasts the three case study summaries for each focus child’s roles assumed.
### Table 7.4: Case study summary - roles assumed in order of strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher*</td>
<td>1. Teacher*</td>
<td>1. Observer-Replicator*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Observer-Replicator</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Artist-Demonstrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher*</td>
<td>1. Director*</td>
<td>1. Observer-Replicator*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Director</td>
<td>2. Artist-Demonstrator</td>
<td>2. Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Artist-Demonstrator</td>
<td>3. Observer-Replicator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assistant</td>
<td>4. Assistant</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Phase 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher*</td>
<td>1. Director*</td>
<td>1. Observer-Replicator*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Artist-Demonstrator</td>
<td>2. Artist-Demonstrator</td>
<td>2. Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assistant</td>
<td>3. Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key**

* = Strongest Role Assumed

### 7.4.2.5.4 Summarising roles assumed

In this doctoral study it was found that when creativity takes place, the creator applies certain modes of thinking, behaviours, methods and procedures, and assumes an “as if” role; these roles have already been defined and discussed in the previous section exploring the nurturing role of others. This section sets out to explore to what extent there are observable commonalities and individual differences across the case study focus children when they assume a role.

When examining the range and strength of each of the creative relationships listed above for the focus children across all Phases it was found that Phase 2 was highlighted as a period of change where it was noted that the focus children expanded their collaborative horizons by experiencing new relationships, interestingly the role of director was a new emergent feature for all of the focus children in Phase 2. Overall it was found that the assumed role of being the teacher in creative relationships was strongest for the focus children, along with director, followed by artist-demonstrator and observer-
replicator which were assumed to a moderate degree; assistant was weak, and apprentice not evident amongst the focus children, it was only their peers that adopted this role. Rosie’s strongest role was the teacher, Box Boy the director, and Hot Wheels the observer- replicator (as shown in red in table 7.4).

### 7.4.2.5.5 Summarising time spent in peer-to-peer creative relationships

The table below (Table 7.5) compares and contrasts the three case study summaries for each focus child’s time spent engaged in art activities with their peers. Rosie is the most collaborative (86 minutes), then Box Boy (62 minutes), and then Hot Wheels (6 minutes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1:</td>
<td>Phase 1:</td>
<td>Phase 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2:</td>
<td>Phase 2:</td>
<td>Phase 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 minutes</td>
<td>16 minutes</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3:</td>
<td>Phase 3:</td>
<td>Phase 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 minutes</td>
<td>26 minutes</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86 minutes</td>
<td>62 minutes</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.5: Case study summaries- time spent in art areas engaged with peers**

Table 7.6 (next page) compares and contrasts the three case study summaries for each focus child’s time spent engaged in the different art activities both alone and with peers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Activity alone</td>
<td>Activity with peer</td>
<td>Activity alone</td>
<td>Activity with peer</td>
<td>Activity alone</td>
<td>Activity with peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mark Making</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Craft</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting Easel</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>Phase 2</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Making</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art and Craft</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Painting Easel</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Making</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Minutes</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6: Case study summary- time spent in art areas alone (red) and engaged with peers (blue)

The above table demonstrates that Rosie is confirmed as the most collaborative focus child, her greatest collaborate period was Phase 3. Box Boy’s most collaborative period of activity was also Phase 3, however Hot Wheels was the least collaborative averaging only 2 minutes during each Phase of collaborative time.

In this doctoral study the children who demonstrated the most successful conditions for collaboration to take place displayed a set of common features.

These features are the ability to:
• Display either nurturing, directive, or authoritative personality traits
• Openly communicate either through actions or talk to others
• Relax boundaries
• Share a common artistic interest or shared vision

7.4.2.5.6 The implications of peer-to-peer roles assumed

To date there have been no published attempts to capture the emergence of young children’s creative collaborative relationships over a sustained period of time which restricts the discussion to that of comparing and contrasting the case study findings for each of the focus children within this doctoral study.

Overall the most noticeable difference was associated with gendered identities. For both boys the role of director was manifest a total of 4 times, whereas Rosie, the only girl in the study manifest the director role just once, she instead preferred to adopt a teaching rather than directing stance.

As a reminder- Teachers were authoritative towards their peers; they evaluated their work and offered praise. They took time to explain instructions to apprentices and demonstrated artistic ideas to them. Apprentices worked closely alongside their teachers, watching them and trying out their ways of working with “new” tools such as scissors, or manipulating materials in different ways through the teacher’s guidance. Directors acted as if they were in charge, making decisions, and telling peers how to use materials and tools through direct and clear instructions. Assistants sourced and provided materials for the director, sometimes they were permitted to help in the making process by following a briefing of what to do.

The difference in characterising the distinction between teaching and directing is that teachers wanted to help their apprentices learn for themselves, whereas directors wanted their assistants to help them reach a goal which the director was the clear owner of the idea, the process, and the
outcome. It would be unjust to claim that this doctoral study has found a
generalizable gender difference, however it appears that the boys wanted to
be leaders, whereas Rosie the only girl wanted to be an educator.

In this doctoral study Rosie was found to be the most collaborative out of all
three focus children spending 86 minutes in total engaged in collaborative
activities, Box Boy spent 62 minutes, and Hot Wheels 6 minutes with his
peers. Rosie also seemed to have a clear collaborative developmental
pathway spending increasing amounts of time over the course of the year
with her peers. Box Boy did develop across the course of the year, but this
was not as linear as Rosie’s development, his main period of collaborative
growth was Phase 3, and Hot Wheels did not develop his relationships at all
in terms of the amount of time he spent engaged with his peers; this was a
static low 2 minutes per Phase throughout the year. Therefore in this doctoral
study it is undeniable that gender is not a variable which determines the
amount of time children partake in collaborative creativity as the differences
between Box Boy and Hot Wheels are vast. The main gender differences are
in the types of roles assumed.

With regard to the amount of time the focus children spent in each art area- in
total across all three focus children the art and craft table was favoured most
(490 minutes), then the mark making area (432 minutes), then finally the
painting easel (246 minutes). However interestingly it was the mark making
table that inspired and encouraged children to collaborate together the most
totalling 72 minutes, followed by the art and craft table- 56 minutes, then the
painting easel- 26 minutes, thus painting remained mainly an individual
endeavour. It is noted that it was only Rosie who engaged in collaborative
painting, neither of the boys did this at all throughout the entire study. In
Phase 1 Rosie’s main art activity was painting, Box Boy’s was art and craft,
and Hot Wheels- mark making. It is fascinating that all three focus children
had different art preferences in Phase 1, however in Phase 2 all of the focus
children showed a preference for art and craft, and then in Phase 3 the main
activity attracting all of the children was found to be mark making which is
also where the majority of collaborations were taking place across the nursery year.

7.4.2.6 Social identity

Throughout the case study discussion links have been demonstrated between the children’s personalities, emerging use of talk to others, the ability to relax boundaries, and interests in new artistic methods and media with a greater focus on art and craft in Phase 2 and mark making in Phase 3. All of these factors impacted on the children’s assumed roles, highlighting what appears to be a “sensitive period” around Phase 2 (January to March) where the children started to expanded their collaborative horizons by experiencing new creative relationships- the role of director was a new emergent feature for all of the focus children during this Phase, but overall throughout the academic year the children seemed to have a preferred “social identity role” or “way of being” in the nursery classroom taking into account “the whole self”: personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries: physical and personal, artistic: style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed.

In this doctoral study children expressed dimensions of their individual identity through their “as if” roles assumed. Identity is a concept that invokes and relates theories from various streams of psychology, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, Cain, (1998). It could be defined as a well-organized conception of the self which is made up of values, beliefs, and goals to which the individual is solidly committed; once organized identity plays a significant role in the regulation of people’s everyday lives, (Ryan and Deci, 2005). However this definition could be deemed as inappropriate for describing young children’s identity as it could be argued that they are still developing a sense of self and social understanding. According to Berger (1977) identity can and does change depending on the environment and experience one finds oneself in, and in this respect identity is dynamic, and can only be regarded as relatively stable. Embedded in every society is a repertoire of identities; that is part of the
“objective knowledge” of its members, there is a relationship between individual and collective identity which is socially constructed. Holland, et al. (1998:272) progress this notion suggesting that ‘identities take us backwards and forwards, from intimate to public spaces’, and this was evidenced in this doctoral study where the children’s own internalized self-identity emerged in order to carry out their own social-role-identity within the group as teachers, directors, artist-demonstrators-replicators etc.

In this doctoral study there was also an increased preference for mark making during Phase 3 in particular. Hawkins (2002) suggests that it is possible to read children’s drawings in relation to self and identity through the interaction of social context- far from an escape from the social world drawing is an engagement with the social construction of identity rather than a free and unfettered act of self-expression. Similarly Hall (2010:11) found that drawings ‘offered spaces for intellectual play and identity construction, where the children positioned themselves as competent and creative individuals’. Hall makes links to Edmiston’s (2008) work: ‘on play and identity construction- play events involve combining everyday experiences with imagination, and in between everyday space and imagined space there is an “authoring space” for self’, (Hall, 2010:11). In this doctoral study authoring of the self was not just through drawing, but through other artistic modes- mark making, art and craft, and painting which melded together with individual personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries, artistic style, skill, and schema, and roles assumed, thus all of these factors contributed towards the authoring of the construction of individual artistic communicator identities.

7.5 Summary of Discussion

This chapter has highlighted the most important and critical themes throughout the discussion in terms of the key implications these themes hold for theory, policy, and early years practice, these are:
• Observing and documenting children’s creativity
• What children can do together - recognising differences
• Pedagogy of possibilities - developing a role
• The value of artistic communication in the nursery classroom

Figure 7.2 (on the next page) shows the clustering of sub-themes within each critical theme.

Each of these critical themes will now be synthesized in the conclusion and recommendations made for practice, forecasting future trends, and the need for further research.
Figure 7.2: Critical themes - this doctoral study
CHAPTER EIGHT
Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter the originality of the research is further demonstrated by drawing together conceptual threads and summarising conclusions of this doctoral study which contribute to the body of knowledge in the field. The conceptual threads relate to: thinking and doing in action; and the importance of being in an “as if” space for imagination and the complexity of collaboration. Summarising conclusions draw on the critical themes highlighted throughout the discussion in terms of the key implications these themes hold for theory, policy, and early years practice. The themes are: what children can do together- recognising differences; the value of artistic communication in the nursery classroom; observing and documenting children’s creativity; and pedagogy of possibilities- developing a role. I present a critique of this doctoral study reflecting on the limitations of the research and make suggestions for areas of further investigation. Finally “looking back, looking forward” is a reflexive statement which considers the historical nature of young children’s art and creativity in the classroom and projects this into educational futures.

8.2 Conceptual Summary

8.2.1 Thinking and doing in action

Throughout this doctoral study children engaged in making imaginative, individualised artistic depictions and models. The function of artistic engagement enabled children to communicate their associated narratives which held an element of intellectual property and ownership for them. They
used materials in their own unique ways turning them into something else and tried using items for a different purpose. Children made their own discoveries through carrying out experiments which were sometimes unexpected, recognising achievements through exploring qualities of combinations; and instigated, designed, facilitated, and sustained their own games—both for themselves and invited players. The critical theme of ‘observing and documenting children’s possibility thinking’ characterises creativity and demonstrates that inherent within the artistic play of the young children in this doctoral study was the concept of thinking and doing in action which was characterised by embodiment and performance where gross and fine body movements were melded with communicative acts.

The relationship between these complex phenomena shows that embodiment as a process is practical and offers immediate internalised feedback in several forms including visual, textual, and audial stimuli. According to Bruce (2004:73) ‘creativity begins with learning through the senses; the sense of movement feedback (embodiment) brings a sense of self and connectedness with others’. Sensory and regulatory motor system mastery and control thus includes an awareness of self in relation to own body movement and the surrounding environment. Having a developed sense of perception therefore enables children to act on stimuli by utilising precise and controlled visual, spatial, hand and eye co-ordinated movements which leads to observing and comparing reaction to action.

The notion of performance encompasses emotions and intellect which results in responsive communicative actions including verbal and non-verbal forms. Thus performance as a concept cannot be considered in isolation by simply categorising it as a physical act of movement, it is also a cognitive act, one which is characterised by language and expressive behaviour which is receptive and responsive to others.
8.2.2 The importance of being in an “as if “space for imagination and the complexity of collaboration

In this doctoral study two main thinking and action modalities were evidenced: concrete and abstract. By this I mean that children’s concrete modalities included explanations, facts and descriptions about “everyday real world” tangible objects which were complemented by logical reasoning; whereas abstract modalities included reference to objects and ideas which were not in “the real world”, i.e. children were able to think of all possibilities and realities. Therefore working with art in the narrative mode that Vygotsky (1978) described as the highest level of thought enabled young children to have access to Bruner's (1987) all possible worlds. This links to the critical theme of ‘the value of artistic communication in the nursery classroom’ where I emphasise the difference between elucidation and imagination.

The importance of being in an “as if” space is highlighted here as a specific point of interest as in this doctoral study when children entered an “as if” space two distinct and significant conceptual relationships were formed; the relationship between “as if” imagination and “as if” collaboration.

The concept of “as if” has long been associated with PT (Craft, 1998 onwards). According to Craft, et al. (2012b) the role of imagination in creativity appears undisputed; it is in understanding how the seed of imagination is manifest in classroom practice that PT research seeks to make a contribution. It does so by examining how this seed comes to fruition through engagement with increasing attention over time to the social context. Holland, et al. (2001) link “as if” to imaginary worlds which can inspire new actions, or paradoxically can encourage escapism or withdrawal from action in which individuals can express their agency; thus “as if” becomes a vehicle for identity development through collaboration (Moran and John-Steiner, 2004).

I will now discuss the complexity of “as if” collaboration first as in this doctoral study “as if” collaboration was found to impact on “as if” imagination.
In this doctoral study children were engaging in “as if” role behaviours, i.e. acting as powerful protagonists in bringing their artistic ideas to fruition; however in collaborative art making episodes between children, behaving “as if” manifest as being responsive to peers but only by increasing and releasing energy, exuding excitement and enthusiasm, or assuming a specific role.

In terms of influencing the artistic and imaginative actions of others when engaged in peer-to-peer collaborative episodes, the concepts of “teaching, directing, or demonstrating” were found to be the “default mode” where reason and logic prevailed, thus thinking and action modalities were concrete. For these young children being in a collaborative “as if” imaginative space during art making was difficult as their thinking and actions were top down and one way and therefore the dynamics of collaborative “as if” never left concrete thinking modalities. However abstract modalities were evidenced during adult-to-child collaborative “as if” episodes. The critical theme of ‘pedagogy of possibilities- developing a role’ draws this relational concept out further.

I found that for thinking and doing in an imaginary “as if” space to move from a single, internal personally directed mode towards a shared mode requires responsive communicative actions which creates a space for dialogic participation. A dialogic view of participation through thinking, action, and language modalities therefore inherently entails the act of "authoring" as a creative answerability and responsibility (Gregory and Ruby, 2010).

Instead of relying on “expert processes” a truly collaborative “as if” space for imagination can only be created where the dynamics between collaborators is not pre-defined or prescribed by the needs of the activity, and each collaborator engages in authentic responsive dialogue and actions thus producing socially constructed emerging and evolving fluid ideas. The concept of social navigation therefore includes engaging and relating through working towards a shared vision, where purposeful interaction leads to connecting ideas and overcoming tension and difference of opinion through joint problem solving which procures new creative developments. During a
study with upper primary children aged 9-to-11, Craft, et al. (2012a) reflected on the notion of 'ideational code switching' (Beghetto, 2007). Beghetto’s 2007 ideational code switching metaphorical concept helps to understand the capacity to shift from intra-personal creativity (generating ideas which are personally meaningful) to inter-personal creative expression (generating novel ideas which are interpersonally meaningful) in other words they are able to share their ideas with others and have these recognised (Craft, et al., 2012a:22).

In this doctoral study it was found that collaborative creativity was more likely to take place when children were able to:

- Share a common artistic interest or shared vision
- Relax boundaries
- Openly communicate either through actions or talk to others
- Display either nurturing, directive, or authoritative personality traits

This is a key contribution to knowledge. I also found that in order for children to project themselves into a sustained imaginary “as if” space they needed to be able to picture another reality in their minds other than the one they are faced with at that moment in time therefore moving from the concrete to the abstract. Not all of the children in this doctoral study were able to do this with ease- even when working alone. Thus I concur with Pavlou (2013) that engagement with artwork does not automatically release children’s imaginative capacities. ‘It was only when the children were asked to speculate, to hypothesise and to uncover meaning- to close their eyes and take a magic trip into the artwork that the children offered narratives relating and connecting to their own past experiences. For some this was a pleasant experience and for others this was not’ (Pavlou, 2013:79).

I conclude that navigating a journey along a “possibility path” towards a sustained imaginary “as if” space requires the nature of artistic play to be openly flexible, uncertain and unpredictable where thinking and meaning making is interpretative, subjective, and free to alter and change direction,
i.e. moving thinking from the concrete to the abstract and back again, into and though the “as if” space (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Conceptualising a possibility path into the “as if” space

The model above shows the conceptual possibility path from concrete (yellow sphere) to abstract modalities (red sphere). The “as if” space for imagination (top right) covers the abstract modality which is reached by passing into and through the “as if” entry point which is located in the centre of the model at the intersection between the permeable and overlapping boundaries of the concrete and abstract concepts. The “as if” space for collaboration (bottom centre) also links to the entry point however sits as a distinct concept overlapping both concrete and abstract modalities as it was found that in this doctoral study collaboration was both concrete and abstract. I also found that
imagination is always required to achieve an “as if” abstract modality, but collaboration is not. Moreover a collaborative “as if” and imaginative “as if” in the abstract modality was only combined when the pedagogical practice of “meddling” (McWilliam, 2008) was facilitated by the adult.

I therefore conclude that it is how the learner engages and interacts with others which has a profound impact on their level of creativity and that what constitutes a creative relationship in its truest and most powerful form is not simply a case of working together. With experience and the development of cognitive structures the individual begins to understand himself or herself as a reality, with his or her own identity standing in relation to other realities and will therefore move from ego-centricity to imagination and the possibility of creating (Pickard, 1979). The distinct ability to learn to be creative together highlights the critical theme of ‘what children can do together- recognising differences’ which contextualises these concepts in more detail by foregrounding the temporary nature of peer-to-peer relationships and linking identity to behaviours in action- “as if”.

8.3 What Children Can Do Together-
Recognising Differences

8.3.1 The temporary nature of peer-to-peer relationships

Several types of social dynamics and artistic relationships were found in the nursery classroom revealing ways in which children’s agency is expressed in relation to taking part in individual, collaborative, and communal playful activities; reflecting previous PT research (Craft, et al., 2012b). Chappell’s (2008, 2011) humanising perspective highlights the interconnections between all three kinds of creativity as part of an emergent story; although interconnections between individual, collaborative, and communal creativity were found in the nursery, for these young learners this was often temporary, and not a static feature. The fluid nature in which creative relationships were
manifest suggests the children did not have “pre-defined” roles prior to the commencement of each episode, and in active live play collaboration was manifest in a variety of ways, and “dipped in and out of” according to the children’s perceived needs of the activity.

In this doctoral study peer-to-peer collaborative creativity was evidenced as three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, Artist-Demonstrator and Observer-Replicator. These relationships make a unique and original contribution defining peer-to-peer collaborative relationships in the nursery classroom for the very first time. When examining the range and strength of each of the creative relationships listed above for the focus children across all phases it was found that Phase 2 was highlighted as a period of change where it was noted that the focus children expanded their collaborative horizons by experiencing new relationships, interestingly the role of director was a new emergent feature for all of the focus children in Phase 2. Phase 2 (January to March) was when the children started to expanded their collaborative horizons by experiencing new creative relationships. The role of director was a new emergent feature for all of the focus children during Phase 2, but overall throughout the academic year it was found that the children had a preferred “identity role” or “way of being” in the classroom.

**8.3.2 Linking identity to behaviours in action- “as if”**

Explorations of identity incorporating: personality, self-talk and talk to others, boundaries, artistic style, skill and schema, established that all of these factors fed into the types of roles assumed by the focus children. Rosie’s strongest role was the teacher. Teachers were authoritative towards their peers; they evaluated their work and offered praise. They took time to explain instructions to apprentices and demonstrated artistic ideas to them. Box Boy’s strongest role was the director. Directors acted as if they were in charge, making decisions, and telling peers how to use materials and tools
through direct and clear instructions. Hot Wheels liked to be the observer-replicator most of the time, this was his strongest role. Observer-replicators mirrored the language, behaviours, and artwork of artists—copying ideas in their own way—not through direct instruction. These preferred roles link with the focus children’s individual traits of personality; self-talk and talk to others; boundaries, physical and personal; and artistic style, skill, and schema. Rosie was found to be the most social, outgoing, and talkative artist out of all the focus children preferring to educate her peers to her preferred ways of being. Box Boy was also social, but he frequently ignored communicative cues as he was an absorbed and intense artist who preferred to remain focussed and in control by directing. Hot Wheels was the most reticent out of the three focus children, he was shy, preferring mainly individual, solo activities and did not communicate often through speech, he was a taciturn artist, but like Box Boy he did occasionally direct. These findings show a tentative gendered link—Rosie (the only focus girl in the study) preferred to educate her peers whereas both focus boys (Box Boy and Hot Wheels) preferred to direct their peers and lead the play. There were also gendered differences in terms of the amount of time spent engaged in collaborate activity, overall Rosie was found to be the most collaborative out of all three focus children spending 86 minutes in total engaged in collaborative activities, Box Boy spent 62 minutes, and Hot Wheels 6 minutes with his peers. Again these gendered links are tentative as this doctoral study highlights the interconnections between identity and peer-to-peer relationships, an area where Hot Wheels clearly struggled.

It is well documented that Vygotsky’s (1976, 1978) sociocultural theory stresses the importance of the social and cultural context—i.e. what children can do with other people. Positive experiences during transitions into school are particularly relevant when considering peer relations as according to Peter’s (2003:46) observations: ‘not only did friends play a vital role in facilitating the children’s transitions into formal schooling; they also assisted directly in facilitating the children’s learning’—some examples of this were navigating, locating materials and modelling the work. However Piaget
(1951:73) argues that ‘the child’s egocentrism is essentially a phenomenon of in-differentiation; i.e. confusion of his [or her] own point of view with that of others’; and that a lack of awareness of the point of view of others must be challenged. The key to overcoming the egocentric phase is communication and interaction with peers, through a process of exchange and overcoming, and is not simply a case of “developmental milestones”.

The implication for practice is thus that children should be given enough time to work through these tensions and blocks before transitioning into more of a “teacher-led” learning environment. The EYFS Framework (2012:6) states: ‘as children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year one’. Continuing post-doctoral work analysing the archived “Communicating Possibilities” data bank will be able to directly assess the impact of this statement in years to come as the children progress through school. However the analysis to date and the findings presented and discussed suggest that there is still room for the focus children to grow and develop the emerging creative relationships being forged through opportunities to engage in freely chosen artistic playful activities. It is indicative that the foundations have been laid for the dynamics of collaborations to develop and emerge between these children through creative and social growth over time during the sensitive period known as the early years, before the door is closed and formal schooling takes priority in the subsequent years of their education.

8.4 The Value of Artistic Communication in the Nursery Classroom

8.4.1 Elucidation and imagination

Throughout this doctoral study two distinct strands of “communication” emerged: elucidation, and innovative imaginative declaration, these strands
were found as being distinct from each other. Elucidation was characterised as including a strong element of logic where the children were constantly interpreting their behaviours into an intelligible order to illuminate, and clarify not only their own actions, but were also sometimes seen to use rational explanations to influence the actions of others by verbalising directives for progression to take place (concrete modalities). Whereas innovative imaginative declarations and demonstrations were found to encompass both verbal, and non-verbal internal to external unique behaviours and actions or expressive communicated statements which included making ideas come to life which were not necessarily logical, and therefore were documented as distinct from elucidated forms of communication (abstract modalities). In this doctoral study there appeared to be three unique ways that innovative imaginative declarations stood out, namely through storytelling, experimental exploration, and making play props, all of which encompassed high levels of the ownership of ideas.

According to Jeffrey and Woods (2009) successful achievement of a high level of learner ownership and control is effective in developing the learner’s awareness of the learning process, and furthermore positive teacher-learner relationships are central to the development of creative learning. This was also a key finding of the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE Project) which documented pedagogic progression in sustained shared thinking (Siraj-Blatchford, 2007). The strongest evidence for sustained shared thinking was found in the “Spider Story” dynamics between Rosie and myself. Hendy and Toon (2001:110) stress the significance of interactive story-making in positive teacher-learner relationships, and describe two distinct forms of “home and away” stories.
Home stories are those that remain in the real world and take their scripts from real-life situations, whereas away stories inhabit the world of fairy-tale and the imagination. In home stories life experience and factual knowledge are applied in an active way, frequently providing a genuine need to know. Away stories encourage imaginative and creative thinking which can transport children into their wildest dreams.

Hendy and Toon (2001:110)

Hendy and Toon's (2001) “home and away” metaphors resonate with this doctoral study in terms of making a distinction between elucidation and imagination (concrete and abstract modalities). This doctoral study found that elucidation encompassed planning, explaining, and rationalising, whereas innovative imaginative declarations and demonstrations were found to encompass both verbal and non-verbal internal to external unique behaviours and actions. Expressive communicated statements included making ideas come to life which were not necessarily logical, and therefore were documented as distinct from elucidated forms of communication - a unique feature of this doctoral study found for the first time with the age group of 3-to-4 year old children and thus is a key contribution to knowledge.

8.4.2 Authentic voice in an authoring “as if” space

This doctoral study makes a strong case for practitioners to engage children’s imaginations, encouraging them to advance their potential by moving thinking beyond what can be seen, bringing art to life, and extending children’s creative narratives through storytelling and meddling in the middle questioning strategies. I reflect on a key note speech I attended at The Worlds Together Conference, Tate modern, London, in September 2012 where I listened to children’s author Michael Morpurgo regale delegates with a reading of ‘I Believe in Unicorns’. After the story Mr Morpurgo reflected on his own childhood and in particular his educational experiences of creative
story writing in primary school. Recalling a moment that stuck with him all his life— he remembered his teacher’s advice when he could not think what to write: “JUST USE YOUR IMAGINATION!” she bellowed at him. Of course the delegates laughed, but this was a serious message.

Bentley (2011:174) places narratives at the heart of artistic learning and vehemently calls for higher awareness and levels of engagement on the part of the early childhood educator, and asks the teacher to watch more carefully, to consider more closely the daily dramas of classroom life— ‘if we continue to listen and respond, we learn more, we become more adept at noticing and supporting these moments, and the artistic learning of young children has the opportunity to flourish’ (2011:174). Cremin, Swann, Flewitt, Faulkner, and Kucirkova (2013) authored the ‘Evaluation Report of Make Believe Arts Helicopter technique of Storytelling and Story Acting’ based on the work of Vivian Gussin Paley. In essence, Paley’s storytelling and story-acting technique involves children telling their stories to an adult who scribes them verbatim. Later the same day, the tales are acted out with their peers on a taped out stage in the classroom (Cremin, et al., 2013:6). Whilst this technique differs in its approach to meddling in the middle, the value of creative storytelling is clearly and comparatively evidenced:

The approach contributed to children’s developing sense of agency through its respect for children’s voices, the emphasis on children choosing whether and how to tell a story and take part in story acting, and the provision of a secure and supportive space for story. A striking find was that the approach motivated the children to engage in literacy activities, in taking down other children’s stories and producing their own illustrated story books. It also fostered increasing awareness of written language (e.g. in following the transcription of their stories).

Cremin, et al. (2013:8)
Throughout this doctoral study I valued and sought to encourage artistic communication. In 2003 Anning suggested that children’s personal versions of meaning making were undervalued and rapidly shaped into “educational” versions, dominated by the imperative to get children writing as quickly as possible, (also see Hall, 2009). According to Adams (2002:230) ‘it is difficult for them [the educators] to evaluate and assess drawings, to give pupils feedback…some teachers have found it difficult to understand drawing as a process for investigation, experimentation, and reflection where there may be unexpected outcomes and the learning activity is not under control of the teacher’. Anning (2003:32) concurs with this notion recalling that ‘where children received little feedback from adults on their “messages” they closed down this aspect of communication, they drew less and less at school, when they did it was in response to an adult directed task or agenda with an “educational” purpose, for which they [the children] showed little enthusiasm or commitment’.

In this doctoral study children liked to engage in verbalising their ideas as they were being visually depicted and constructed, as well as describing what could be seen children used physical actions to emphasise ideas, demonstrating emotional and aesthetic responses. Duffy (2005:191) recognises that ‘creativity through the arts enables children to communicate their feelings in non-verbal and pre-verbal ways and to express their thoughts’. Lancaster (2003) also supports the notion that the arts have an important role for ensuring that the child’s voice is heard.

This doctoral study is located in England, but the findings can be transposed in many UK and international practices demonstrating worldwide relevance as interest in the value of arts practice remains key to persuading policy makers of its relevance to children’s education. In a recent report by The Arts Council of Wales (ACW, 2013) the value of engaging young people in “creative practice” was stressed as a high priority. The ACW was commissioned to carry out the review by Welsh Government who reported a significant finding that 99% of schools responding to the consultation felt that involvement in the arts improved learner engagement. Similarly, 98% of
schools felt the arts developed emotional well-being and interpersonal skills respectively. However ACW also voiced concerns and worries that teachers who were "bombarded with other directives" and facing tighter budgets were unable to make the arts a priority. BBC Wales reported a key finding from the research suggesting:

The current and very necessary emphasis on literacy and numeracy is narrowing the focus of schools and limiting the opportunities for young people to engage in creative practice that can - ironically - lead to improved standards in these areas.

BBC Wales (2013)

Creative Little Scientists (CLS) is a consortium comprising expertise of the highest level and quality in the areas of science and mathematics education in early childhood, creativity in education, cognitive psychology, comparative educational studies, and teacher training. This consortium in a sample of nine European countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania, and the UK) has been selected to represent a wide spectrum of educational, economic, social and cultural contexts. CLS acknowledges that science, mathematics and creativity are three areas with different foci; however argue that they importantly share a recognition of the importance of hands-on and minds-on exploratory engagement, and a focus on inquiry and investigation, often driven by young learners’ curiosity and questions (CLS, 2012).

ACW Chair Professor Dai Smith advocates for the arts in all its forms, and like CLS acknowledges that the benefits of creative learning are far reaching, calling for creative practice to be acknowledged as an enabler to driving up standards.
“Teaching in and through the arts, far from detracting from literacy and numeracy, should be seen as an enabler to driving up standards in those academic priorities. The value of the arts therefore needs to be reiterated with schools and, importantly, schools need to be supported in taking up and delivering more imaginative approaches to cross-curricular creative activity. Within our educational system the arts should become core and never again, for whatever reasons, be regarded as peripheral.”

ACW (2013)

8.5 Observing and Documenting Children’s Emergent Creativity

8.5.1 Characterising creativity

This doctoral study has reported elaborate findings from micro data analysis which revealed more detailed categories, and deeper definitions and descriptions about the nature of PT and young children’s thinking and behaviours which were made visible whilst engaging in art making activities.

In addition to reinforcing previous PT research and existing PT characteristics, this doctoral study has risen to the challenge of sustained documentation of PT with the same cohort of participants in order to examine potential changes over time. This doctoral study offers new landmark sub categories and definitions of question-responding and risk taking, and documents for the first time in the history of PT research how these features evolved and emerged during the nursery year for each of the three focus children. This doctoral study also offers new PT evidence revealed for the first time with the age group of 3-to-4 year old children manifest during art
making: aesthetic acumen and acuity, elucidation, augmented accuracy, critiquing, and problem ownership.

This doctoral study reinforces and supports the EYFS characteristics of effective learning found when young children are creating and thinking critically. These were observed as: children having their own ideas; making links; and choosing their own individual, unique, playful ways to do things in the nursery classroom. In 2011, following a change of government, the Tickell Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) reinforced creativity as an important dimension of the early years curriculum; redefined as ‘Expressive Arts and Design’ acknowledging the importance of exploration and imagination with an inherent role in critical and creative thinking together with active learning and play as characteristics of young children’s engagement with the world around them (Tickell, 2011a, 2011b).

8.5.2 PT Matrices

The detailed examples of PT in this doctoral study offer teachers, early years practitioners, and future researchers a greater understanding of young children’s creativity. Through these unique insights educators and researchers will be able to recognise, identify, and document evidence of creative behaviours manifest with the young children in their individual settings.

This doctoral study makes a comprehensive contribution to the field, presenting a PT Matrix for each of the main areas discussed in this doctoral study: The Core of PT, Question-Responding, Risk Taking, and PT Behaviours in Action. The matrices can be used in both research and classroom practice to record evidence of each of the characteristics of PT (see Tables 8.1 to 8.4). This doctoral study focussed on PT evident during art making episodes; however consideration is made to the “overlapping” nature of findings evidenced from this doctoral study and previous PT research with different age groups in different contexts. Thus is the nature of PT that it is
envisaged that the matrices have the potential to be used more generally to document PT in all contexts, not just those which focus solely on art making.

I must stress that each matrix is not intended to be used as a “tick list”, the complex characteristics of PT will not be evident for every child in every episode, they are there as a guide for practitioners and researchers to be able to recognise PT in their observational work. I suggest the matrices be used to record rich evidence of observations as exampled throughout the findings chapters of this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Core of PT</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playful acted out explorations</td>
<td>Combinatory playfulness, Improvisation, Pretend, Turning understanding into action: relating, connecting, and communicating, Actively performs lived experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluxing drivers</td>
<td>Process: unconscious, functional, or therapeutic, Outcome: conscious, goal orientated, or design driven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-determined sensorial infusion</td>
<td>Independence, Looking for own stimulus: question-posing, Gathering information through the senses: visual, textural, audial, or movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersive action intention flow</td>
<td>Absorbed in own actions, Deep in concentration, Acting with a clear purpose or goal knowing what they want to do, Making active decisions, Uninterrupted constant flow of thought in action, Focused control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1: The Core of PT Matrix- this doctoral study
### Question-Responding Characteristics Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing</th>
<th>Trialling</th>
<th>Piloting</th>
<th>Experimental exploration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
<td>Knowing what will happen</td>
<td>Using knowledge to take action</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Have “I” got it right?</td>
<td>Comparing</td>
<td>Observing reaction to action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undoing</td>
<td>Erasing</td>
<td>De-constructing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensating</td>
<td>Modifying for error</td>
<td>Replacing instead of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating</td>
<td>Carrying out same actions</td>
<td>Using same words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Confirming</td>
<td>Happy with result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejecting</td>
<td>Discarding</td>
<td>Filtering materials</td>
<td>Refusing others’ ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing</td>
<td>Concluding an action in order to move forward</td>
<td>Terminating on own terms</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8.2: PT Question-Responding Matrix- this doctoral study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Taking</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novelty</td>
<td>Using materials in own way</td>
<td>Outcome not predicted by practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trying new ways of working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naivety</td>
<td>Not respecting boundaries</td>
<td>Copying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pushing boundaries of activity</td>
<td>Unsure of actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-conformist</td>
<td>Challenging rules</td>
<td>Behaving in a non-permitted fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignoring authority</td>
<td>Not adhering to cultural norms of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure of actions</td>
<td>Remaining silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deflecting adults’ questions</td>
<td>Terminating dialogue with adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating fears</td>
<td>Evaluating risk</td>
<td>Overriding self-preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deconstructing barriers</td>
<td>Having a go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provoking others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8.3: PT Risk Taking Matrix- this doctoral study**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PT Behaviours</strong></th>
<th><strong>Characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Evidence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic acumen and acuity</td>
<td>Awareness and evaluation: makes judgments about the look and feel of work Embodied performance and dramatic display: acts ideas out in embodied ways mixing gross and fine motor elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elucidation</td>
<td>Planning: uses a strong element of logic Explaining: interprets behaviours into an intelligible order Rationalizing: clarifies own actions, influences behaviours of others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative imaginative declaration</td>
<td>Original and unique outcome/behaviour Artistic storytelling Experimental exploration Play props</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmented accuracy</td>
<td>Modifying: seeks to enhance, enlarge, expand, and extend ideas Perfecting: rectifies, alters or changes the direction of work Embellishing: decorates, elaborates, or exaggerates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiquing</td>
<td>Verbal and non-verbal opinionated analysis and interpretation of the behaviours, actions, and outcomes of self and others Comparing standards Making superior judgments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem ownership</td>
<td>Patience and persistence Shows self-determination and increased confidence A willingness to endure working through problems Keeps behaviour in check, remains calm Considers alternatives, finds solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.4: PT Behaviours Matrix- this doctoral study

8.5.3 The nature of “development”

Organising theoretical frameworks such as the PT Matrices above can guide and give meaning to what we see and understand about young children’s creativity. As well as affording a space to describe and explain actions, the use of the PT Matrices over time with the same children has the potential to document developmental behaviour. However Berk (2006:7) questions ‘does one course of development characterise all children, or are there many possible courses; is the course of development continuous, or discontinuous?’ Table 8.5 defines the differences between continuous and discontinuous development.
Table 8.5: Defining continuous and discontinuous development (Berk, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous Development</th>
<th>Discontinuous Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A process that consists of gradually adding more of the same types of skills that were there to begin with</td>
<td>A process in which new ways of understanding and responding to the world emerge at specific times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I question the notion of development in relation to this doctoral study - did I evidence continuous development as a natural and smooth pathway, or discontinuous development as taking place in stages? According to Berk (2006:8) ‘stages [are defined as] qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, and behaviours that characterise specific periods of development’, each stage therefore corresponds to a more mature, reorganised way of functioning. This doctoral study of question-responding and risk taking would seem to fit the profile of discontinuous development, but it would be an ambitious assumption to suggest that development occurs in a neat orderly sequence of events, i.e. that every child in the final term of their nursery year would experience the same changes as the focus children did in the current study as there is a high probability that the recorded changes in the focus children’s behaviours resulted from unique combinations of events the children manifest which are context dependant. In this respect development could be viewed from a dynamic systems perspective, that which conceives development as a web of fibres branching out in many directions, physical, cognitive, social and emotional. As the web expands, skills become more numerous, complex, and effective (Fischer and Bidell, 1998). This complex integrated view of change over time suggests there are many possible courses of development where socially mediated changes vary from culture to culture and also dovetails with the adopted philosophies of relativistic ontology and constructionist epistemology found throughout this thesis and links with the EYFS 2012 practitioner guidance:
Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

Early Education (2012:6)

Therefore I suggest that when using the PT Matrices there should be an awareness and consideration of each child’s individual developmental pathway focussing on their unique strengths.

### 8.5.4 Summarising key PT differences in this doctoral study

Several key characteristics were commonly evidenced each time children were initiating, instigating, and engaging in creative art making episodes, and these characteristics have been termed the “Core of PT”. One of the features within the centre of the core was found to be fluxing drivers (process and outcome). Process and outcome were found to be fluxing, i.e. presenting interchangeably between each other throughout every episode, for every focus child. What this means is that sometimes children were consciously outcome or product focussed by concentrating on design, and other times they were immersed in process which was found to be more unconscious and at times therapeutic in nature.

Elements of some/or all PT behaviours in action were evidenced when children engaged in art making these were: aesthetic acumen and acuity, question-responding, elucidation, innovative imaginative declaration, risk taking, augmented accuracy, critiquing, and problem ownership. Due to the individual nature of episodes not all of these “behaviours” were found every time children engaged in art making. Overall throughout the nursery year aesthetic acumen and acuity, and question-responding were found to be most strongly evidenced (hot features); elucidation, innovative imaginative declaration, risk taking, and augmented accuracy were moderately evidenced
(warm features); and critiquing, and problem ownership were the least evidenced (cool features).

Close examination of the analysis revealed that most interestingly question-responding and risk taking behaviours were found to emerge and evolve over time throughout the nursery year. Deductive analysis revealed that predicting, evaluating, repeating, accepting, and completing were found to be the strongest elements of question-responding, followed by rejecting, and testing, with undoing, and compensating found to be least evidenced. Cross case analysis confirmed that undoing and compensating were the least displayed features of question-responding in the study for all of the focus children. The discussion illuminated the potentiality of arguing that age was a factor affecting undoing and compensating which were found to encompass: erasing, de-constructing, modifying for error, and replacing instead of, all of which require a reversal of thinking thus making a direct link to metacognition, or “thinking about thinking”. The EYFS 2012 suggests the characteristics of effective learning concern ‘creating and thinking critically: choosing ways to do things’ which Early Education (2012:7) state is when children can be observed:

- Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
- Checking how well their activities are going
- Changing strategy as needed
- Reviewing how well the approach worked

Early Education (2012:7) recognise that the EYFS makes a strong case for creating and thinking critically in a co-constructive manner suggesting that practitioners should ‘develop a learning community which focuses on how and not just what we are learning’. At the onset of this doctoral study and throughout the course of the year children seemed adept at making their own choices and decisions about how to approach a task found as aesthetic acumen and acuity (hot feature of PT), they were also evidently able to explain their actions in a concrete form which was found as elucidation:
planning, explaining, and rationalising (warm feature of PT), however evaluating in the form of critiquing was less evident (cool feature of PT).

Interestingly it was in weeks 7-to-9 of the study (Phase 3), the summer term, which appeared to be a vital time where all the focus children manifest every feature of question-responding and their creative behaviours emerged most strongly. It was also fascinating to discover that the children manifest some emergent risk taking behaviours during Phase 3 which were found to encompass some tentative gendered differences. Overall the two boys (Box Boy and Hot Wheels) were found to have taken more risks than Rosie the only girl in the study. However for all of the focus children the summary of the deductive risk taking analysis showed that non-conformist behaviours were most frequently evident throughout the nursery year, followed by naivety and novelty which were of comparable frequency, and finally combating fears. It was noted with great curiosity that the categories most associated with combating fears (evaluating risk, overriding self-preservation, deconstructing barriers, having a go, and provoking others) are documented as “observable features” of the EYFS (2012) ‘Playing and Exploring’ which characterises effective learning and engagement as “being willing to have a go”:

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a ‘can do’ attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences
- Learning by trial and error

*Early Education* (2012:6)

Combating fears during risk taking was only evidenced in Phase 3 (weeks 7-to-9) during the final term when all of the children would have been 4 years old and preparing for their transitions into their reception classes in primary school. This doctoral study therefore concludes that Phase 3, the summer term of the academic year was a “sensitive period of change and development” for all of the focus children in terms of emergent question-responding and risk taking behaviours.
8.6 Pedagogy of Possibilities- Developing a Role

8.6.1. Enabling creativity through facilitation

This doctoral study has highlighted the implications for how teachers and early years practitioners provide classroom resources which foster PT. Two strands emerged throughout the data, firstly understanding the importance of providing materials which stimulate question-posing, shown to be at the heart of the core of PT. Secondly the value of provocation- a key element of the enabling context in this doctoral study found to trigger children’s interest, engagement, and imagination.

8.6.1.1 Materials- possibility broad, moderate, narrow

In this doctoral study teachers and early years practitioners provided easily accessible open-ended materials without direct instruction which enabled agency and freedom of choice (possibility broad). Sometimes creative opportunities were semi-structured within the boundary of a theme, e.g. “let’s think about what we would find in the woods today” (possibility moderate), and other times materials and tools were provided with instructions to work towards a prototype (possibility narrow). However there was always space within activities whether broad, moderate, or narrow to personalise, or individualise a piece of artwork. The EYFS (2012) framework states that as part of the enabling environment, in planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn, and demonstrate these in their practice (Statutory Framework EYFS, Department for Education, 2012). Expressive arts and design has two strands: exploring and using media and materials; and being imaginative. Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. Perhaps it would be useful for practitioners to recognise and identify opportunities which are inherently: possibility broad, moderate, or narrow in order to ask themselves:
Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own ideas? Avoid children just reproducing someone else’s ideas.

Early Education (2012:7)

8.6.1.2 Provocation

Provocation was a key element of the enabling context in this doctoral study triggering children’s interest, engagement, and imagination; deemed by school practice to be ‘the essential ingredient of children’s relationships with materials gives them multiple possibilities’ (Gandini, et al., 2005:15). Practitioners left unusual objects for the children to discover, hid materials in boxes, or suitcases, mixed glitter and sand in with paints, cello-taped pieces of paper in unexpected places, cut holes in card, and used natural elements such as ice, leaves, stones, etc. These aspects of provocation are reinforced in the EYFS (2012:6) practitioner guidance notes on ‘Active Learning’ through ‘Motivation’:

Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests

Early Education (2012:6)

The use of the term “provocation” as adopted by the school encompassed several meanings ranging from what some would describe as “normal classroom provision” as documented above, to problem solving situations such as a key frozen in a block of ice, all the tables turned up on end in the classroom, or a small doorway painted on the skirting board. As the Head Teacher noted in an interview: the setting, the classroom layout, the materials, the staff etc are all part of the provocation, “it’s in the way you present things, shaking them up which is provoking.”
8.6.2 Extending creativity- intervention

Leading on from facilitation, this doctoral study sought to uncover characteristics of the role of intervention through extended meddling dynamics and this was achieved by analysing rich creative episodes and narratives which emerged between the children and myself. The implications for practice are documented below.

8.6.2.1 Meddling- the implications for practice

In this doctoral study I clearly demonstrated a genuine interest in young children’s art acknowledging the part I played in respecting children’s own, individual, and personal ideas. In terms of the issue of “roles” and the dynamics between the meddler and the child Hendy and Toon (2001:111) suggest that ‘adults must be careful never to begin [an episode] in role without telling the children that they are doing so: “we have witnessed interventions that do not warn the children that an adult has gone into a role”…without an opening statement [informing] children of our intentions, they can become very confused’. In this doctoral study roles were never stated, and neither was a contract, or learning objective, or procedures to follow. Having initiated the episode Rosie welcomed me to naturally join in, affording a space to respond to her in order to further her thinking and facilitate learning using drawing as space for intellectual play (Wood and Hall, 2011).

In the “Spider Story” Rosie was clearly the owner, there was no script, and the episode was unpredictable and most definitely creative. Improvisation was the medium for the story’s emergence and my role in supporting this was ‘to manage and evaluate the dialogue and non-verbal action’ which was assessed through documentation and reflective analysis (Hendy and Toon, 2001:112). Reference is made to key literature supporting the role of documentation as a form of assessment in schools. Duffy (2005:198) suggests that ‘it is important to record and document children’s artistic
development as with any other area of the curriculum, it is especially important to record the process as well as any end products, portfolios for individual children enable progress to be tracked over time and offer the children an insight into their own learning’. Part of the EYFS (2012) recommendations as mentioned in the Tickell Report (2012:35,78) emphasised the continuing practice of the documentation of evidence through the Foundation Stage Profile, by recording emerging, expected, and exceeding ‘observation of daily activities that illustrate children’s embedded learning’. However Tickell (2012:30) stressed that ‘skilled practitioners should spend most of their time interacting directly with children to guide their learning rather than writing things down’. In this doctoral study the role of meddler as adopted by myself encompassed being in the moment, where watching, observing, videoing, and photographing as part of the learner/documenter role were complimented by question-posing techniques which were then subsequently analysed. The benefit of reflective practice is positioned here by Edwards (1998:185): ‘the teacher also documents her own words and actions, such observations are needed to interpret what is happening with the children and to make predictions and projections about how to go forward’.

As stated in the literature review, in order to accomplish the forging of new types of relationships Erica McWilliam (2008) propositioned that educators need to move beyond the binary formula of teachers as either ‘the sage on the stage’ or ‘the guide on the side’, to a new role of ‘meddler in the middle’. According to McWilliam (2010:295) ‘meddler in the middle is a much more active and interventionist teaching role, it positions the teacher and student as mutually involved in assembling and disassembling cultural products’. Meddling is a re-positioning of teacher and student as co-directors and co-editors of their social world, in other words changing the pedagogical focus from the teacher to the learner as was clearly the case in this doctoral study. However I acknowledge my position in the classroom was that of a “learner/documenter” and not a “teacher” and thus I have to question the extent to which this type of extended meddling pedagogy is a realistic option.
in other early years settings? Edwards (1998:181) suggests that ‘questions about what teachers can and should do can never be finally answered, but rather must keep returning to the original problem: What kind of teachers are needed by our children? - those real individuals in the classrooms of today’.

As previously mentioned in the literature review there is very little attention paid to guiding the nurturance of imaginative thinking in the EYFS (2012), and the research literature documenting questioning types to encourage young children to talk about art is rather dated. Such a lack of “concern” in the literature regarding the adoption of questioning strategies to encourage young children to talk about art raises questions about perceived values of purposeful and co-constructive engagement with young children such as the episodes evidenced in this doctoral study. I question that if there is no adult “involvement” in young children’s art making episodes what do practitioners get? - they get to view the end product which resulted from an intricate and complex process. The product will offer them a few insights, and a very limited perspective which they could evaluate and analyse as an outsider imposing their subjective interpretation, but they will have lost the rich and fascinating narratives contained within the piece, be it modelling, painting or drawing. Indeed Thompson and Bales concur ‘the drawing provided no entry to a viewer who had missed the performance which bought it about’ (2005:43). Bentley (2011:174) places narratives at the heart of artistic learning and vehemently calls for higher awareness and levels of engagement on the part of the early childhood educator, and asks the teacher to watch more carefully, to consider more closely the daily dramas of classroom life- ‘if we continue to listen and respond, we learn more, we become more adept at noticing and supporting these moments, and the artistic learning of young children has the opportunity to flourish’ (2011:174).

This doctoral study makes an original contribution towards bridging the gap in the literature by offering clear guidance as to how practitioners can gain deeper insights into young children’s art making, advocating young children’s rightful entitlement to participate fully in artistic learning experiences with
practitioners who engage children’s imaginations, encouraging them to advance their potential by moving thinking beyond what can be seen, bringing art to life, and extending children’s creative narratives through storytelling, and opens the discussion to the wider early years community for further debate.

8.7 Final Summary of Communicating Possibilities

This doctoral study demonstrates that engaging in art making in the nursery classroom was found to encompass so much more than making visual representations (pictures and models). This doctoral study makes a comprehensive contribution to the field, presenting complex PT Matrices for each of the main areas: The Core of PT, Question-Responding, Risk Taking, and PT Behaviours in Action. Several types of social dynamics and artistic relationships were found in the nursery classroom revealing ways in which children’s agency is expressed in relation to taking part in individual, collaborative, and communal playful activities, examining the ways in which young children become engaged in a process of “thinking and doing together”. Three main relationships: Teacher and Apprentice, Director and Assistant, Artist-Demonstrator and Observer-Replicator were discovered. These relationships make a unique and original contribution defining peer-to-peer collaborative relationships in the nursery classroom for the very first time finding that overall throughout the academic year the children had a preferred “identity role” or “way of being” in the classroom. Two distinct strands of “communication” emerged throughout the study: elucidation, and innovative imaginative declaration, demonstrating that by working with art in the narrative mode that Vygotsky (1978) described as the highest level of thought, young children have access to Bruner’s (1987) all possible worlds.
8.8 Critique of this Doctoral Study

8.8.1 Evaluation
This section presents a critique of this doctoral study reflecting on the limitations of the research and makes suggestions for areas of further investigation.

8.8.1.1 Small scale research
I acknowledge the scope of the findings in this project relate to a small scale study conducted in one setting which could be argued to be hermetically sealed from the outside world. However in order to combat this bias the research methodology was designed to capture three in-depth case studies which are longitudinal in nature, each case reflecting individuality and difference offering the opportunity to compare and contrast PT behaviours, narratives, and relationships formed. It was also hoped that a transparent methodology and analytical trail which produced such rich findings would enable others to explore possible transferability in other contexts.

8.8.1.2 Unequal gender representation
On reflection the robustness of the study would have been enhanced by having equal numbers of boys and girls in the focus participant group which would have enabled direct gender comparisons.

8.8.1.3 Microphone data
It is regrettable that the microphone data was collected and not used for analysis in this doctoral study. However this was a strategic decision as the transcription and analysis would have taken considerable time and there was already a range of data including the close up mobile video data set which contained “rich narratives”. I acknowledge that in adopting this strategy I could have potentially missed something, however this “extra” data now forms part of the Communicating Possibilities data bank for future post-doctoral work.
8.8.1.4 Prioritising the close up mobile video data set
The design of this doctoral study incorporated several data collection methods: naturalistic observations- incorporating video data (fixed classroom, and hand held close up mobile camera); photographic still images, and voice recordings (video narrative, and individual microphone clips); researcher diary- (recording notes, artefacts, and informal conversations); children’s creative journals- collating photographs, artefacts, and practitioner observations; and practitioner interviews- (responses, and reflections to observations and analytical findings). However I prioritised the hand held close up mobile camera video data set as I felt this was the most efficient and effective way of revealing deep and insightful findings which were then triangulated by the other complementary data sets. I acknowledge that prioritising the close up mobile video data set could be perceived as a shortcoming in terms of “drilling down” deeply on particular episodes whilst perhaps missing broader contextualising. For example I could have collected larger photographic and artefact data sets, (i.e. focussing on the children’s artwork) and analysed them by looking for themes and patterns which may have proved more useful in terms of generalising outcomes. However I defend the prioritisation of the close up mobile video data set in this doctoral study as the artwork, or product outcome was not the sole focus; I was interested in the emergent processes and thus chose to prioritise data which encompassed both visual and narrative data.

8.8.1.5 Episode selection
Consideration must be paid to the strategy of episode selection; this was deemed an essential part of the research process for two reasons. Firstly the scope of data manageability by a solo investigator- I acknowledge in hindsight that I collected far too much data for one PhD, and secondly a way of “honing in” was required in order to use the data which had the potential to contribute towards answering all three research questions. In employing this strategy I accept the possibility that at present there are unused episodes in the Communicating Possibilities data bank which could be interpreted as a missed opportunity to discover further insights.
8.8.1.6 Researcher positioning and perspective
At the onset of the study I made a declarative statement about my personal and professional values in relation to the views I hold about children and acknowledged how these could have impacted on my positioning and subsequent perspectives. For example there may be teachers who will disagree with my views as I am not a qualified teacher, I have a playworker background. Furthermore school practitioners may argue that the workability of “meddling pedagogy” is not a feasible working option in their classrooms as the positioning of a meddler does not fit with their own personal and professional identity as a teacher. I also acknowledge that my close “insider” positioning when working one-to-one with the children as a meddler may have left teachers feeling isolated from the activity as there was not a space “afforded” for them to join in. In hindsight I accept that this is a shortcoming of this doctoral study as there were no extended meddling episodes with teachers in the data for this reason.

8.8.2 Further areas of research
This doctoral study has opened up several lines of inquiry which have the potential to contribute to further understanding the nature of young children’s creative art making and pedagogical strategies which nurture and foster PT.

8.8.2.1 Developmental aspects of PT
As previously mentioned the adoption of several data collection methods has yielded a huge data bank, part of which was analysed over time using a grounded theory approach, and revealed rich, fascinating results. Post-doctoral work with this vast data set has the potential to include secondary analysis of the first 12 months of data (Phases 1 to 3) and to instigate new “fresh” analysis of the remaining unused data (Phases 4 to 7) which holds a potential possibility space for collaboration with colleagues sharing similar interests in the developmental aspects of children’s lives associated with early years education, in particular between the ages of 3 and 6 years of age.

This doctoral study has already captured some developmental changes for the focus children evidenced throughout the latter part of the nursery year as the children were getting ready to transition into their reception classes.
However developmental aspects of PT between the ages of 3 and 6 years are yet to be fully explored with the Communicating Possibilities data set, these areas include:

- Question-responding
- Risk taking
- Roles and relationships: transitioning from collaboration to emergence (from simply working alongside each other to more complex roles including challenges and co-construction)
- Gendered differences

The data bank also has the potential to address a set of secondary lead questions with the focus children:

- When does emergent collaboration begin in the creative learning context?
- What does a possible transactional model of creative development, through a natural unfolding of improved social interaction, which develops over time look like?
- To what degree is this model experienced by all children?

8.8.2.2 Challenges for future researchers
It is not within the scope of this doctoral study to revisit the data to further explore issues and topics which have surfaced through the analysis and subsequent discussion such as the narrative dynamics between adults and children, and findings which posed tentative links hindering children’s engagement with PT and creative relationships. I thus challenge future researchers to examine the workability of extended meddling pedagogy in practice by adopting the questioning strategies as detailed in this doctoral study, and to reveal more about the nature of metacognition in relation to question-posing and egocentricity impacting on social relationships by
employing experimental designs with different age groups in different contexts in light of the new PT Matrices.

8.9 Looking Back, Looking Forward

In England during the 1960s the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967), provided a landmark for envisioning a role for creativity in the English curriculum (Craft, 2002). The report focussed on the notion of a child-centred approach to education, through which it was envisaged that children would take more of an active role in their education. Learning was emphasised as that which should be taking place through experiential exploration, discovery, and play. During the 1980s there was a shift away from creativity in education to that of knowledge acquisition and performativity. It was not until the 1990s that endorsements of the importance of creativity in education surfaced once again with the publication of the National Advisory Committee for Culture and Creative Education Report (NACCCE, 1999). Following the NACCCE report, the recognition of “creative development” was stated in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000) and then (DfES, 2008a). Creativity was named as one of the key areas of development pervading throughout the document. Following a change of government, the Tickell Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) reinforced creativity as an important dimension of the early years curriculum; redefined as ‘Expressive Arts and Design’ acknowledging the importance of exploration and imagination with an inherent role in critical and creative thinking together with active learning and play as characteristics of young children’s engagement with the world around them (Tickell, 2011a, 2011b).
“Communicating Possibilities” contributes to understanding the complexity and richness that can be gained by children when engaging in creative art making practices in the context of early years education and demonstrates that art encompasses many areas of the Early Years Foundation Phase Curriculum (2012), not just “Expressive Art and Design”. In this doctoral study PT evidence was found to pervade throughout the areas of Expressive Arts and Design, Communication and Language, and Personal, Social and Emotional development (see Figure 8.2). In this doctoral study children expressed themselves in a variety of ways and thus “art” was not just about making pictures or models, it was about personal communication and expressive language, and developing complex social relations in an emotionally enabling environment. I therefore argue that greater emphasis should be placed on the value of art making in early years education due to the many cross-curricula benefits evidenced in this doctoral study.

Figure 8.2: PT pervading through EYFS curriculum areas

Ever since creative practice was introduced into English schools a fiery debate has raged over the role of art in education. Countless papers, articles, letters, and conference presentations have been positioned to put forward
arguments in favour of art in schools. In the face of cuts in art education due to financial constraints in times of austerity and a change in direction in “back to basics” high-stakes testing, art educators continue advocating and lobbying for greater recognition and a valued place for art in schools.

“Communicating Possibilities” is a ground breaking project which advocates for a greater understanding of young children’s creative art making and calls for early years practitioners and policy makers to appreciate, embrace, and welcome the complex nature of Possibility Thinking in classrooms of the future.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Methodological Analytical Models

1.1 Layer One: Framing the context

1.2 Layer Two: Inductive modes of inquiry

1.3 Layer Three: Deductive modes of inquiry

1.4 Layer Four: Constructing theory and modelling

1.5 Layer Five: Final theory construction

Click here to open methodology model file
Appendix 2: Consent Form Example (Child Participant)

Dear Parents and Carers

My name is Linda McConnon and I am researching young children’s creativity and play.

Your child’s school has been kind enough to allow me the opportunity of working with your children from September 2010 to December 2012.

I will be at the school every three weeks collecting data, this will include:

- Observing the children playing, working, and creating together (sometimes this will be recorded on video and photographs).
- Asking the children to take photographs and talk about them.
- Looking at the children’s art and work books.
- Listening to the children talking together (sometimes this will be recorded).

If you would like your child to take part in this project please tick the appropriate boxes and sign below:

☐ I am happy for my child to take part
☐ I am happy for my child to be photographed
☐ I am happy for my child’s voice and image to be recorded on video

I understand that my child’s participation is voluntary, that I/or they may choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I/they can withdraw at any stage without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

As part of the research this information may be used within future written reports, presentations, journal articles and publications which make reference to this research on the understanding that real names will not be used.

Child’s name..............................................

Parent/Carer signature..............................................

September 2010 to December 2012
Appendix 3: Consent Form Example (Practitioner Participant)

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHING STAFF AND CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS

Researching: Creativity and play, September 2010 to December 2012
Researcher: Linda McConnon

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.
I understand that:

There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project.
I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

All information I give will be treated as confidential.

The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity by use of appropriate pseudonyms.

As part of the research this information may be used within future written reports, presentations, journal articles and publications which make reference to this research on the understanding that real names will not be used.

Please tick as appropriate the data box/es that you give consent to be collected:

[ ] I am happy to be photographed
[ ] I am happy for my image to be captured on the survey (fixed camera video) on the understanding that this data be only viewed by the researcher in order to record the children's movements around the classroom and make appropriate graphs as a result of this data
[ ] I am happy for my image to be captured on the close up (mobile camera video)
[ ] I am happy for my voice to be recorded

..................................................
(Signature of participant)
September 2010 to December 2012
**Appendix 4: Line by Line Coding Example**

This was the first stage of the coding process. Initial line by line comments and codes were applied to each episode; in total this process was carried out 27 times. These lines were then cut up and manually sorted, re-organised and grouped in the next stage of coding (axial) as exampled in Appendix: 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcript Details</th>
<th>Open Coding RQ1 (Emergent creativity framed as PT)</th>
<th>Open Coding RQ2 (The nurturing role of others including peer collaboration)</th>
<th>Open Coding RQ3 (The child’s identity as an artist communicator)</th>
<th>Deductive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Hot Wheels</td>
<td>Child initiated&lt;br&gt;Freely chosen activity using materials and tools provided in own way</td>
<td>Low accessible apparatus&lt;br&gt;Materials and tools openly accessible&lt;br&gt;Non prescribed activities permitted</td>
<td>Child initiated pencil drawing&lt;br&gt;Left handed</td>
<td>Red evidence of PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: Phase 1, Week 1, 15/10/10</td>
<td>Breaking cultural rules of practice having coat on inside</td>
<td>Allowing the breaking cultural rules of practice having coat on inside</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blue questions raised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number: Clip 19-20 (3 min)</td>
<td>Permitting child comfort&lt;br&gt;Sensitivity to individual needs</td>
<td>Permitting child comfort&lt;br&gt;Sensitivity to individual needs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW has his coat on inside the nursery and it is nearly home time. He is stood at the paper store (low shelving unit with a worktop) drawing a picture. HW has a pencil which he grips in his left hand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child initiated - Reacting to environment/materials/provoking own possibilities</td>
<td>Standing back - Practitioner allows space for child to create in own way</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of agency - Making own decisions, deciding when and where to create</td>
<td>Emotionally enabling context - Allowing personal comfort and responding sensitively to child’s needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW makes random marks on the paper. As he turns around to look at what is going on behind him in the nursery he carries on drawing without looking at his artwork.</td>
<td>Shows visual interest in peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care free mark making in own way</td>
<td>Reacts to noise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency -</td>
<td>Wants to know what is going on in the classroom</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional piece of artwork Process driven, going through the motions, not focussed on outcome</td>
<td>Individual creativity happening in the context of a communal environment - Chappell (2008) and Craft, McConnon, Matthews (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>414</td>
<td>Play? - This is more functional in nature,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process-outcome? Being imaginative? Not innovating-not risk taking- Play? This is more functional in nature, so perhaps play fits as intrinsically motivated</td>
<td>Seems to be centred around observing and awareness?</td>
<td>so perhaps play fits as intrinsically motivated</td>
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<tr>
<td>The drawing falls to the floor and HW huffs as he bends down to pick it up.</td>
<td>Shows annoyance when things don’t go according to plan</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As he rises from the floor he holds up his picture up to show it to the camera.

Keen to visually show his artwork to others

Non-verbal: Child inviting adult stepping forward
Craft, McConnon, Matthews (2012)

Keen to visually show his artwork to others

Non-verbal: Child inviting adult stepping forward
Craft, McConnon, Matthews (2012)

LM: “would you like to tell me about it?”
H: HW nods
LM: “what would you like to tell me about?”

(child) Using body language to communicate agreement

Inviting child to respond if wants to
Open questioning
Not directing
Let child choose what to talk about
Let child choose own words
Communicates personal interests visually and verbally to adults

Stepping forward meddling in the middle
Inviting dialogue
Craft, McConnon and Matthews (2012)

Communicating through physical gestures
Body language

Artwork described in closed terms...it is a ... car
Communicates personal interests visually and verbally to adults

Being imaginative:
Uses imagination to depict car and communicate ideas

Self-determination:
Self-chosen depiction
Intentionality:
As if thinking-
Clear outcome verbalised
Burnard, et al. (2006)

Stepping forward meddling in the middle
Inviting dialogue
Craft, McConnon and Matthews (2012)

Being imaginative:
Uses imagination to depict car and communicate ideas

Self-determination:
Self-chosen depiction
Intentionality:
As if-
Clear outcome verbalised
Burnard, et al. (2006)
| HW holds the picture in front of his face and then on his head and turns away. | Shyness when communicating ideas verbally to adults Hiding | Reverting to individual status | Shyness when communicating ideas verbally to adults Hiding | Reverting to individual status Chappell (2008) |
Appendix 5: Axial Cluster Coding Example (key codes in note form)
Appendix 6: Memo Example

Selective key codes and core variables were conceptualised and theoretical ideas were explored through memoing. DVDs and memos were validated and cross examined through peer checking.

Elucidation: Planning, Explaining, Rationalising

Working definition: Elucidation seems to include a strong element of logic where the children are constantly interpreting their behaviours into an intelligible order to illuminate and clarify their not only their own actions but sometimes use rational explanations to influence the actions of others by verbalising directives for progression to take place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Elucidation</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
<th>DVD: Week 4, Clip 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This was a rare occasion when Hot Wheels instigated his own learning by finding a picture of an earwig in a book that he wanted to make. In the clip Hot Wheels can be seen going through different stages, first he finds a stimulus (the picture), then he sets about collecting his materials- he declares “that’s it” when he has enough parts, then refers to the book before commencing the making of the piece. Hot Wheels says “I’m going to do this bit first”, rubs his hands together, looks at the book, points to the earwig and takes a piece of blue tissue and taps it down on the butterfly shape. There appears to be a logical order to the planning of the piece which Hot Wheels plays out in action.

Interesting points to note:

Child makes artistic decision based on aesthetic appeal

Making reference to visual stimulus

Planning artistic activity, looking for resources to make chosen object

Thinking in the present for forward action
**Appendix 7: Question-Responding Deductive Analysis**

Cross case analysis: deductive findings, simple present or absent results indicated by a tick.

**Phase 1 (September to December)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>QR Feature</th>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predicting</td>
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<td>Undoing</td>
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<td>Compensating</td>
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<td>Repeating</td>
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<td>Accepting</td>
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<td>Completing</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>QR Feature</th>
<th>Rosie</th>
<th>Box Boy</th>
<th>Hot Wheels</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td>Testing</td>
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**Appendix 8: Risk Taking Deductive Analysis**

Cross case analysis: deductive findings, simple present or absent results indicated by a colour coded tick.

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The graph below summarises the above findings in terms of strength. The RT bars represent the amount of energy put into manifesting the main risk taking categories, and the sub-categories are listed in order after each main category.
**Appendix 9: PT Star Chart**

Size of star indicates level of energy put into manifesting PT characteristics.

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**Appendix 10: Narrative Coding Examples**

Narratives were classified into categories. In total 27 episodes were analysed for categories and grouped into Phases.

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal invite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child holds picture up to camera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal <strong>agreement to communicate</strong> with adult RESPONSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child nods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Prompted Imaginative RESPONSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses finger to point/retrace painting path</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“it’s a car”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Initiated Spontaneous Imaginative Declaration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and a mouth”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Initiated Spontaneous Elucidation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“yellow”</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher/Meddlers Phase 1 Narrative to Hot Wheels</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Initiated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal invite to communicate/open dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“do you want to tell me about your idea?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“would you like to tell me about it?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“how’s the picture Hot Wheels?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONSE</strong> to child holding up picture (non-verbal invite)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“what would you like to tell me about?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPEN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Boy Phase 1 Narrative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Initiated Spontaneous Elucidation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m putting the paper out for the children”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“we got loads of scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“look there’s some scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I got loads a scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“look there’s some yellow scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’ll try them”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“these cut like that”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you can cut like that”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you want scissors, you can have scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“try them scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“them are my scissors”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“that’s my paper”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I need to try some new paper”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I do the lellow”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m gonna get some for my Dad”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“tell the story in a minute innit”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I need some tissue paper on it”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“make it all nice”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“we need to stick some pictures on like these cakes”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“put them all in an envelope”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Initiated Imaginative Declaration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“that’s my firework there”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“it makes a bang like the thunderstorm”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“a big snap”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“colours in the sky”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and this is painting for babies…spots”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and this is Ruth”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and that’s me there”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONDING</strong> to adult subjective observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“that me at the top”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“yeah”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Researcher/Meddler Phase 1 Narrative to Box Boy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult RESPONDING to child’s elucidation with invite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“are you going to tell me a story about your painting?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Responding to child’s imaginative declaration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“who is Ruth?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and that’s you at the top?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLOSED

### Rosie Phase 1 Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Initiated Verbal invite (to teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“teacher look”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Agreement to communicate with adult RESPONSE**

| “all right” |
| “yeah” |
| “yeah” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Prompted Imaginative RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“a bridge it’s called a bridge of blue”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“up down”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“red on the mouth, a bridge on it got blue”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I got the spots, the blue bridge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“the flowers, two flowers, the sun, the eyes, the nose, the mouth”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Prompted Elucidation Statement RESPONSE to direct CLOSED question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“paint in my hand”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“yellow, I got yellow”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Prompted Elucidation Statement RESPONSE to direct OPEN question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“red”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“yellow”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and green”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“yellow, red, and green, and all finished”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Child Initiated Spontaneous
**Self/Other Criticality Statement (to adult meddler, not peer)**

- “whoops”
- “whoopsie sorry”
- “oh no tidy up”
- “oh what happened?”
- “oh my goodness”
- “oops sorry”
- “oops sorry”
- “whoops”

### Child Initiated Spontaneous
**Imaginative Declaration**

- “it’s a leaf”
- “banana- banana- ba-na-na”
- “I’m painting the sun”
- “I make my sun”
- “then it might rain”
- “I made a flower look mwah”
- “the flower, I made a flower”
- “some dinosaur tracks”
- “he’s coming”
- “some dots, dot dot dot”
- “leaf leaf leaf”

### Child Initiated Spontaneous
**Elucidation**

- “blue”
- “I’ve finished now”
- “red”
- “one two one two”
- “I’ve finished”
- “I finished”
- “I got the blue one I got the blue one”
- “a line, a line, a line”
- “look painting red”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher/Meddler Phase 1 Narrative to Rosie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Initiated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“do you want to tell me something about your picture?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“do you want to tell me about any of your ideas as you are going along?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONSE</strong> to child agreeing to communicate <strong>OPEN question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“what would you like to tell me about?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ok do you want to tell me anything else about your picture apart from the colours?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONSE</strong> to child imaginative declaration <strong>CLOSED question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“what is it?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“whose idea is it?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONSE</strong> to child self-initiated imaginative declaration <strong>CHALLENGING- EXTENDING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“are you painting the sun as well?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“is this your idea or someone else’s idea?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“where’s the bridge of blue going?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“do you want to tell me anything else?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 11: Peer-to-Peer Relationships

This table represents the strength of relationships, each time the focus children engaged in a relationship the symbol grew in strength. Strength: weak, moderate, and strong are comparative indicators used against each other, i.e. director was manifest more often and was strong compared to assistant which was less evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Artist-Communicator</th>
<th>Observer-Replicator</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Assistant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosie</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box Boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Wheels</td>
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<td>Phase 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Focus Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Not evident</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix 12: Flow Movement Diagram Examples**

**Rosie Pilot Phase 1 Week 1 Session 1**

![Flow Movement Diagram Example](image)

The flow chart demonstrates that during the first session of week 1 Rosie mainly engaged in activity involving the painting easel. It should be noted that the mark making area was out of bounds during this session due to building works in the classroom; however both the painting easel and art and craft tables were accessible. Rosie entered the painting area for a few minutes prior to engaging in activity alone. The two peaks at level 3 (engaged in action with peer) noted at 20 and 28 minutes shall be examined further.

Examination of the fixed video data reveals that during the level 1 plots Rosie makes her initial entry into the painting area. Rosie was trying to engage an adult to help her put on an apron and then she waited inactive whilst paper and paints were provided for her use. Rosie left the art area briefly to visit the home corner and returned when she noticed the paper and paints were set up. However during Rosie’s absence Larry had started to paint and stopped on her return, he was then seated at the art and craft table by the teacher leaving Rosie to continue with her painting.
Rosie made a start on her painting, using a block style. The first peak at level 3 (engagement with peer) happened when Larry left the art and craft table to talk to Rosie at the painting easel. Larry grabbed the paint brush and made a mark on Rosie’s picture. Rosie took the brush back off him and carried on painting. Larry continued to engage with Rosie, both children were facing each other and both were extending their arms towards the top of the easel. Larry moved to the junk modelling area and took a plastic tray, he was seen showing it to Rosie, who looked at it briefly. Rosie carried on painting and Larry left the area.

The second peak at level 3 (engaged with peer) was also Larry. He approached the easel and stood next to Rosie for a few moments, whilst she was painting; he took a brush and started to add to her picture. Immediately, Rosie removed her apron, by pulling at the neck and left the area, this was shown by the drop in the flow of activity at 30 minutes.

The painting episode was not captured on the mobile/close up video camera as I was engaged collecting video data with another child. This is to be addressed in the methodology. The voice recorders were not used during this session and this is also noted as a weakness as this episode cannot be analysed in any further detail.

**Week 1 Session 2**
The movements show that Rosie did not engage with her peers at all during this session; indeed she spent 30 minutes away from the art area in between using the art and craft table and the painting easel. Again she entered both the art and craft area and painting easel area before engaging in her activity alone. Rosie’s time at the art and craft table lasted 6 minutes, and 12 minutes at the painting easel, which ended when the session was drawn to a close. Again during this session it is noted that the mark making table is not in use.

Examination of the fixed video data reveals that once again Rosie starts off her initial entry into the art area by asking an adult to put her apron on for her, saying that “she needs painting.” Rosie waited by the art and craft table whilst the practitioner squeezed out paint into trays asking the children to name the colours of the paint as she does. Rosie is heard on the video saying “I need painting” “I need painting” before taking a seat at the art and craft table. During the time at the table, Sammi sat next to Rosie, the two children worked independently on their art, and neither engaged with each other. However Rosie did engage with the practitioners saying “look I done it”, “I got leaves.”

Rosie entered the art area for the second time as shown at 36 minutes. She was heard on the video saying “I want painting”; the practitioner is heard suggesting that Rosie takes a look at the other things to do in nursery as she does lots of painting. However Rosie was persistent approaching other adults and asking them to put an apron on for her saying “I want painting”. A practitioner came to help her put an apron on and put some clean paper on the easel. Rosie started painting. Rosie worked alone, using the colours separately creating blocks of colour.
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