Outside the norm: An ethnographic study of creative practitioner approaches in an alternative provision site for 14-16 year olds.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ....

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Figures

Abstract:

Outside the norm: An ethnographic study of creative practitioner approaches in an alternative provision site for 14-16 year olds

Alternative Provision, as a sector, is well positioned to offer a remarkable opportunity to cultivate a young person's humanity through care and challenge. Where practitioners embrace responsibility for young people and their environment, and honour context and complexity, they can mobilise the present as a rich source of possibility and agency. There needs to be a clear understanding of the contribution that Alternative Provision can make to young people's lives and how this relates to practice and policy perceptions of effectiveness.

Yet because it is difficult to know, track, manage and regulate, Alternative Provision remains largely uninspected and unregulated, with lack of clarity in purpose holding back the potential to inspire change in pupil perception and experience. On top of these issues, schools face the challenge of being held directly accountable for Alternative Provision they commission for their pupils, and responsible for ensuring that it is suitable, safe and effective. Research into current practice and theory is needed to help schools and policy makers fulfil their mandates at a time when policy makers are at the cusp of re-designing the field.

At these key beginnings of re-design for Alternative Provision in England, this ethnographic study offers to fill that research gap through a conceptualisation of practitioner approaches in one Alternative Provision site over an academic year, that led to pupil well-being, a sense of belonging and further training or employment. These outcomes, alongside the practitioner approaches of mutually transforming empathic engagement and mission, I argue, are central to sound thinking about Alternative Provision. The process involved – licensed chaos – with its authorised release of pupils into play, immersion, risk taking and ownership, is presented as one way of embodying this journey and is offered here as a model of process on which other schools could build their own.

Methodological contributions are made through the exploration of life writing as ontology and as a way of communicating the ever-present realities for many pupils attending Alternative Provision. Critical reflection and acknowledgement of the researcher's role and transformation through the research process is shared. Reciprocal virtual ethnography is explored and put forward as an effective means of researching young people in Alternative Provision.

This thesis tells a story of lives and learning that further humanises and empowers the field of Alternative Provision and its commissioning schools.

1 Introduction

1.1 Personal and professional influences

During 2007, I was working as an Arts Education Project Manager in South West England, and secured funding for an artist to work with 'at risk' pupils in local secondary schools or their Alternative Provision (referred to as AP for the duration of this thesis). The term 'at risk' covers children and young people who are at risk of being excluded and/or of not completing mainstream schooling. A mixture of schools and AP sites were identified for this project, (where pupils had been placed to avoid permanent exclusion or conflict, whilst keeping them separate from the mainstream set-up), an artist found and a vision communicated. I chose a talented graffiti artist with a passion and gift for engaging youth who had disengaged from education that stemmed from his own past, and who saw the project as an opportunity for pupils to express identity and a voice. The project quickly became a nightmare to manage: schools/AP sites took little ownership, often not providing adequate storage or numbers of staff to supervise; pupils and occasionally the artist did not turn up; damage to the project location occurred; communication with sites became elusive. Month after month, amidst my other projects, I battled with trying to make the project a success - except in one site: Eastbank (pseudonym).

Eastbank's project had 100% attendance, was fully staffed, the artist felt excited to be there and pupils created art work that communicated what they had wanted to say. During his evaluation of the project, the graffiti artist expressed that working at Eastbank had moved him, had made it all worthwhile and helped him to decide to continue working with 'hard-to-reach' young people because the people there helped him to see that he made a difference. Ultimately, he had grown as a person by being there. I had been so busy with troubleshooting the other sites and managing other projects, that I did not visit Eastbank at the time, only meeting the pupils and staff upon collecting their artwork for a display. Having been a teacher for several years, specialising in disaffection, I can usually quickly begin to identify what a site believes about learning and its pupils. However, at Eastbank, the set-up seemed a mystery to me. I gave a lift to one girl, as she wanted to see where her artwork was going, which the site encouraged. As we drove, I asked her what she thought of Eastbank. She replied, 'It's mint. Safe, yeah?' ('mint' meaning brilliant and 'safe' meaning somebody is a friend or on good terms with you, a colloquial term). Her brief but glowing account and how her request to come with me had been handled stayed with me. 'Hard-to-reach', a term used by the artist, is a potentially stigmatising terminology (Smith, 2006; Freimuth and Mettger, 1990), defining the problem as one within the group itself, not within one's approach to them, and so I avoid its use in this study.

A few months after the project ended I met Professor Anna Craft at a workshop and learnt of the PhD studentships. As soon as I started to plan a proposal, I knew that I wanted to undertake a case study at Eastbank.

Going much further back and contextualising my interest in ethnography and disaffection, I have been very influenced by my own background. My mother was a nurse and, after nursing her husband until he died of leukaemia, became a foster mother of children and young people that nobody else chose to foster due to medical or behavioural issues. My childhood was therefore full of extended family – sometimes emergency encounters and other times extending over years – and I grew to love and enjoy watching the complex and previously voiceless young people grow into health and humanity in our home. My mother was also a district midwife and the only member of the medical profession that certain traveller and gypsy communities in the region would allow on site. For years I would fetch a piece of lace or hand-carved leather and settle down with my mother in anticipation of a story that it triggered. My mother has influenced my way of being in research and is a reason behind why I have been drawn to story, disaffection, voice and ethnography.

1.2 Introducing the field

The field of AP is difficult to discuss with any certainty. It is a largely uninspected and unregulated sector (Ofsted, 2011, p.4), there is no reliable data on the number of pupils in AP (Taylor, 2012, p.4) and good AP is not easy to define (Taylor, 2012, p.9). The pupils within AP have often self-protected out of lost trust in education or home, leaving their voices less heard than pupils in mainstream education (Taylor, 2012) as they can be hard to research. The latest figures from the Department for Education (DfE) 2011 AP Census recorded 14,050 school-aged pupils in Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and 23,020 in other AP settings on full or part-time placements (differences between settings shown in 2.3), which are to be taken as a rough guide (Taylor, 2012).Young people attend AP for a variety of reasons, but predominately due to perceived behaviour difficulties that have become untenable in years 10 and 11. These young people have either been permanently excluded from school and are placed in AP by the local authority, or they are sent to AP by individual schools as early intervention to avoid permanent exclusion.

Despite the difficulties encountered in trying to know, contain with boundaries and channel AP in a certain direction, its complex make-up can offer positive elements. Firstly, pupils are constantly challenged in learning how to live with others that are not like them, as they remain with the same pupils throughout the day and year, each of whom has disengaged from mainstream education for unique reasons. This challenge of living with difference involves showing who they are and where they stand, and offers the opportunity to become aware of their own personal and unique responsibility to the 'other' (Biesta, 2006). Due to the nature of the complexities often surrounding pupils' lives, AP retains a worldly quality; such spaces make action possible and are where freedom can appear (Biesta, 2006). The setting also gives pupils reason to reflect upon the 'fragile conditions under which all people can act, under which all people can be a subject' (Biesta, 2006, p.145). Although knowing, containing and channelling AP is a little like trying to catch a fish with your hands, the flip-side of this is a culture suited to exploring democratic education through a cultivation of one's humanity.

In terms of policy, this is a key time for AP in England. Michael Gove (current Secretary of State for Education) has recently stated that AP 'needs to be completely redrawn' (Gove, 2012, p.1), accepting all of Taylor's (2012) recommendations in *Improving Alternative Provision*, and indicating that he plans to implement these swiftly. He agrees with Taylor that 'the Government and the educational establishment cannot continue to hold these children in their peripheral vision' (Taylor, 2012, p.4). Certain recommendations in the report appear to be straight forward and offer no surprises, such as: an increased focus on identification of children's needs; shared information between schools and providers that locally leads to clear and realistic plans with baselines against which to measure progress; and appropriate and challenging English and Maths teaching. Other recommendations offer potential tensions: the DfE to commission a payment by results trial for AP; and an expectation that pupils in PRUs and AP academies (AP sites are to be state-maintained but independently-run schools in England set up with the help of outside sponsors) should make similar academic progress to their mainstream peers. A payment by results trial would first need a consensus of what is meant by 'results', and take into account that, by its nature, AP outcomes are difficult to measure. Also, expectations of similar academic progress to mainstream peers may not take into account the context, complexities and needs beyond academic progress surrounding the pupils in AP.

The question of success is a complex one. With the insight of theory and practice into identifying needs, the nature of success in AP and clear baselines against which to measure progress, policy could contribute positively towards the capacity of AP to embrace the wide responsibilities of education.

1.3 Overview of study

The thesis is an ethnographic case study of practitioner approaches in an AP site in South West England for 14-16 year olds. Through a grounded theory approach, I examine what characterised the practitioner approaches there and explore where those approaches led. The practitioners in the study are comprised of:

- a 'lead teacher' – an experienced teacher who can support and counsel other staff
- three specialist teaching assistants – trained in behaviour support
- two sets of artists in residence – a musician and a theatre group

The research questions are:

1. What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?
2. Where did these approaches lead?

I begin with a literature review of theory, practice and policy in AP. Knowing that Eastbank regularly invited artists to work at the site, I also considered arts education practice and literature and, more

broadly, creativity literature, including through the lens of dialogic education. With the second research question in mind, which asks where the practitioner approaches led, I consider educational futures and aspiration literature. I do not include literature in the light of my findings in this chapter, instead weaving this new literature into my discussion chapter. This separation tells a more coherent story and charts a clearer journey from and returning to the literature throughout the research. Although adopting a grounded theory approach, I chose not to delay the literature review until analysis was completed as a way of encouraging new ideas to emerge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), instead taking the critical stance of 'theoretical agnosticism' (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003, p.138) towards earlier theories.

My methodology chapter follows, beginning with a background of the research site and mainstream school to which it is affiliated. Underpinning perspectives that influence my design are described, namely a relativist ontology, constructionist epistemology and a theoretical design driven by a post-critical theory approach. Having drawn on grounded theory and ethnographic approaches, I discuss my influences and reasons, highlighting tensions and dilemmas. I do the same with methods used, discussing the nature of case study. My rationale for the chosen forms of data collection and analysis is made clear, considering ethical issues throughout. Of particular significance and original contribution is my use of story as methodology and my tentative exploration into understanding life writing as ontology. Due to the level of reciprocity in my research and growing use of virtual ethnography, I discuss reciprocal virtual ethnography as way of researching those attending AP.

My findings are divided into two chapters: the first answers the question, 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' and the second chapter answers the question, 'Where did these approaches lead?' The first chapter shows findings of practitioners reflecting on practice, building principles and exploring practice, also constructing, experimenting and interpreting as the processes overlapped. The chapter discusses context and complexity speaking into decisions or actions and the marriage of empathic engagement and mission at the core of these overlapping approaches and resulting actions. How findings were interpreted from stories I had written during data collection is also discussed in detail. The second findings chapter follows the approaches into 'licensed chaos', which is broken down into examples of play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership. Outcomes of belonging and well-being are presented. Original contribution is offered in both chapters, through the model of practitioner approaches and outcomes, and through the inclusion of story to represent my findings.

My ensuing discussion chapter starts with a discussion of how my findings contribute to the wider relevant literature. My findings moved my understanding of theory beyond the realms of the preliminary nature of my literature review; during this chapter I will consider new literature in the light of my findings and chart the shift into new territory.

I discuss where my findings are supported by that literature, where they are not and make suggestions of new contribution to the field of AP by considering what my findings open up and how they might alter

the current 'map' of understanding and practice. Specifically, I consider the relationship between licensed chaos and creativity, and licensed chaos in relation to humanising creativity and possibility thinking. The significance of belonging in education is also considered, particularly in relation to humanising creativity and aspiration. Well-being at Eastbank in relation to theory and society is discussed, before moving to a wider discussion that questions the nature of success in AP. Here I consider the governmental view on success within AP in relation my findings at Eastbank. Finally, I discuss my methodological contribution in terms of post-critical theory, reciprocal virtual ethnography and story as methodology, highlighting my ethical dilemmas. I reflect on what I have learnt in the light of my findings and consider where there is fertile ground for further research.

The thesis conclusion begins with my developing understanding within AP of a democratic education for a human future. I then give an overview of my research, restating my original contribution to knowledge, the significance of the research, the problems and limitations from which I have learnt, as well as recommend further areas of scholarship.

1.4 Purpose of study

The aim of this study is to explore the contribution AP can make to young people's lives and how this relates to practice and policy perceptions of effectiveness.

My objectives are threefold:
1. to understand how practitioners in one site offered AP;
2. to establish the kind of outcomes achieved in the AP site, and
3. to develop further existing methodologies in researching the field of AP.

1.5 Rationale for conducting the study

Policy makers have opened a space for such a study to have traction through a recent determination to shift young people in AP from periphery to central view. Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove has called for AP to be redrawn and with the insight of research into identifying needs, baselines against which to measure progress and the nature of success in AP, policy is better positioned to reach its aims.

There is also a call from practice to demonstrate that: 'in the recognition that adolescence is an opportunity, not a threat, lies society's best assurance of a positive future' (Abbott, 2010, p.8). There is cause for researching how AP is recognising adolescence as an opportunity and the outcomes of this, especially in the light of the 2011 disorder and riots in England (for background see Baker, 2012), where over half appearing in court for offences were aged 20 or under, and more than a third of those had recently been excluded from school (Ministry of Justice, 2012). This is reflected in theory: Thomson

and Walker (2010, p.397), in their discussion of Giroux, underline that, 'how a society views their children is, he proposes, a key to democratic health'.

The results of UNICEF's comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in 21 nations of the industrialized world, *An overview of child well-being in rich countries* (UNICEF, 2007) also indicate that more research is needed on approaches taken with young people who feel negatively about school and who cause concern in terms of behaviour and risks. Its research concludes that, in an average ranking of all dimensions, the UK's children and young people exhibit the lowest levels of well-being in all 21 nations, particularly in the area of behaviours and risks, and how they feel about school. There is a need for schools and AP to help their pupils to thrive in holistic ways in the 21st century, which can be assisted by research such as this study into practitioner approaches and outcomes.

Previous empirical research into strategic alternatives to exclusions from school has also put out a call: There needs to be a creative approach to AP and a reconsideration of what counts as educational and developmental experiences, especially for children who find being in and behaving in school quite difficult. There are grounds for stretching the bounds of what would count as appropriate provision that keeps the child in touch with education and its position to progress (Parsons, 2011, p.117).

Therefore, to study an AP site that aims to take a creative approach to its provision as it explores what counts as educational and developmental experiences and stretches the bounds of previous provision, is to open up possibilities for the field of AP.

Sir Ken Robinson argues for the realisation of personalising and customising education as the only successful way ahead:

> Personalising and customising education is not just a theory...This is the best, and I believe the only, practical way to realize the talents of all our students and to help them engage in the real challenges they face (Robinson, 2009, foreword in Gerver, 2010, xi).

By following one AP site's journey that aims to do this is to contribute further in bringing theory into practice and offer a model from which other AP practitioners can forge their own.

Finally, the challenge has been thrown down by Gallagher that, 'educational storytellers will need to break new ground and do so in theoretically robust ways; their stories, in both form and content, need to provoke new imaginings' (Gallagher, 2011, p.60). There is a methodological rationale for this study to develop story as methodology in a theoretically robust way. In doing so, fragments can be held together through story in order to bring holistic insight into the lives of pupils in AP and challenge the status quo of rules that constrain the production of new ideas.

14

1.6 Setting boundaries

This thesis is an ethnographic case study of one AP site in South West England. It is not claiming that the findings are necessarily generalizable to all AP sites in the UK. However, the approaches that emerged from my findings may also lead to belonging and well-being in other AP sites were they to be implemented in those sites.

Although the AP site was affiliated to a mainstream secondary school, I have not undertaken research in the secondary school to gain insight into the wider approaches undertaken in relation to the AP site. I have chosen to keep the focus narrow and on the practitioners directly involved with Eastbank. This would be a valuable activity in future research, but I felt it was beyond the scope of this PhD.

When pupils were undertaking apprenticeship training at a local college, pupils from the secondary school who were likely to join Eastbank the following year also attended, with teaching assistants from the mainstream school. The same pupils and teaching assistants visited Eastbank and participated sporadically in the activities led by the artists in residence. I did not include these pupils and practitioners in my study. I acknowledge that this could have offered further valuable insight into practitioner approaches and how this gradual inclusion of new pupils contributed to a sense of belonging and well-being, but also argue this would have made the research too wide for this PhD. My focus has been on Eastbank practitioners and current pupils attending Eastbank.

I have discussed research literature that is international, but have focused on policy and practice that is based in England. Further study of policy and approaches in AP in other countries as a comparison to the England could speak into future research and ideas in England, but is beyond the scope of this study due to time and word count limitations.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The study I have undertaken builds on and contributes to work in AP (Parsons, 1999; 2011; Thomson and Russell, 2007; Kinder et al, 1999; Eastman, 20011; Lovell and Cooper, 1997). Such studies have examined type, scale and scope of programmes for excluded young people, as well as planning, management and monitoring of AP, and producing and reducing disaffection. Studies have also engaged in debates on whether AP is inequitable and on AP's aim of returning pupils to the mainstream (a summary of which is outlined in Munn *et al.*, 2000). Many have played an important role in reducing marginalisation of young people on the fringes of the education system. Yet there has not been an ethnographic study that conceptualises practitioner approaches in AP through seeking voices that escape easy classification and do not make easy sense (concepts expressed in Mazzei & Jackson, 2009). As such, this thesis provides additional insight into practitioner approaches and where they can lead. The analytic focus on the evolution of these approaches enables further contribution. This study analyses the holistic outworking of the central practitioner approaches of empathic engagement and mission, and their pathway to belonging and well-being. Although there exists an established understanding of the benefits of creative partnerships, such as creating new spaces and connections, developing real life competencies, capitalizing on expertise within the creative sector and widening the range of opportunities, little analytic attention has been paid to practitioner-inspired catalysts for belonging and well-being within AP. I address this issue by demonstrating that practitioner (artist and teacher) approaches of empathic engagement and mission in one AP site evolved into licensed chaos and contributed to belonging and well-being – two areas which I suggest are central to sound thinking about AP and mainstream education.

Within this chapter I discuss academic and policy literature that led to my research questions:

1. What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?
2. Where did these approaches lead?

I begin by reviewing research and reports on AP, exclusion and disaffection in order to better understand the wider context in which Eastbank was situated. I then consider creativity literature, in particular possibility thinking and creative partnership studies through the lens of a dialogic approach. This was an obvious focus due to artists in residence being part of the research site, but also as I wanted to be informed when considering creative practitioner-inspired approaches beyond creative partnership work. Studying possibility thinking and its forward-leading projection led me to educational futures thinking and literature that relates to aspiration. I was, at least initially, interested to what extent and in what ways the pupils were taught to think about the future and how they felt about their educational futures. My methodology chapter maps out how my research questions developed, but at this stage, I was imagining that I wanted my research questions to ask how the pupils felt about their

educational futures and how that developed over time. Therefore, educational futures thinking and pupil aspiration were key fields to mine at that time. Finally, my initial impression of Eastbank from my previous role as an arts education co-ordinator was that there was a strong sense of pupils' voices in the art work and in its display format post-project. I was also keen not to colonize pupils' voices in my research; reading literature on pupil voice not only better framed my understanding of the field, but also led to further methodological reading on voice, which became significant to my study and is outlined in the next chapter. I have deliberately kept the word 'approaches' without preceding it with, for example, pedagogical, pastoral or philosophical. I chose to keep the question focused on approaches as 'ways of dealing with something' (Merriam-Webster, 2012), without closing it down by compartmentalised specifics.

My approach to the literature review is influenced by grounded theory, as throughout my study I use grounded theory strategies, albeit flexibly and in my own way. As Charmaz (2006) discusses, the place of the literature review within grounded theory research has long been disputed. I did not, as Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate, delay the literature review until analysis was completed to encourage new ideas to emerge. I have rather taken the critical stance of 'theoretical agnosticism' (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003, p.138) towards earlier theories before collecting and analysing my data. I saw this stance as bringing awareness to preconceived ideas and a means to remind myself not to see the data through the lens of earlier ideas, which seemed to me to be more intentional than hoping that by not reading around the field that I would do the same. The literature review was an instinctive and common sense broad sweep of what might best serve me as I began data collection, with a particular effort not to hold it closely as vocabulary to replace new thought. I have updated the literature reviewed as new material was published and research projects were developed.

In order to make clear sense of the research story, this chapter does not include further literature that I sought out to better understand my findings towards the end of my analysis. Instead, within my discussion chapter I have reviewed literature that is linked to my findings of empathic engagement, mission, licensed chaos, belonging and well-being, referring back to this preliminary literature review to show a clear trail of my research process and progression. I believe that to include in this chapter the literature that I considered in the light of my findings would muddle the trail of my process. New literature directions taken are better placed within my wider discussion where I bring literature, findings and methodology together. I have, however, included within the chapter policy literature that emerged later than my preliminary literature review as I saw it as an important current context for the range of literature discussed.

2.2 School Exclusion in England

AP as a term is a relatively new one in England, featuring as Alternative Education Provision in the NFER (2000) research report on the field, with little other reference to the term before the turn of the

twenty-first century. Therefore, I include a historical overview of research on school exclusion as part of understanding the field of AP, as exclusion was a term more widely used historically.

Exclusion was and remains a disciplinary measure available for schools, reserved for persistent and unwavering misbehaviour or extreme behaviour that harms others, damages property or severely disrupts the learning of other pupils. It can be permanent or for a fixed-term. Historically, responses to disruptive behaviour and behavioural problems have resulted in removing the child from school. Research of this action has shifted in focus: Kinder et al.'s (1999) overview of the history of research on exclusions from school in England describes 1970's research on exclusion as mainly having a psychological focus, focusing on individual deviance (York et al, 1972). This was replaced in the early 1980s, with an emphasis on sociological approaches to the causes of disruptive behaviour, examining how relationships, teaching practices and curriculum may be causative factors in the exclusion process (Bradley, 1986). By the 1990s, more research was considering how ethos and environment may help to minimise exclusions and promote good behaviour (Lovell and Cooper, 1997). Research in the early part of the new century highlighted peer, family and community pressures and needs that can contribute to the kinds of school behaviours that lead to exclusion. These were linked to more general regional social and economic circumstances (Thomson, 2002; Lupton, 2003).

There were voices of dissent: the 1970s brought a growth of off-site exclusion units established by the local authority, which Basini (1981) suggested only examined the symptoms and not the causes of disruptive behaviour, which were as likely to be generated by schools and society as by the pupils. A focus on deviance, he said, deflected from the possible need of school reform. Parsons (1994; 1999) argued that the practice of exclusion assumes that behavioural problems are intrinsic in the pupil rather than the school, presenting them as having problems rather than needs, also highlighting the coincidence of high numbers of excluded students and poverty. Stirling (1992) pointed out that, from 1991, excluded pupils improved school attendance figures as they were classed as having authorised absence, meaning that the pupils' absences from school were no longer counted in the unauthorised absence figures that schools were under pressure to keep low. Although authorised absences still exist, there is much speculation that they will soon be phased out. It is worth noting that until the 1993 Education Act, schools benefited from excluding pupils, as they retained the funding for the pupils for that academic year. More recently, Eastman (2011) has highlighted the human cost of exclusion, referring to a recent survey of 15 to 18 year olds held in custody: 90 per cent of the young men and 75 per cent of the young women had been excluded from school (Eastman, 2011, p.13). Perhaps these voices have contributed to the recent downward trend of exclusion (DfE, 2012) and the building of AP as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Certainly, Parsons (2011), despite calling for the abandonment of exclusion, sees some aspects of AP as being part of his ideas for an inclusion agenda, where, it is 'possible to allocate a young person to a range of provision whilst still being attached to the school roll with the prospect that they may go back should matters improve' (Parsons, 2011, p.28). He sees benefit in a set-up where, 'a young person might spend three mornings a week at the equestrian

centre, three afternoons a week at basic skills and other days with youth and community or on a vocational placement' (Parsons, 2011, p.28). This and other types of AP will be discussed during the chapter.

With reference to my study, such diverse exclusion research foci over the decades demonstrate the need for me to be cognisant of various factors when formulating and answering my research questions: the educational and social needs of the pupils in Eastbank when researching their behaviour and practitioner responses; where social welfare and health services have and can assist in addressing those needs; and more broadly, general educational provision's role in producing excluded pupils. The pupils at Eastbank were sent there as an alternative to exclusion, apart from the four places bought by the LA for excluded pupils from other schools. Therefore, power issues surrounding absence, exclusion and the main site were not a focus of this study.

The Department of Education figures from 2010/11 on school exclusions show that there were 5,080 permanent exclusions in England, 11.5 per cent less than 2009/10, continuing the decline from 12,300 permanent exclusions in 1997/1998. There were 324,110 fixed-term exclusions in 2010/11 amongst a pupil population of approximately eight million. The most common reason for exclusion was persistent disruptive behaviour, accounting for 33.7 per cent of permanent exclusions and 24.8 per cent of fixed period exclusions from all schools (DfE, 2012). Boys are around three times more likely to receive a permanent or fixed period exclusion than girls. Although pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) are around nine times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than those pupils with no SEN, no pupils at Eastbank had statements of SEN, removing it as a focus for my study. Despite the number of permanent exclusions falling considerably, the number of pupils being educated in PRUs almost doubled between 1997 and 2007 (Eastman, 2011, p.11). The annual cost of educating a pupil full-time in a mainstream school is estimated at £4,000 a year. In a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), it is an estimated £15,000 -18,000 (Eastman, 2011, p.46); cost issues provide another reason for the move towards AP sites run by schools as an alternative to exclusion for their pupils.

2.3 Understanding the field of Alternative Provision (AP)

AP is provision made by schools or Local Authorities (LAs) for pupils in mainstream education who violate their school disciplinary code or are disengaged to the extent that they take themselves out of the school system (Parsons, 1999; Smyth and Hattam, 2004) and who do not need to attend a special school. This provision includes:

- Pupil referral units (PRUs): a type of school established and run by LAs specifically for pupils who cannot attend a mainstream or special school. All PRUs have a Teacher in Charge, similar to a mainstream school's head teacher, and a management committee, which acts like a school's governing body. It is a core provider of education (type 1).

- LA provision run by their pupil referral services, such as hospital schools, hospital and home teaching services, tuition centres and e-learning centres. Illness and bullying victims are key features of this type of AP (type 2).

- Provision which is brokered or arranged by a school or group of schools or LA, such as placements in FE colleges, extended work experience, projects provided by the voluntary or private sector, or through multi-agency initiatives – a specialist provider (type 3). An example is Lancashire Educational Alternative Provision (LEAP). Run in partnership with local secondary schools, the programme aims to re-engage disaffected youngsters without the need for a formal exclusion from school (Rathbone, 2005) (DfE, 2012).

However, AP is not always so clear cut. Eastbank, for example, was set up by a school and included placements in Further Education Colleges and extended work experience within its timetable. However, Eastbank was a small core provider of education with pupils attending full-time, creating a blend of type one and three. Thomson and Russell (2007) found similar problems with this typology in their study of AP, where some core providers were specialist providers as well, and programmes had full-time pupils alongside part-time pupils from other core providers.

As outlined in my introduction, the field of AP is difficult to discuss with any certainty and I concur with its description as 'a relatively unregulated market in which there are diverse scales of operation, inspection regimes, data-collection frameworks and priorities' (Thomson and Russell, 2007, page 'x'), 'not a well-developed area' (Parsons, 2011, p.44) and 'difficult to know, track, manage and regulate' (Thomson and Russell, 2007, p.59). Indeed, it was muffled understanding and, in particular, the lack of data emanating from the field compelling core providers 'to rely on their own networks and knowledge to arrange programmes for young people' (Thomson and Russell, 2007, p.60) that encouraged me to conduct my study at Eastbank and start to ask what characterised practitioner approaches there. Though not a central focus to this study, I am mindful of the concerns raised that the lack of co-ordinated data in AP and the range in quality and funding of programmes results in some young people not being well looked after (Thomson and Russell, 2007; 2009; Ofsted, 2011; Taylor, 2012).

Appendix 1 offers an international review of AP and inclusion programmes, research or projects, both historical and contemporary, in chart form. Although not an exhaustive list, it gives a detailed overview of much empirical research that is relevant to my study. It also serves to show that very few studies chart artist involvement or engagement, and so highlights the contribution my study makes. Those that do tend to be an inclusion program within a mainstream school for young people identified as disruptive in lessons, rather than based in a separate education site.

2.4 A broader view: disaffection

Alongside exclusion and AP literature, I have found it useful to review literature regarding disaffection as it offers insight into pupils' feelings about education which can lead to leaving mainstream education.

Disaffection is a key link between AP and mainstream schooling. The Memidex online dictionary defines disaffection as disloyalty to established authority and the feeling of being alienated from others (Memidex, 2012). In the context of education it covers a range of situations: pupils who are excluded from school, at risk of permanent exclusion and those that are leading towards finding themselves in this situation. As explained in my introduction, 'at risk' pupils are children and young people who are at risk of being excluded and/or of not completing mainstream schooling. I do not use the term 'at risk' beyond this chapter to describe the pupils in my study, as it is a potentially damaging label for those in receipt of it (Thomson, 2002). Thomson (2002) highlights that there are six aspects to the risk issue. Firstly, pupils designated as not the norm are labelled 'at risk'. This label paves the way for descriptions of consequences of 'risky behaviours', which contain their own in-built solutions. It also positions pupils as separate, suggesting that those 'at risk' have no common concerns as those who fall within the norm. The label suggests that there is something common to all pupils exhibiting risk behaviours, making risk amenable to one educational solution rather than opening up differences. Risk also works to become the young person's official identity rather than allowing for differences that are both individual and social. Finally, where risk is located within individuals, families and cultures instead of in a set of organised institutions and social processes, positive attributes of those individuals, families or cultures can be pushed out of the frame.

Existing evidence suggests that holding negative perceptions of the future (whether of society, of community or of personal trajectories) may contribute to feelings of disempowerment and disengagement from education (Dweck, 2000). Sociologists such as Fuller (2009) show that a contributory element to negative perceptions of the future is the persistence of class in determining life course. For example, research commissioned by the Department of Children, School and Families found that many working-class children are being placed in lower ability school sets despite having above average test results. The same study found that pupils from middle-class backgrounds were more likely to be allocated higher set placements, irrespective of their prior attainment (British Education Research Association Press Release, 2007, quoted in Fuller, 2009, p.10). Yet Fuller believes that addressing educational inequalities by focusing on class ignores the importance of individual complexity, contextual differences as well as how the practice of class is experienced differently: 'In terms of understanding educational aspirations, assuming the experiences of class are collective experiences merely because class outcomes appear to demonstrate collective patterns is unsatisfactory' (Fuller, 2009, p.39).

I am mindful of this wisdom when considering the fact that all pupils in my study were white and working class, two thirds of them boys. The area in which the AP site was situated was a predominantly white working class area and I was not aware of any refusals from other ethnicities to attend the site. Although an interesting topic to explore, I was more interested in the community that had been created at Eastbank, and so steered away from a focus on social class literature. Of course, and as previously underlined, it is important to be cognisant of the educational and social needs of pupils in AP, the social

welfare and health services that assist in addressing needs, and general educational provision's role in producing excluded pupils, when seeking to understand the root of exclusion and, preceding that, disaffection.

When considering disaffection and future, today's pupils need to understand how school relates to their future lives (Claxton, 2008): 'Without a story that makes sense to them, today's young people are not going to buy in to what school offers, and they are more likely to disengage - some of them quietly, some of them disruptively' (Claxton, 2008, p.18). The stress of school is compounded for many youngsters, Claxton claims, by their inability to see the point of it. In relation to disaffection at key stage four, it is therefore important to consider the role of education as meets the personal challenges of young people in the 21st century. If the purpose of education is to prepare young people for the future (Claxton, 2008), it is widely argued that schools have a responsibility to help young people develop capacities they will need to thrive (Egan, 2008; Claxton, 2008). What Dewey (1897) calls a 'pressure from without',

> may, indeed, give certain external results but cannot truly be called educative. Without insight into the psychological structure and activities of the individual, the educative process will, therefore, be haphazard and arbitrary. If it chances to coincide with the child's activity it will get a leverage; if it does not, it will result in friction, or disintegration, or arrest of the child nature (Dewey, 1897, article 1, para 3).

Children's Commissioner for England Sir Al Aynsley Green (2007), in response to the 2007 UNICEF well-being study, points towards a crisis at the heart of society: that the very children that represent the future of our country feel unsafe and insecure, have low aspirations and put themselves at risk. The UNICEF study that Green refers to, *An overview of child well-being in rich countries* (UNICEF, 2007), is a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in 21 nations of the industrialized world. It attempts to measure and compare child well-being under six different headings or dimensions: material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks, and young people's own subjective sense of well-being. Its research concludes that, in an average ranking of all six dimensions, the UK is bottom of the list, with children and young people exhibiting the lowest levels of well-being in all 21 nations. Peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks and subjective well-being are the worst scores for the UK. Subjective well-being measures children's own perceptions of personal well-being, health and how they feel about school. If many children are struggling with peer relationships, are putting themselves at risk, perceive themselves as lacking in well-being and are not enjoying school, there is a call within these findings for schools to help their pupils to thrive in holistic ways in the 21st century.

UNICEF's well-being findings are relevant to AP in that by fostering confidence that they are equal to the challenges they face, young people may behave less dangerously, be less prone to becoming anxious and insecure, and move beyond acting in the self-destructive ways that typify people under

stress. This consideration became a key motivation for asking what characterised the practitioner approaches and examining how they evolved. Psychologists explain 'stress' as the result of demands made that exceed the resources to meet them (McGrath, 1970). A continuing imbalance between demands and resources leads to feelings of being inadequate, anxious and out of control. Claxton (2008) explains that to be a teenager today is to be 'a shape-shifter and a quick-change artist': there is pleasure and risk, but also stress, in that freedom (Claxton, 2008, p.7). He underlines that young people are stressed and can feel obliged to try to manage their feelings rather than to focus on tackling the demands themselves. Denial, withdrawal, blaming, escapism and displacement activities ensue as 'attempts to avoid the self-criticism that comes from not feeling up to dealing with life's problems' (Claxton, 2008, p.12). Pupils' understandings of how school and learning relate to their future lives are important to consider, therefore, when researching Eastbank's practitioner approaches and where they led.

2.5 Policy literature on Alternative Provision

The change of Government part-way through my study in 2010 led to changes in policy. When designing my study, the Government's proposals for transforming alternative provision were set out in The White Paper (DCSF, 2008). However, the current Government is now working from Taylor's (2012) recommendations in his review – an evaluation report of AP. Initially in my study, I reviewed The White Paper in detail, but once it was superseded by the work of the 2010 incoming government, I instead compared and contrasted it to the latest policy literature, which, because it is current, is where I shall begin. However, it was The White Paper, not the Taylor review, which contributed to shaping my thinking in designing my study and its research questions.

2.5.1 Current policy context

Taylor's (2012) *Improving Alternative Provision* is a review of existing AP with recommendations for improving the outcomes for children and young people, and a recent major influence on the future of AP policy. It is valuable for this study to consider its findings as to do so places the practitioner approaches and outcomes at Eastbank in a wider policy context by which those approaches will be monitored and assessed. Taylor begins the report with a warning: if the Government and the educational establishment continue to hold children in AP in their peripheral vision and fail to give them a first-class education then, 'as the events of last summer (2011) showed, we will all pay a heavy price' (Taylor, 2012, p.4). Taylor indicates that the disorder events in England in 2011 (for background see Baker, 2012) were in part a result of poor Governmental attention to vulnerable young people in AP. Despite the menacing overtones of Taylor's warning that portrays these young people as dangerous, there is some substance to his link between AP and the disorder events. Over half appearing in court for offences relating to the disorder were aged 20 or under (Home Office, 2011, p.5) and 36% of 10-17 year olds appearing before court had been excluded from school during 2009/10 (Ministry of Justice, 2012, table 4.13).

The report is critical of the commissioning role played by many schools, AP and LAs, but mainly criticizes 'a flawed system that fails to provide suitable education and proper accountability for some of the most vulnerable children in the country' (Taylor, 2012, p.4). Specifically, his main criticisms were:

- the quality of teaching on offer, the skills of the staff, the cost of AP and its effectiveness vary greatly
- although LAs have a legal responsibility to monitor local maintained schools, including PRUs, and intervene if there is a problem, there is no such requirement when it comes to (specialist provider) AP
- providers who do not have enough places to be officially registered as an AP site may have no external assessment at all
- in some areas there is little or no quality assurance of the AP available and only patchy checking is undertaken
- the DfE keeps a central register of AP, but this contains only partial information which is not validated
- a third of schools did not visit the provider before they placed a pupil and once children had started in the AP, a third of providers surveyed were visited by the school less often than once every 6 months and only a sixth were visited every week
- often schools do not send children to AP that is suitable for them, have not quality assured the provision and have not agreed targets for success or put systems in place for monitoring progress. (Taylor, 2012, pp.8-12)

These findings give a picture of the AP landscape in which Eastbank is situated. The Ofsted survey of AP in June 2011 (which evaluates the use of off-site AP by a small sample of schools and PRUs, considers what makes AP successful and examines some of the current issues associated with its use) highlighted serious concerns in line with the above bullet points. As these were confirmed in Taylor's review, with specific reference to the Ofsted survey, I will not conduct a review of its findings at risk of repetition. The specific criticisms are relevant to my study in the light of Eastbank being closed down during my data collection; there was not clear evidence, external monitoring or understanding of the kind of successful outcomes offered by the AP site. I will address Taylor's recommendations based on these criticisms in the light of my findings, in subsequent chapters.

Taylor's review highlights how difficult it is to define good AP, and that there is no one particular model, or group of models, that can be used as an example. He insists that, 'local systems will need to vary and the test for them will always be how effectively they meet the needs of local children' (Taylor, 2012, p.9). However, in offering notions of 'quality' he states that the following characteristics will be consistently found in quality provision:

a. a good understanding of the different local needs AP will meet, with routine and thorough processes to map needs and, with this information, help with commissioning;

b. a demonstration of good outcomes and positive impact, along with a curriculum that is appropriate, delivered by good quality staff who will help children to make excellent progress;

c. good arrangements in working with other relevant services such as social care, educational psychologists, child and adolescent mental health services, youth offending teams, Drug Support etc.;

d. rigour at the individual placement level; there is a thorough assessment of pupils' needs, information is shared and there is ongoing monitoring of progress between the school and the provider;

e. a specific focus on literacy and numeracy at an appropriate level; and

f. a goal of reintegrating the child/young person into mainstream education when he or she is ready (Taylor, 2012, p.9).

Although, as will be seen, my research questions do not specifically ask what good AP is, Taylor's framework for quality provision is relevant in considering my findings in terms of future policy and how it will monitor, as well as further framing the sudden closure of Eastbank during my data collection.

2.5.2 The White Paper

The current government is working from Taylor's (2012) review based on his six year vision. However, it is important to place this in the context of previous policy commitment to AP. The White Paper, *Back on track: A strategy for modernising alternative provision for young people* was launched in May 2008 under the previous government. It set out the Government's proposals for transforming AP into a successful part of the whole education system, working in close partnership with mainstream schools, special schools and with children's services, to meet the needs of all individual young people and 'set them back on the path to success'. As the title indicates, the aim of this paper is based upon the understanding that pupils need to be brought back on track. A pupil will remain in a unit until ready to be re-integrated:

> Where a pupil remains in alternative provision because they are not ready to be re-integrated to a mainstream or special school, it is essential that they nonetheless receive an education that puts them on the path to success in adulthood. This is not just the right thing for them, but for their local community and for society more widely (DCSF, 2008: Introduction, p.3).

The paper indicates that low performance outcomes equate to poor outcomes:

> There is limited performance data available for pupils in alternative provision, but what there is indicates often very poor outcomes. In 2006 only 1 per cent of 15 year olds in Pupil Referral Units achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent; 11.3 per cent achieved 5 or more grades A*-G; and 82.1 per cent achieved 1 or more qualification.' (DCSF, 2008, p.4)

This differs from the aims of Eastbank, where GCSEs were only a small part of the aims of the AP site. A lack of GCSEs there did not intimate poor outcomes. From my initial visits to Eastbank, I did not get the sense that the practitioners subscribed to the notion of the pupils there needing to be brought back onto a set track, nor that the practitioners were focused on re-integration as a goal, or pushing the pupils to gain GCSEs. They were also slow to dictate what the 'right thing' was for them. This initial sense of contradiction to The White Paper caused me to begin to ask what characterised the practitioner approaches and where they led.

The Taylor report, by contrast, has less of a focus on GCSE results when discussing poor outcomes. It is useful to compare and contrast the two policy documents to chart some of the policy evolution over the last five years. The language used differs greatly. For example, The White Paper states that, 'Too many of these young people not only fail to fulfil their own potential, but go on to cause serious problems for themselves and their communities' (DCSF, 2008, p.1). The use of 'too many' could possibly give the impression that the government finds a certain number of such pupils failing to fulfil potential and instead causing problems inevitable and acceptable. Whereas the Taylor review underlines that vulnerable young people should no longer be on the periphery of care. Phrases such as, 'No school should ever be required to take a pupil who is not ready to return from permanent exclusion, and no school should be required to take an unfair share of pupils who have been permanently excluded' (DCSF, 2008, p.2) might give the impression that The White Paper views the pupils in AP negatively. The White Paper states that 'improved information and accountability is the key to improved alternative provision' (DCSF, 2008, p.6), yet by 2012, Taylor's review moves beyond this to also place emphasis on communication, flexibility and pupils' needs and experiences.

There are key similarities between the two policy reports. The White Paper's strategy was based on core principles running through it that are also found in the 2012 review:

- that we should start from what will work best for each young person taking account of his or her different needs and in consultation with parents and carers;
- that we should secure a core educational entitlement for all young people in alternative provision;
- that there should be better planning and commissioning of alternative provision both at an area level and for the individual;
- that local authorities should be held to account for outcomes from the alternative provision they deliver or commission;
- that there should be better partnership working between alternative provision, other parts of the education sector and other agencies and services working with young people to facilitate early intervention and ensure an integrated approach to meeting the young person's needs; and
- that we must learn from the best and support innovation.

Both policy documents express that AP is a central and essential part of the government's strategy for improving behaviour in schools. They also agree on the need to consult on how best to gather

progression and value added data for pupils in AP and a need to focus on pupil well-being. Increased support for the workforce in AP, along with improvement of accommodation and facilities and continuing professional development (CPD) is also acknowledged as important. However, Taylor's (2012) review offers a more tolerant, holistic and imaginative vision in terms of outcomes.

Reaching further back than The White Paper (DCSF, 2008), The White Paper (DfES, 2005) highlighted four key priorities regarding the nature of the entitlement within AP:

- A focus on functional skills needed for everyday life.
- Stronger vocational routes.
- More 'stretching' options in both general and applied routes and more flexible provision.
- New ways to tackle disengagement.

Although the scope of this study does not reach to continuing the historical policy context of AP, it is worth noting that the 2005 paper moves towards functional skills and vocation, with some cross over with later policy literature.

2.6 Creativity, futures, aspiration and pupil voice literature that inform my study

Beyond AP literature, several other fields led me to my choice of research questions and research design. Eastbank regularly invited artists to be in residence, sometimes externally funded and at other times out of the main site budget. Therefore creativity and creative partnership theory and research became an area of study. I also explored dialogic education, after reading about dialogic space through a focus on the interacting professional roles between teachers and artists. The first research question, 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' emerged, in part, out of the issues raised within these literatures.

The emphasis on future when exploring disaffection literature led me to futures and aspiration theories and practices; the particular emphasis on pupils needing to understand how their learning relates to their future lives led me to consider the role of pupil voice in the process. These areas of study contributed to the formation of my second research question: 'Where did these approaches lead?'

2.6.1 Creativity and Possibility Thinking:

There are many definitions of creativity and the debate as to what defines creativity has been running for many years (Rhodes, 1961; Vernon, 1989; Craft 2000). Many definitions include a focus on imagination, novel or original outcomes and purpose or value. Due to the educational and, in particular, creative partnership context of this study, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education's (NACCCE) definition is pertinent, which is: 'imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are original and of value' (NACCCE, 1999, p.29). The NACCCE report *All Our Futures*

(1999), which argued for the need to foster creative development within all pupils, resulted in much greater funding for creative partnership work, as well as the establishment of the 'Creative Partnerships' organization. Imagination, as defined and used by the NACCCE, involves seeing new or other possibilities, which seems pertinent to Eastbank's role as an alternative to exclusion and mainstream schooling. However, the NACCCE also describes creativity as 'applied imagination' (p.29), and application can be hard to summon for pupils within AP; it certainly is not presumed. For this reason, another definition that my study leans towards is Pope's (2005): 'the capacity to make, do or become something fresh and valuable with respect to others as well as ourselves' (Pope, 2005, p.xvi). The emphasis on capacity – indicative of potential, power and a quality – rather than on application seems to be appropriate to a setting where pupils have often learnt to be afraid of failure. The emphasis on becoming something resonates with making and being made – becoming the process – which I will discuss in the next section, and is pivotal to my study.

Possibility thinking (PT for the rest of the thesis), developed in educational research on creativity (Craft, 1999; 2001; Jeffrey, 2005; Craft, Burnard and Grainger, 2005) conceptually and later empirically, explores the transition involved in the shift from what is to what might be. When pupils enter AP, they may well want their situations to improve. Where practitioners are seeking to foster a transition into positive possibility, PT may be evident in their approaches, and so is discussed in detail here. Since the research questions explore practitioner approaches, PT seems especially relevant. Craft (2002) describes PT as, 'the means by which questions are posed or puzzles surfaced – through multiple ways of generating the question 'what if?'…Fostering children's PT can be seen as 'building their resilience and confidence and reinforcing their capabilities as confident explorers, meaning-makers and decision-makers' (Craft, 2002, p.36). Work undertaken within the four-phase study of PT being led by Craft has generated classification of question-posing and question-responding in which the 'breadth of possibility' is seen to frame significantly what children and young people are able to follow through in creative behaviour. PT is described by Craft as 'being at the heart of creativity in the classroom' (Craft, 2001, p.49). If this is so, any creative activity may have within it the potential to open up new possibilities for artists, practitioners and pupils.

Within PT, it is not merely the posing of questions that is important, but also the 'type' of questions posed (Chappell et al, 2009; Craft, Cremin, & Burnard, 2008). The posing of the question 'What if?' in a variety of ways is particularly important. This can be described as a generative question, that is, one that may itself lead to more questions (Craft, 2000). Such posed questions will then generate a number of possibilities for the learner: posing questions within the context of PT involves the young person 'moving' along the continuum of questioning (Craft, 2002) from asking the concrete question 'What is this and what does this do?' to the abstract question 'What can I do with this?' It is in this more advanced form of posing questions that we may see a link between imagination and posing questions. Empirical work has investigated the inclusion of posing questions, using an empirical approach to investigate the place and nature of question posing (e.g. Burnard et al., 2006; Craft, 2008) and

developing an understanding of its role in PT. Of particular relevance is Chappell et al.'s (2009) research into the manifestation of the degree of possibility inherent in children's questions (including the concepts of possibility narrow, possibility moderate and possibility broad). The fine-grained data analysis of this research offers insight into how children engage in PT to meet specific needs in responding to creative tasks and activities and reveals the crucial role that question-posing and question-responding play in creative learning. Such empirical work has also investigated play as part of PT (e.g. Craft, 2008) and further re-analysis is ongoing to further define play and explore its relationship to the core operational features of PT (Craft et al., 2008; Craft, McConnon and Matthews, 2012). In a setting where pupils need to re-engage with learning, it might be that play and voicing questions are a key feature.

Historically, following on from the theoretical conceptualisation of PT, the concept of PT was then supported by such empirical evidence, starting in 2002 and is currently ongoing (Clack, 2008). These empirical studies aim to note what 'characterised' PT in the Early Years classroom and investigated individual characteristics of PT (e.g. Burnard et al., 2006; Chappell, 2008; Cremin, Burnard and Craft, 2006; Craft et al, 2012), using a qualitative, interpretive approach. The empirical work has been undertaken in four stages, focusing on specific factors in each stage, including; characterising possibility thinking; teachers and their pedagogical approaches; children and their posing of questions; and school-wide initiatives.

The first stage, running from 2002 to 2006 focused on developing a qualitative methodology for exploring possibility thinking, with an aim of identifying what characterized possibility thinking in young children aged three to seven, and to understand how teachers may foster possibility thinking and the potential pedagogical strategies. Data collection involved a co-participatory approach, allowing for co-construction of concepts with the teachers involved (Burnard et al., 2006). The data analysis used a deductive-inductive approach, 'deductively by working with an existing conceptual framework' and 'inductively by re-looking at the data to identify emergent categories and relationships' (Burnard et al., 2006, p.246). This then led to suggesting seven features as core to possibility thinking on the basis of the empirical evidence from the classrooms: posing questions; play and immersion; innovation; risk-taking; being imaginative; self-determination and intentionality. The research suggested that the interaction between teacher and learner was important, and placed these seven core features within 'enabling conditions' (Burnard et al., 2006, p.258). Data analysis also suggested that there are four features of pedagogy that are key to possibility thinking: standing back; offering time and space, and profiling learner agency (Cremin, Burnard and Craft, 2006, p.115).

The second stage work focused on questioning. Chappell (2008) notes the initial outcomes of stage two research, which suggested an interaction between risk-taking, being imaginative and posing and responding to questions. This was illustrated as part of intention and self-determination, within the context of play and led to the following diagrammatic representation of the concept of PT, shown below (Figure 2.1).

PLAY

ACTION/INTENTION

QUESTION-POSING
(verbal + non-verbal)
Leading or Service or Follow-through

Possibility broad

Possibility moderate

Possibility
narrow

RISK-TAKING

BEING IMAGINATIVE

testing   *I**   predicting

evaluating

rejecting   undoing   accepting

completing

compensating

repeating

QUESTION-RESPONDING
(verbal + non-verbal)

SELF DETERMINATION

IMMERSION

I* Innovation as possible outcome of possibility thinking as the engine of creative learning

Figure 2.1: Stage 2 analysis of question-posing and question-responding placed back within the original framework (Chappell, 2008, p19)

The third stage of research aimed to characterise PT in the strategies of teachers and the learning experiences of children in Key Stage 2 (aged seven to eleven), expanding on the initial empirical work and literature, which focused on the early years (see Craft et al, 2012). A fourth stage of research has focused on younger learner and the role of play in PT (Craft, McConnon and Mathews, 2012). It emerged the pedagogical features of 'meddling in the middle' and individual, collaborative and communal play into the model of pedagogy that nurtures PT, as shown in figure 2.2:
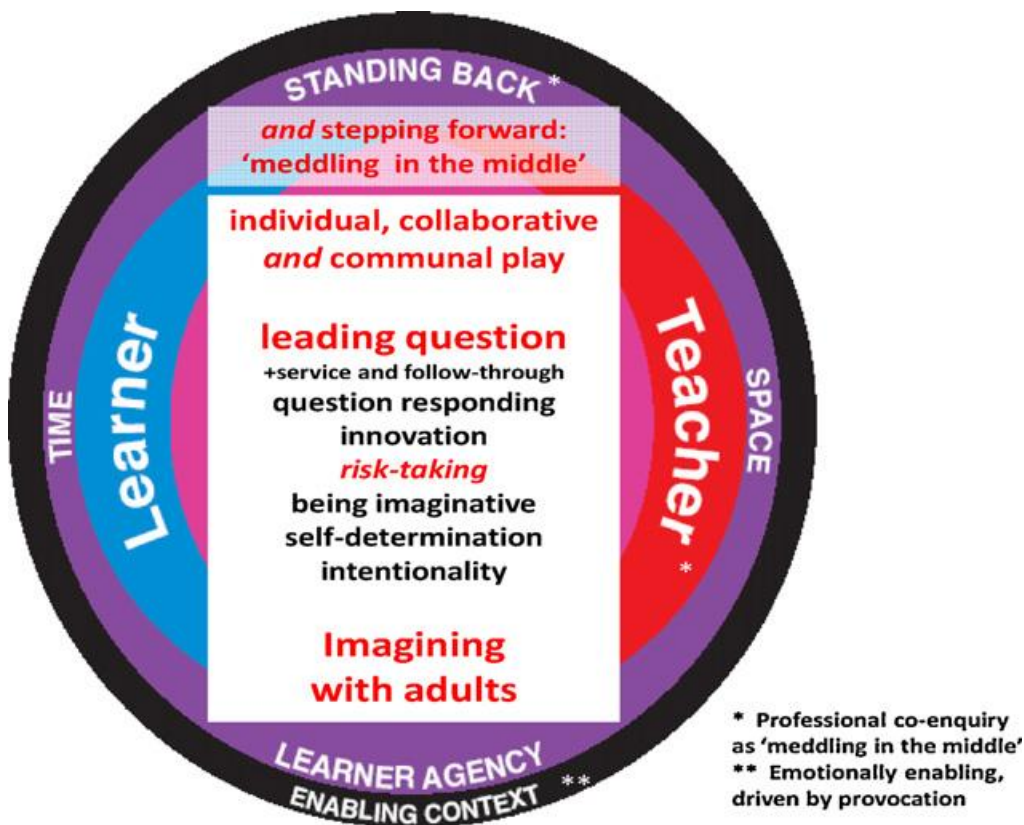
Figure 2.2: Pedagogy that nurtures possibility thinking (Craft et al., 2012, p.60)

I will compare and contrast my own findings of practitioner approaches with this model in my discussion chapter. Each of the practitioners at Eastbank had chosen specifically to work with pupils who had disengaged from education and carved their practice to reach them. Therefore, where conceptualisations from PT studies and from this study of practitioner approaches lean towards and away from each other may produce interesting consideration.

One of the aims of PT is to provide a way of understanding creativity in the classroom, and to find ways of conceptualising how creativity might be enabled in all rather than a select few. One of the ways that Craft (2001) uses to address this is to link it with the theory of 'Multiple Intelligences', proposed by Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1993; Gardner, Kornhaber, and Wake, 1996), who suggests that intelligence is not limited solely to the perhaps traditional interpretation of academic intelligence, and that there are a number of different intelligences that are applicable to all areas of life. These intelligences include; linguistic; logical-mathematical; musical; bodily-kinaesthetic; spatial; interpersonal; and intrapersonal intelligence. PT, therefore, may occur within any one or more of these intelligences, thus avoiding limiting the field of PT to a select few (where intelligence is narrowly defined). PT can be presented as 'lifewide' in its nature: Craft (2005) describes little c creativity as the ordinary but 'lifewide' attitude toward life, driven by PT. It is about 'acting effectively with flexibility, intelligence and novelty in the everyday rather than the extraordinary' (Craft, 2005, p19). Such an approach is highly pertinent to working through the medium of creative partnership with pupils who have disengaged from education and who often appear to be seeking originality and value on their own terms.

2.6.2 Creative Partnership

Creative partnerships involve school children or young people and their teachers coming together with creative organisations and individuals to work in partnership on creative projects. Although the focus of my study is in England, creative partnership has a history particularly in North America and the UK, as well as other parts of the world. The creative individuals who work in partnership with schools are referred to in this study as artists, meaning that they are creative in, innovative in or adept at an artistic practice as an occupation, such as visual art, music, dance, drama or creative writing. The artists in residence in my study are also included when I am discussing 'the practitioners' at Eastbank, alongside the teachers, and so are the subjects of my research questions.

There exists an established understanding of the benefits of creative partnerships, such as creating new spaces and connections, developing real life competencies, capitalizing on expertise within the creative sector and widening the range of opportunities. Creative partnerships are embedded within a decade of significant interest in creativity in education in England. Main influences within these recent years began with the NACCCE report (1999), which argued for a clear curriculum framework for creative and cultural education and for widespread creative partnership in learning and led to a range of policy activity in England (Craft, 2011c). In particular, creative development was named as one of the seven Early Learning Goals (QCA and DfES, 2000) which emphasized the role of imagination, and the Creative Partnerships initiative was established in 2002 to provide an opportunity to develop creativity in learning and enjoy high quality cultural activities (DCMS, DfES and Arts Council England, 2005). The Roberts Review (2006) assessed progress since the NACCCE report (1999), leading to the establishment of the Cultural and Creative Education Advisory Board (CCEAB) in 2006 and influencing analysis of Creative Partnerships and its achievements in its first five years (Craft, 2011c).

Creative partnerships have been introduced in many instances to reach young people who have disengaged from education, as was the case at Eastbank. One initiative local to the South West was TREADZ, a multi art form action research project, explored the potential of the arts to increase self-esteem and confidence in young people in Devon in 2004 that were excluded from school and attending PRUs. Organised by Devon Arts In Schools Initiative and funded by the local authority and the Arts Council England, young people, staff and artists collaborated in creating various forms of art. Research showed positive impact on motivation, behaviour, willingness to participate and positive anticipation, alongside a marked contribution to learning both in terms of the kinds of skills fostered by the activities and the contribution to specific modules. Similar projects, such as 'DARTS' – an arts project with young people attending PRUs in Doncaster – give compelling reasons for the impact of the arts with excluded pupils: 'DARTS' research showed a move from curiosity through to involvement, to responding to change and progression and then to a sense of success and achievement (Hirst & Robertshaw, 2003). Common to much of the research into the impact of creative partnership on 'disaffected pupils' is the conclusion that more in depth research is needed to underline the significant difference such an approach has.

In approaching a research site that promotes creativity and creative partnerships, I was drawn to expand my understanding of the space of learning by considering that it might be a 'dialogic space' in which learner and teacher engage with each other and, in a sense, learn to see the task through each other's eyes (Wegerif, 2007).This also extends to the relationships between learner, teacher and artist in creative partnerships, particularly as artists work outside of educational settings, of which I came to awareness through the work of Jeffery (2005). In light of this, Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the dialogic nature of language and being is highly relevant to characterizing strong creative partnerships. A widely accepted definition for the term 'dialogic', is that a meaning of an utterance is given by its location within a dialogue. The self is found in relation or dialogue, not isolated or trapped in the binary oppositions of self and other, text and context, signifier and signified. Wegerif (2008) explains that 'the boundary of selves is not a demarcation line or an external link between self and other, but an inclusive 'space' of dialogue within which self and other mutually construct, de-construct and re-construct each other'.

Jeffery (2005) contextualizes a dialogic space through a focus on the interacting professional roles between teachers and artists. To summarize his four-fold model of teacher/artist partnership:

Teacher as artist	The creative practice of a teacher has a personal and institutional dimension. A teacher needs to be a practitioner of what he or she teaches, playing multiple roles simultaneously, not only modelling the role of a teacher but that of the field to be taught.
Artist as educator	This relates to an artist's role in relation to the boundary between institutional learning and less formal learning. An artist helps students to explore the world in new ways, bringing valuable skills in his or her area of practice to the young people and teacher. He or she brings new contexts and authenticity, and presents the challenge of the unfamiliar.
Artistry of teaching	Referring to the research-planning-action-reflection cycle in reflective practice: skilled dialogue opens up new contexts for learning. The learning practices of the artist may come to inform everyday classroom practice. The learners become practitioners through the modelling of the practice by others surrounding them.
Artistic work as model & educator	This concerns the value of artistic work - skilled facilitation of participation in the creative process and the work of making art - and how it can be a springboard for learning.

Figure 2.3: Summary of four-fold model of teacher/artist partnership (Jeffery, 2005, pp.79-85)

Jeffery states that a strong model of creative partnership, alongside all four perspectives in his model, includes investigating and using places and spaces beyond the everyday, thereby situating the work more broadly. He also argues for taking working into a shared public realm, allowing learners to share their achievements in a public context. The context itself contributes to the sense of the shifting nature

of self. Jeffery's model has proved highly influential in the upper secondary phase in particular as well as beyond. It does not consider the learner within the partnership, however, which is relevant to my second research question, 'Where did the practitioner approaches lead?' A key challenge for a child or young person, particularly a pupil within AP, is to navigate the shifting nature of the self. McGonigal (2004) describes a borderline or debatable land between you and me, now and then, here and there. An inspirational teacher, he claims, can deploy a dialogue that combines integrity of ideas (a tried epistemology) with empathy of interaction, making classroom experience a shared event, a language itself. An outer sense of how a learner is perceived by another allows that learner to forge himself or herself from the outside, 'being given the chance to author a higher self, one more worthy of respect and of greater potential than he or she suspected' (McGonigal, 2004, p.123). I find this possibility highly relevant to AP, and McGonigal's work has contributed to my choice of research questions that sought to explore practitioner approaches within my research site in a way that includes the learner in the partnership.

Bakhtin's (1981) 'surplus of seeing' – things which one person can see that the other cannot, seeing beyond each other and together creating a unified view – is relevant to the artist, learner, teacher and potentially researcher relationship. Through the practitioner holding in tension from whence the learner has come and the next stages ahead, the learner may feel understood. I see this as an embodiment of the notion that to understand an utterance is to look at what it is responding to and the future it is anticipating (McGonigal, 2004). This resonates with the notion that we do not take words from a dictionary, as Bakhtin (1981) points out, 'but from the words of other speakers and so they carry with them the voices of those who have used them before' (Bakhtin, 1981, p.294). Partnerships between artist, teacher, pupils and potentially researcher may help both pupils and practitioners to 'suspend their disbelief' in their inadequacy and enter an extremely positive stage of learning. When constructing out of the different perspectives, Bakhtin expressed that what was important was what one *can* see rather than what is denied by law of placement: a celebration of plenitude. This allows for practitioners and pupils to recognise value in the distinctive slice of the world that only they perceive; from their unique place there are things that only they can see. In my own research site, then, to relax into the opening of a dialogue rather than strive for self-identity could be beneficial to a teenager struggling to find their place in the world as they engage with what it means to be human. As already stated, today's teenagers need to be 'shape-shifters' and 'quick-change artists', which can be stressful to navigate and can lead to managing their feelings rather than to focus on tackling the demands themselves. Listening to other voices is therefore a key element to forging a strong creative partnership, just as being part of a creative partnership can call forth listening to other voices. To ask good questions and listen carefully to the responses can lead to watching new perspectives and insights emerge.

A dialogic approach can be a very inclusive process and a strong partnership can, by its shifting nature, enable assumptions and previous ways of doing things to fall aside. The example of Merleau-Ponty's (1968) account of perception seems relevant to the context of Eastbank. As a person stands within a landscape, a horizon forms around them, and yet as the person's gaze falls on the horizon, they

experience being located within it. It refers to a mutual envelopment, a reversibility between two perspectives. It may enhance a sense of belonging. Recognising huge shifts in perspective can also, notably, lead to much bigger questions: to what extent do learners possess an educated voice and use it as a tool? Or does this voice make use of learners? Such an idea of discourses acquiring subjects is a recognised postmodern theme (Walkerdine, 1988). Postmodernism does not subscribe to dialogic theory and its belief that meaning resides in our collective exchanges of dialogue. Holquist (2007) points out that it is criticized by postmodern thought, which believes that meaning resides with no-one, and by traditionalists who believe it resides with the individual. Others might suggest that the readers of Bakhtin have multi-defined him by the many other voices that have shaped their reading when approaching his work. These counter-opinions are worth considering when exploring dialogic theory.

Tensions within creative partnerships are highlighted by researchers such as Pringle (2008) and Galton (2008) who both have observed a dichotomising of the role of artist and teacher and a polarisation between their pedagogies. One reason for this may be a performance-orientated pedagogy or 'performativity' (Ball, 2001; 2003; Craft and Jeffrey, 2008) in schools. Chappell (2007; 2008) suggests that creativity is being stifled by increasing constraints from performativity fuelled by the testing and attainment agenda. Teachers therefore feel required to structure their activity in relation to externally devised targets (Chappell, 2008). Fielding (2007) argues that a 'high performance' model of schooling is one that values pupils largely in terms of how their attainments contribute to school performance, which he argues undermines a school's purpose, aspirations and justification. This raises a further dilemma: how do we judge quality within creative partnerships and beyond, when performativity and creativity have such different perspectives on what quality is? Finding an answer to this is difficult. The creativity and performativity dilemma relates to reaching key stage four pupils in AP through creative partnership: such pupils may suffer from being valued in terms of their attainment contribution and might benefit from an alternative route of producing outcomes that are original and of value.

Drawing on my time working in an arts education partnership managing how artists and schools come together, I observed several tensions and dilemmas that seemed to recur. Firstly, I observed a tendency for the artist to work directly with the pupils, encouraging co-participation with children, yet without developing an equivalent partnership with teachers. This might happen for various reasons, not least of all budgets. There is often not enough school funding to pay the artist and release the teacher to engage in dialogue in advance of, during or after the visit to the school or cultural venue. Therefore, a brief discussion to confirm details might be all that is possible. I also found that, without sustained dialogue, artists can remain uninformed about teachers' priorities, and fears on the part of the teacher who may be feeling intimidated by an artist being in the class cannot be soothed; all of which causes tension. Different interpretations of the intentions of a project can emerge, detracting from the outcome. One common problem that can arise is the frustration of the teacher that the artist is not behaving like a teacher in terms of classroom management and differentiation; teachers want the authenticity of a professional artist, but can struggle with unfamiliarity and lack of institutionalization. CapeUK (2009) have published a report on similar findings within their Teacher Artist Partnership Programme (TAPP)

materials. In particular, it found that certain partners were more active than others and constant nurturing and careful communication was a necessary and time consuming aspect of management (CapeUK, 2009, p.49).

Chappell et al (2011), through the research project Dance Partners for Creativity (DPC) sought to redress the balance between creativity and performativity and to challenge the dichotomisation of teacher and artist. One of its aims was to learn from and build on Jeffery's (2005) model, to develop a shared space between teacher, dance artist and research mentor, and work beyond role and identity boundaries. Through creative partnerships in Key Stage 3 dance education, university researchers and school-based partner researchers worked together to develop dance-artist and dance-teacher partnership practice through exploration and challenge. They also sought to invigorate young people's creativity in dance. In asking what kinds of creative partnerships are manifested between dance-artists and dance teachers, and how these facilitate the creativity of 11 to 14 year olds, the research investigated the partnership roles and relationships which push boundaries, how creativity is conceived and facilitated and the problems faced by partnerships.

There are three elements of the DPC research findings which may be of particular relevance to my study: the individual, collaborative and communal in creativity (developed from Chappell, 2008); humanising creativity (developed from Chappell 2006, 2008); and meddling in the middle (Craft, 2011). The diagram below (Greenwood et al, 2011) shows an inter-relationship between individual, communal and collaborative ways of creating: the individual is by or for one person; the communal represents public and collective ownership belonging to or shared by the community; and the collaborative means working together, with joint effort.

Figure 2.4: The individual, collaborative and communal in creativity (Greenwood et al, 2011)

Each of these elements has been designed to be part of the project led by Wolf and Water at Eastbank, which started the year before my research began. Wolf and Water is an Arts Company that uses arts techniques creatively as part of a therapeutic process with groups who experience difficulties, including

pupils in AP. The comedy show that they began at Eastbank in 2008 was collaborative and streamed to the public, and the stop animation work was individual, collaborative and, when streamed, communal.

Another strand of the DPC research findings emerged the conceptualisation of creativity as a humanising process: those that are creating are mindful of the consequences of their creative actions for others and are becoming more humane through engaging in the creative process. This process connects someone's self or identity development with their creative activity, offering potential for personal change and developing new ideas. As a process it is an individual, collaborative and communal endeavour: all three are part of humanising creativity and empathetically negotiating with the needs of others. Specific to the DPC research, young people that were creating dance in a humanising way were engaged in a conversation between the ideas that were within them and other people's ideas that were outside of themselves: they created from the inside-out and the outside-in. As young people developed new creative ideas through interacting with others, they developed new dimensions to their own identity. Within a communal environment, the ideas and their identities developed in a humanising way (Chappell et al, 2011). The diagram below (Greenwood et al, 2011) shows a representation of becoming the process:
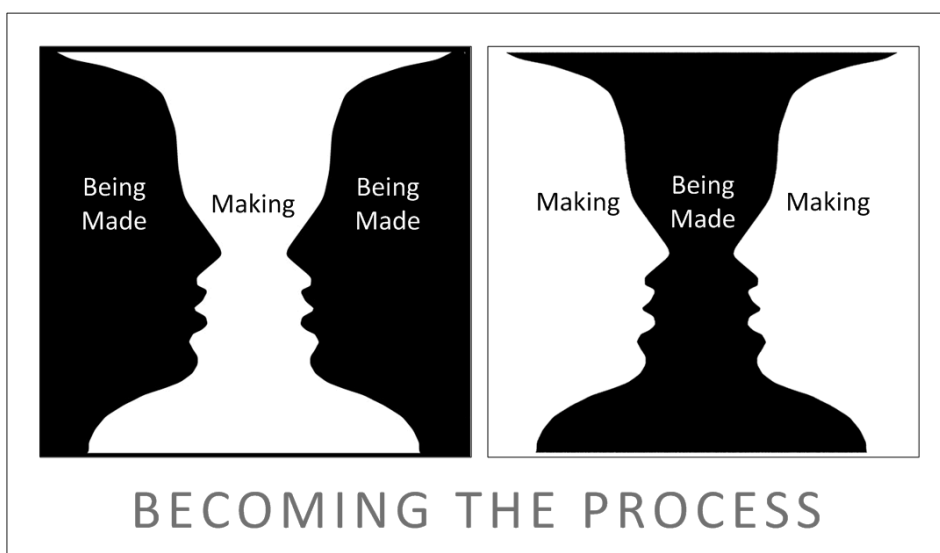
Figure 2.5: Becoming the process (Greenwood et al, 2011)

Young people worked from inside themselves to the outside and from outside themselves to the inside, both making and being made. Students' identities were changing; they were becoming themselves. This process of transformation could be very relevant to creative approaches in AP.

However, it is worth considering a postmodern perspective on identity and difference as a contrast to the perspective found in the DPC research and in approaching my own study. A postmodern view sees identity and difference as social constructions, the boundaries and meanings of which are a social achievement: they are 'constructed in and through the dynamics of our engagement with each other over time' (Ellsworth and Miller, 1996, p.181). The dialogic process expressed in the DPC research can also be seen as a language game of 'rational' debate between two opposing sides. Postmodern perspectives see this expectation as skirting 'the complex, shifting, nonlinear and multivalent workings

of power, fear, desire, identity, history, meaning and difference' (Ellsworth and Miller, 1996, p.189) that render incidents of, for example, racism or social status, in the first place. This postmodern mapping continues to help me to understand and articulate my relationship to the various features of my study.

The third set of findings that may well resonate with my own study is 'meddling in the middle' (Craft 2011). Building on McWilliam's (2008) 'meddler', practitioners who 'meddle in the middle' value uncertainty, encourage risk-taking, design, assemble and edit alongside pupils and actively co-evaluate. This is a creative step beyond actively standing back, offering time and space and valuing pupil agency, which is more of a guiding role. 'Meddling' practice within DPC was about partners co-designing, co-exploring, co-evaluating in a collective endeavour. The partnerships opened up 'possibility spaces', permeating into student creativity and opening up new ways of engaging with teaching. In an environment that is accustomed to uncertainty and risk due to out-of-school realities, 'meddling in the middle' may be a natural part of practitioner approaches at Eastbank.

2.6.3 Educational Futures

As indicated in section 1.3, my second research question seeks to understand where the practitioner approaches led. I am interested in the evolution of the approaches and their effect in all directions. For this reason I was led to Futures Studies: an area of research that seeks to help individuals and organisations better understand the processes of change so that wiser, preferred futures can be created (Inayatullah, 2008). In the context of education, Inayatullah proposes that three broad categories emerge, each with their own priorities, understandings and sense of agency: the future of education, alternative futures of education and education for the future. I will explore these categories unevenly according to perceived relevance to my study, with a main focus on alternative futures of education as it is focuses on opening up alternatives and agency.

The term, *The Future of Education,* according to Bussey and Inayatullah (2008), assumes that there is one future in the external world, which can, to some extent, be accurately predicted. Predictive methodologies are used to reduce risk, and futures information feeds into strategic purposes, focusing on how students and ministries must adapt this one future: including globalizing, virtualizing and learning new life sciences.

Alternative Futures of Education, they argue, by contrast, involves teaching and learning about alternative futures, with an understanding that the future cannot be predicted with any accuracy: the extent of uncertainty is too high. This is due to rapid economic and technological change, but also because humans participate in the future they are creating. Claxton (2008) among others underlines that the global balance of political and economic power, developments in technology, global warming, terrorism and war, are individually larger issues than one can imagine outcomes for, and combining them means that it is not possible to predict what the future holds for children. There is a plurality to alternative futures of education; Dator (2002), for example, has been arguing this point since the late 1960's.

Bussey and Inayatullah (2008) put forward that the future is epistemological: an open space being created by our inner and outer realities, leading to a range of alternative futures. Therefore, central to this approach is the notion that there is more than one possible future. The aim is not to fix the future or offer certainty, but to open up alternatives and agency. They describe this approach as:

Predictive – in anticipating dimensions of future
Interpretive – valuing the different meanings individuals give to the future
Critical – sensitivity to what is missing; how the future is colonised
Anticipatory action learning eg. where students use their own categories of the future to invent desired futures
(Bussey & Inayatullah, 2008, p.4).

To study the alternative futures of education is not only to identify possible, probable and preferable futures for learning (Bell, 1997, 2003), outlined below, but also to provide tools and concepts to engage with how education is shaped, therefore clarifying the underpinning values in order to offer more creative directions. Of particular interest to this study is the notion that the teaching in futures of education moves beyond rational teaching models in order to create an embodied experience of the future (Bussey, 2008). Non-linear teaching strategies can embody the experience of the future for pupils, especially through music, drama, the visual arts and media, creative writing and experiments in non-verbal communication.

Alternative futures of education can, as it involves movement between epistemologies, supply and develop skills for anticipatory engagement with the world, the development of critical literacies and appreciation of cultural forces. The approach involves challenging assumptions, especially challenging 'the coherence of the knowing self that is constructing the future' (Bussey & Inayatullah, 2008, p.4). As already indicated, there is evidence that interventions can alter perceptions of the future in relation to education (Oyserman et al., 2002) and that the outcomes of educational engagement are not fixed or immutable in relation to background values (Feinstein & Duckworth, 2006). Despite this evidence, Claxton (2008) argues that pupils are rarely coached, effectively and systematically, in the habits and qualities of mind that will enable them to meet future demands with confidence. These findings suggest that research exploring interventions that embody the experience of the future could benefit pupils, as they may be opened to alternative ways of knowing.

The third approach offered by Bussey and Inayatullah, *Education for the Future*, has a focus on sustainable development: saving the future for generations to come. It challenges the previous approach by pointing out that without pursuing a path to deep sustainability and instead allowing nature to be destroyed, no alternative futures will be needed. This is highlighted by Egan (2008) in his provocative ideas on how change might be implemented over the next fifty years: that school, for a time, will exist to respond to the ecological crisis. David Hicks' work on sustainable futures comes from this third approach (Hicks, 1994, 2002, 2004). The sense of agency is collective and includes those that have gone before through to those not yet in existence; the ethical commitment is to speak for past, present and future. It recognises that the future differs by culture (Inayatullah, 2003; Sardar, 1985) and

although its methodology is rooted in positivism, also questions existence and meaning. It is worth noting that, whilst the theoretical perspectives (such as positivism) are distinct, the people developing the ideas within these perspectives overlap. Social structures are explored within the context of pupils' lives and beyond.

Another formulation of educational futures can be seen in Bell's (2003) probable, possible and preferable categories. Possible futures are all those futures that could exist at some time, lying somewhere between the best and the worst that can be imagined. Probable futures are those that seem most likely to come about, for example, in our own lives or as a result of forecasting. There appears to be a more pessimistic view about the probable future at global level than at personal or local levels. Preferable futures are those futures that are most desired to come about stemming from deeply held values and beliefs. They are visions of a better world which need to be identified in order to clarify action for positive change in the present.

This formulation is relevant to the study of practitioner approaches at Eastbank, as Bell underlines that the determinants of present behaviour are only partly found in social and cultural backgrounds and present locations. They are also found in anticipation because,

> People address their behavior to the future. As they travel through time, people orient and guide themselves, more or less self-consciously, using their cognitive maps of the future, their hopes and fears. Thus, understanding those maps, even though they are sometimes wildly inaccurate, is essential to explaining people's behavior. Such maps, or images of the future, include not only people's intentions, but also their beliefs about what will happen, what might happen, and what ought to happen. Thus, no theory of society and social change is complete if it does not incorporate the idea of the 'image of the future' (Bell, 2002, p.33).

These 'maps' are therefore key information when aiming to explore transformative approaches with young people attending AP.

Bell also states that 'people cannot become competent, effective, and responsible actors unless they know what the consequences of their acts will be. But such consequences, obviously, will occur in the future; and the future, until it becomes the present, is non-evidential and unobservable' (Bell, 2002, p.34). This links to the Quaglia Institute of Student Aspirations third guiding principle, a sense of purpose, outlined in 6.2.4, where pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for whom and what they want to become. As Bell is pointing out, with a future that does not yet exist there are obvious obstacles to face in making valid and reliable assertions about probable futures. Nonetheless, the ideas that individuals and groups hold about the future are instrumental in shaping what it is that they believe to be possible to achieve, both personally and socially (Hicks, 2008). These ideas about the future are critical in shaping the aspirations of individuals and groups, including their sense of empowerment, agency and control over their present and future lives (Wigfield, 1994, Markus and Nurius, 1986). Evidence suggests that the factors shaping how people see their own and society's possible futures are

social, economic and cultural, characterised in attitudes toward aspiration, persistence, mastery and deferred gratification. The literature investigating these phenomena has a long history (eg. Dweck, 2000; Weiner, 1974; 1996).

The study of educational futures literature serves to highlight the complexity of learning, children's diverse strategies and multiple theories of knowledge. However, Taguchi points out (within Fielding & Moss, 2011):

> The more we seem to know about the complexity of learning, children's diverse strategies and multiple theories of knowledge, the more we seek to impose learning strategies and curriculum goals that reduce the complexities and diversities of learning and knowing. The more complex things become the more we seem to desire processes of reduction and thus control, but such reduction strategies might simultaneously shut out the inclusion and justice we want to achieve. (Lens Taguchi, 2009, p.8, quoted in Fielding and Moss, 2011, p.24).

Within an AP site such as Eastbank, there is likely to be a particular focus on inclusion and standing against injustice. Therefore, it is less likely that there will be curriculum goals that reduce complexity and diversity, which I will consider when analysing my findings. Certainly, pupils who are no longer buying into the mainstream school system would kick against what Fielding and Moss see happening in schools:

> Thought and knowledge are stifled by separating things out and from their contexts, ignoring many of the hundred languages of childhood, and insisting on their being one right answer, one acceptable outcome, in the belief in a certain, stable and objectively knowable world (Fielding & Moss, 2011, p.27).

AP practitioners would need to be particularly sensitive to this point and counteract it in order to see changes of pupil perception.

When considering practitioner approaches and where they led at Eastbank, it is helpful to be able to place how the AP site (and others affiliated with it) perceived its overarching role. Egan (1997) claims that the way we conceive what school is supposed to do is based upon a combination of the ideas of socialization, Plato and Rousseau. These ideas, along with Egan's work, were put forward over very different periods of time. Seeing the process of socialization as central to the mandate of schools today, Egan (1997, p.11) states that, 'the central task of socialization is to inculcate a restricted set of norms and beliefs – the set that constitutes the adult society the child will grow into'. Those that prioritise this side of education, 'see the school as primarily a social agency that should accommodate society's changing needs' (Egan, 1997, p.12).

Plato, however, felt that education's primary concern should not be with equipping pupils to develop the knowledge and skills 'best suited to ensuring their success as citizens and sharing the norms and values of their peers. Rather, education was to be a process of learning those forms of knowledge that

would give students a privileged, rational view of reality' (Egan, 1997, p.13). In order to see such reality clearly, the mind needed to transcend conventional beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes through disciplined study of increasingly abstract forms of knowledge. In education today, we include in the curriculum 'a range of subject matter that we assume will do something valuable for students' minds and give them a more realistic grasp of the world'(Egan, 1997, p.14). Those wishing to prioritize this view, tend to see the task of education as connecting young people with 'the great cultural conversation that very definitely is there and that transcends politics, special milieus, local experiences, and conventional sets of norms and values' (Egan, 1997, p.14). They see school as a place apart from society that is dedicated to knowledge and skills that are of 'persisting value' and transcend social life needs (Egan, 1997).

Rousseau (1911, p.1), on the other hand, observed that pedagogues 'are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man'. His idea involved understanding the internal development process, focusing on the nature of pupils' development, learning, and motivation. Knowledge of these could then lead to an efficient and humane educational process. Features of Rousseau's educational scheme included careful observation and study of pupils, recognition of the distinctive forms of learning that characterise different ages, an emphasis on individual differences among learners and the encouragement of active rather than passive learning. 'Here the focus of education is the experience of the child...Teachers are not authorities so much as facilitators, providers of the best resources, shapers of the environment in which students will learn' (Egan, 1997, p.17).

As Egan points out, school is somehow expected to facilitate socializing the young, teach particular forms of knowledge that will bring about a realistic and rational view of the world, and to help realise the unique potential of each child. However, 'the more we work to achieve one of the schools' aims, the more difficult it becomes to achieve the others' (Egan, 1997, p.10). The three ideas are, to an extent, working against each other. For example, when comparing socialization to Plato's ideas: 'The homogenizing aim of socialization, which is to reproduce in each student a particular set of beliefs, conventions, commitments, norms of behaviour, and values, is necessarily at odds with a process that aims to show their hollowness and inadequacy' (Egan, 1997, p.18).

In the modern proponents of Plato's academic idea, education is characterized by pupils' ability to master knowledge, regardless of their psychological development. Rousseau and Piaget's ideas claim that it is the stages of psychological development that characterise education and determine which sort of knowledge the student needs. Egan highlights that by implementing one, we undermine the other:

These ideas conflict – most profoundly in identifying the cause and dynamic of the educational process. In the Platonic idea, learning particular forms of knowledge carries the educational process forward; knowledge drives development. In the Rousseauian idea, education results from an internal, developmental process unfolding within a supportive environment; development drives knowledge, determining what knowledge is learnable, meaningful, and relevant. For Plato education is a time-

related epistemological process; for Rousseau it is an age-related, psychological process (Egan, 1997, p.20).

Socialization, with its distinct end in view, is also at odds with the ideas of Rousseau, which, in supporting the fullest development of student potential involves 'releasing students to explore and discover their uniqueness...an individualizing process that encourages distinctiveness even to the point of eccentricity, if necessary, and is expansive without predetermined ends' (Egan, 1997, p.21). This incompatibility is of particular interest to me when considering Eastbank's 'identity' from which the practitioner approaches emerged. In order to consider where the approaches led, it is important to consider from whence they came. The sudden closure of the unit may be linked to differing perceptions of overarching role, between the practitioners, the main school and government policy. Though each of the three ideas is powerful and important, they create challenges for education even before they are placed together. Egan summarizes that 'socialization to generally agreed norms and values that we have inherited is no longer straightforwardly viable...The Platonic program comes with ideas about reaching a transcendent truth or privileged knowledge that is no longer credible. The conception of individual development we have inherited is built on a belief in some culture-neutral process that is no longer sustainable (Egan, 1997, p.24). From this place of seeking clarity, Egan then proceeds to reconceive education, focusing on the way particular 'intellectual tools' shape how we make sense of the world. With 2012 policy changes meaning that the most successful AP sites are able to forge their own identity, it will be important that they more forward into new territory as they prepare pupils for the twenty-first century, rather than using historical templates.

Biesta (2006) suggests a theory of education that responds to the question as to how to live with others in a world of plurality and difference. He challenges the idea that we can only live together in such a world if we provide a common definition of humanity, instead exploring the implications for education when asking what it means to be human as an open question. This would be answered through engagement rather than pre-empting before educating. What it means to be human, Biesta claims, is first of all an educational question. I agree, and find Biesta's way to understand and approach education pertinent to AP, particularly as pupils have had difficulty in feeling part of a norm of what it means to be human. The problem with humanism, Biesta (2006, p.9) explains, is that 'it posits a *norm of humaneness*...and in doing so excludes those who do not live up to or are unable to live up to this norm (see Honig 1993)'. This demonstrates unequal power relations, leading to either forms of assimilation or exclusion.

Beare and Slaughter's (1993, as quoted in Bussey, Inayatullah and Milojevic, 2008, p.288) guidelines for teaching and preparing young people for the twenty-first century are also particularly relevant to AP. This educational futures literature resonates with research on aspiration, some of which is outlined in 2.6.4. The ten guidelines are:

1. Appropriate Imagery – choosing metaphors with care and imagination
2. Teach for Wholeness and Balance – holistic paradigm
3. Teach Identification, Connectedness, Integration – epistemological interconnectedness

4. Develop Individual Values – value the individual
5. Teach Visualisation – development of the picturing imagination
6. Cultivate Visions of the Future – cultivate images and visions of the future
7. Empowering through active hope – distinguish between faith and hope
8. Tell stories – use storytelling and mythology as powerful teaching tool
9. Teach and learn how to celebrate – celebrate festivals
10. Teach Futures Tool – encourage and use futures tools and methods

The purpose of school needs to make sense for pupils in AP for them to trust the process. I will consider my findings in relation to these integral approaches to education, which adopt 'multiple ways of knowing, being and playing...that go beyond the narrow specialisations of instrumental rationality' (Gidley & Hampson as quoted in Bussey, Inayatullah and Milojevic, 2008, p.286), Beare and Slaughter's guidelines could be relevant for pupils whose out of school realities are such that they react against a system that does not make sense in the light of these realities. Rogers (1998(1998, as quoted in Bussey, Inayatullah and Milojevic, 2008, p.287) states, 'Perhaps we ought to consider the notion that the purpose of education be reconceptualised as the facilitation of people's search for meaning, wholeness, transcendence and an understanding of our individual roles in the human evolutionary journey'. To what extend Eastbank's practitioners subscribe to this purpose will be considered in my discussion chapter. Gidley and Hampson (2008, as quoted in Bussey, Inayatullah and Milojevic, 2008, p.287) comment that as yet, the suggestions and guidelines outlined above 'have not been applied by educational futures researchers in an integrated fashion in an educational setting that could then be studied'. Although not the aim of this study, it is a direction in which my research could take in the future. At a time of re-design of AP, the integral movement may be a key asset, especially in the area of personal empowerment towards creating one's own preferred future. If the role of education were to be the facilitation of people's search for meaning, wholeness, transcendence and an understanding of one's individual role, the gradual discovery might inspire an ambition from within, a will to succeed in that role. Aspiration would be at work from the inside out.

2.6.4 Aspiration

In creating one's preferred future, aspiration is a key ingredient and relevant to the second research question, 'Where did the practitioner approaches lead?' In her research into educational aspirations, Fuller (2009) characterizes low aspirers as 'students who intend to leave schooling at the end of compulsory education and who largely consider school as 'useless' and 'pointless' to their futures' (Fuller, 2009, p.40). Middle aspirers are those who intend to continue with further education and are distinct from low-aspiring students in that they 'have clear career goals and essentially see education as valuable, worthwhile and believe continuing with it is crucial for their future' (p.68). High aspirers intend to pursue a higher education and 'have no clear intended future career path to drive their ambitions... valuing education highly because of an explicit belief that a clear correlation exists between future security, choice and the potential for future independence' (p.102). When considering disaffected pupils, Fuller's scale does not necessarily stretch wide enough. There may also be an aim to embrace vocational aspirations leading up to the age of sixteen, inspired by an apprenticeship experience, rather than simply encouraging pupils to move from low to high aspirers on Fuller's scale. Aspiration,

44

understood to be a will to succeed, ambition, an ardent wish or cherished desire (Oxford English, 2012), may be manifested vocationally through apprenticeship.

Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) graph depicting the relationship between the perceived challenges of a task and one's perceived skills is interesting when considering where Eastbank's practitioner approaches led. Csikszentmihalyi states that 'flow' is the optimum state of intrinsic motivation. When describing aspiration, The Quaglia Institute for Student aspirations (QISA) sees it as 'an ability to set goals and think about the future while being inspired in the present to reach those goals' (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.1). Therefore, such a state of flow, by feeding motivation, can fuel aspiration. In terms of conditions for flow, the graph (figure 2.6) illustrates that flow can only occur when the activity is a higher-than-average challenge (above the centre point) and requires above-average skills (to the right of the centre point).The centre represents average levels of challenge and skill. The further from the centre an experience is, the greater the intensity of that state of being.
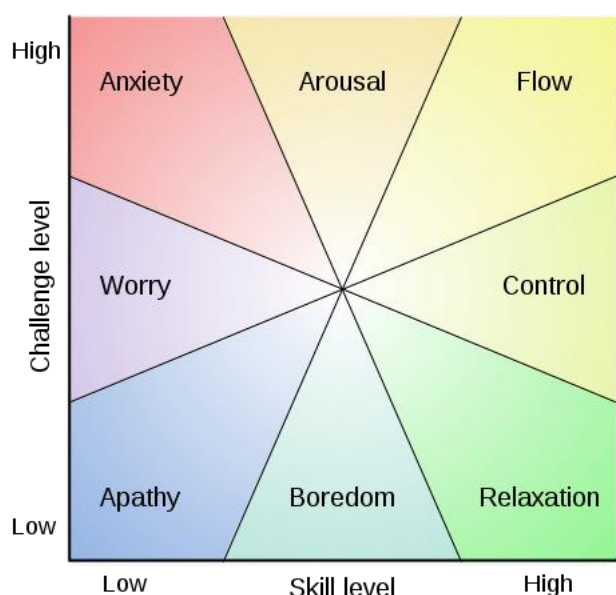
Figure 2.6: Mental state in terms of challenge level and skill level

Csikszentmihalyi states that 'flow' is the result of a challenging task and that the person experiencing 'flow' becomes part of the task rather than standing outside it. 'Flow' is involved with pursuing definite goals and depends on immediate feedback. It requires a high level of concentration and gives the person a sense of control without a striving, which Csikszentmihalyi calls the 'paradox of control'. Finally, a sense of self disappears and sense of time is altered. To become part of the task whilst in 'flow' is similar to QISA's foundational condition of aspiration: belonging, which is outlined below. 'Flow' is, in part, about belonging to the moment, which resonates with Facer's (2012) call to embrace the present rather than the future as the source of possibility and agency. I will consider my findings through the lens of this measure of intrinsic motivation in order to gauge a sense of how the practitioner approaches might be affecting pupil motivation.

QISA has created 'The Guiding Principles' to provide educators with a practical model that can be used to guide the fostering of aspiration. This may be a useful lens through which to consider my findings from the second research question: Where did these approaches lead? QISA believes that for pupils to have high aspirations, three Guiding Principles must be present: self-worth, active engagement, and purpose:

> 1. Self-Worth: Self-Worth occurs when students know they are valued members of the school community, have a person in their lives they can trust and learn from, and believe they have the ability to achieve – academically, personally and socially.

> 2. Active Engagement: Active Engagement happens when students are deeply involved in the learning process as characterized by enthusiasm and desire to learn new things and a willingness to take positive, healthy steps toward the future.

> 3. Purpose: Purpose exists when students take responsibility for who and what they want to become, in terms not only of professional careers, but by being confident, responsible members of their community.' (QISA, 2012).

When looking at how educators support pupils' development of self-worth, QISA state that three conditions need to be in place in order to make a difference: a sense of belonging, heroes and a sense of accomplishment. Research has shown that 'A sense of Belonging is an important condition for a student's feeling of well-being, social engagement, and competence' and that 'The Condition of Belonging is likely to enhance intrinsic motivation, for it fosters self-confidence and investment in the community' (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.7). In practice, it means that a pupil feels that they are part of a community whilst 'being recognized, appreciated and celebrated for their uniqueness' (QISA, 2012). Such a relationship would be characterised by connection and support. In defining heroes, QISA similarly characterizes them as people with whom pupils can connect and build relationship through support, guidance and encouragement, thus enabling pupils to 'become more confident in their academic, personal and social growth' (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.9). Again, in practice, these heroes would be teachers, family and friends who inspire them in some way to aim for positive change and to excel, able to have a positive influence whilst listening and valuing ideas. Finally, beyond the narrow view of accomplishment that refers to innate ability and grades, a sense of accomplishment that QISA refers to involves taking time to recognise and support pupils' 'effort, perseverance and citizenship – along with academic achievement – as a sign of student success' (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.10) in order to encourage motivation to create a healthy learning environment. With a sense of self-worth, QISA has found that pupils are 'more likely to persevere through difficult tasks and take the steps needed to reach their goals' (QISA, 2012).

Active Engagement, QISA's second guiding principle, happens when fun and excitement, curiosity and creativity and a spirit of adventure are fostered. Through being inspired to learn, pupils can become 'actively engaged and emotionally involved in their school work' (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.12). Practically, this involves offering pupils new opportunities and challenges that connect with their interests, thus fostering a willingness to engage in the day's challenges. QISA characterises 'curiosity and creativity' as 'inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a longing to satisfy the mind with new discoveries' (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.13). In practice, motivation could be sustained through promoting questioning and exploration alongside creative freedom. A spirit of adventure is characterised by taking on 'positive, healthy challenges at school and home, with family and friends', unhampered by the fear of failure or success when approaching something new (My Voice National Student Report, QISA, 2011, p.15). To promote this means investing in confidence and resilience through exploring making good decisions and how to take healthy risks. QISA's fundamental point seems to be that through active engagement, participation in learning 'becomes important in and of itself' (QISA, 2012).

QISA's third principle, 'Encouraging a sense of purpose' is focused upon accountability and confidence, endorsing the enabling of pupils to 'think about who they want to become as well as what they want to be' (QISA, 2012). QISA equates finding purpose in life to having confidence to act to secure the best possible future. Specifically, 'leadership and responsibility' and 'Confidence to take action' are presented as key conditions in fostering this principle. The first is represented as expressing ideas and accepting consequences for their actions. In practice, a learning environment would provide authentic decision making opportunities, encourage student voice and expect accountability for actions of all parties. The latter, confidence to take action, is about self-belief, embodied by a positive outlook on life and not needing external approval. QISA suggests that educators provide support, celebrate diversity and encourage independent thinking.

2.6.5 Pupil voice

Pupil voice is an obvious area to consider in relation to Eastbank, as it 'rang true' in the brief encounter I had there at the end of graffiti artist project through my paid work prior to the doctoral study. However, that does not mean that it runs consistently through the AP site as an approach taken. I have considered pupil voice mainly in the context of disaffection and engagement, as well as giving a brief overview of the notion of voice.

Thomson's (2008, pp.4-6) discussion of the complexity of researching voices highlights that voice can mean not only having a say, but also refers to the 'language, emotional components and non-verbal means used to express opinions'. These elements also form a particular rather than universal point of view: young people do not speak as one. Drawing on various understandings of types of voice, Thomson discusses the authoritative, critical and therapeutic voice (Hadfield and Haw, 2001), consumer (Bragg, 2007) and pedagogic voice (Arnot and Reay, 2007), underlining that each individual

uses more than one voice. The authoritative voice is representative and intended to speak on behalf of a group. The critical voice is intended to challenge the status quo. The therapeutic voice emerges in spaces perceived as safe to discuss painful or difficult experiences, with support to find ways of dealing with them. The person who speaks with each of these voices has exercised some agency and control of circumstances which previously was perceived to be beyond them. To express preferences about lifestyle, culture or leisure-related activities and experiences is to use a consumer voice, which is sought after by commercial interests without the kinds of ethical safeguards hopefully employed by social science researchers seeking to understand it. The pedagogic voice is put forward by Arnot and Reay as being created by the experiences of being educated within pedagogic, curriculum and assessment regimes. Classrooms, subjects, identities or tacit and explicit codes/rules are the focus of this talk, which can be complicit, resistant or mediating. Within my study, I will need to listen to things unsaid and unexpected, as well as differentiate between the kind of talk on which I focus whilst avoiding seeing voice as pure. This is discussed further in my methodology in 3.9. Adding to the complexity of the notion of pupil voice is its dependency on the social context in which it is located (Thomson, 2008). What is said and how it is heard are reflections of these contexts and outcomes depend on who is listening, what they choose to do in response and in whose interests they act (Fielding, 2001). I will need to work in the knowledge that what I hear does not come from a fixed and stable voice.

Making space for pupils' voice has been found to foster a sense of belonging (Mitra, 2004), and research has previously suggests that when pupils feel that they belong they are more likely to be engaged in school (Osterman, 2000). Bundick's current research (2012) offers a mediational model in which the embodied benefits of pupil voice lead to an increased sense of belonging and on towards increased engagement. He draws links between schools that promote pupil voice and those that offer emotional engagement. 'When pupils feel their opinions are valued and they can have a role in making their school a better place, a sense of broader school belonging is cultivated. This sense of belonging, in turn, is likely to lead them to feel more engaged, especially emotionally' (Bundick, 2012, p.9). Bundick highlights the well-established links between engagement and desirable academic outcomes, and the psychological benefits of belonging and engagement, to spur schools to start providing pupils opportunities to contribute their perspectives and play meaningful parts in their school improvement efforts.

It is suggested that pupils may have much to say about 'the conditions of learning in schools; how regimes and relationships shape their sense of status as individual learners as members of the community and, consequently, affect their commitment to learning in school' (Ruddock and Flutter, 2000 p.76). Levin (1999) has pointed out that the fear of pupils as 'revolutionaries', bent on undermining the system, is unfounded: most pupils' wishes he says, are 'modest, even timid. They do not seek to overthrow the system, or even to control it. They do, however, want to understand why things are done as they are. They would like to be able to voice their views about change and have them heard. They wish to have some more choice about how and what they learn' (Levin, 1999, p.2). Although I agree

that pupils are not on the whole bent on undermining the system, young people are not timidly accepting the future being offered to them, as the 2011 disorder in the UK highlights. As previously stated, over half of the young people appearing in court charged with related offences were twenty or under, over a third of them recently excluded from school. Interviews with young looters indicate that this sample being interviewed did not feel cared for, saw no future for young people, and felt that they were deliberately not being given the right opportunities to thrive (see 6.2.1 for examples of interviews). Effectively, they felt they had no valued voice and no reason not to be part of the riots and looting. When feeling cornered and with nothing to lose, young people as 'revolutionaries' is no longer so unlikely.

Fielding and Ruddock (2002) claim that difficulties arise from the context of performativity and surveillance within which many teachers are working and which make it especially hard to develop a dialogic approach: there is little time for genuinely open conversations through which pupils may have opportunities to develop their understanding and learning. In AP, however, there is often more time factored in for conversation, so pupil voice has the potential to be prevalent. Fielding and Ruddock's point highlights two discourses in education: examination and the micro-physics of power. Foucault (1977) discusses surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, classify and punish, and Gardner (1991) highlights the dangers of a 'decontextualised measure' in a decontextualised setting. Foucault also shines a light on unquestioned adhesion to minor details of movement, infinitesimal discipline and docile bodies.

Highly relevant to pupil voice, discourses involve what can be said and thought, who can speak and when and with what authority; they are constituted by both inclusions and exclusions. Discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak… Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention' (Foucault, 1974, p.49). Ball (1990), quoting Foucault, describes discourse as,

> lying between the level of pure atemporal linguistic 'structure' (langue) and the level of surface speaking (parole): it expresses the historical specificity of what is said and what remains unsaid. Discourses are composed of signs, but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this move that renders them irreducible to the language and to speech. It is this 'move' that we must reveal and describe (Foucault 1974, p.49)
> (Ball, 1990, p.2).

Whilst asking what characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank and where those approaches led, it is important to have awareness of the discourses surrounding education.

When seeking voices that escape easy classification and do not make easy sense (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009), listening to unconventional, subtle and sometimes inarticulate voices can be

challenging, and hearing silent voices demands what Mazzei and Jackson (2009) refer to as an attentive, open and reflexive approach. They also state that, when seeking such voices, by simply,

> presenting their "exact words" as if they are transparent is a move that fails to consider how as researchers we are always already shaping those "exact words" through the unequal power relationships present and by our own exploitative research agendas and timelines (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009, p. 2).

Instead, they urge researchers to 'tangle ourselves in the layers of voices present and the epistemological assumptions that continue to haunt our methodological practices' (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009, p. 3). This is advice that I have heeded, and which will be reflected in my methodology chapter.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has given a background to the field of AP and explored literature perceived to resonate with the context of my study; new literature discovered in the light of my findings is woven into my discussion chapter. I have explored the complex issues surrounding AP as shown in the literature and considered current and historic policy in relation to this. Creativity, futures, aspiration and pupil voice literature has been discussed in acknowledgement but not limitation of understanding the data gathered from my research questions:

- What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?
- Where did these approaches lead?

These questions will be answered within the context of current and previous literature, thus offering a pathway towards research-informed practice and policy in a field that is needing wise trusteeship.

The next chapter discusses my methodology underpinning my study, through expressing my 'underlying conceptions of the world and its possibilities' (Popkewitz, 1984, quoted in Thomson and Walker, 2010).

3 Methodology

3.1 Introducing Eastbank

Background knowledge of the AP research site helps to situate the methodology; hence I will introduce some of the story of Eastbank as a backdrop to the methodological choices I outline in the chapter.

My study is based in an AP site that was operated by a South West of England secondary school. The school itself is larger than average, serving a large and socially diverse area. There is evidence of disadvantage and low aspirations in the community, also outlined in the school's Ofsted report. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. Very few of the students come from minority ethnic groups and only a very small number speak English as an additional language. Since 2003, the school has held specialist status for the visual arts and has gained Investor in People, Investor in Careers and Investor in Education Business Partnership status, together with the Artsmark silver and Sportsmark awards.

The secondary school was also the focus for a project providing multi-agency support for vulnerable young people and their families, which was phased out with a change of government during the course of this study. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme aimed to transform children's services to improve the well-being of all children and young people. The Children's Act placed a legal duty on local authorities and other key partners to cooperate through Children's Trust arrangements to achieve this. The local Children's Trust developed a programme to bring together the whole spectrum of children's services into a single system, which was in place at the school when I began my study at its AP site. This programme aimed to support the early identification of additional needs and prevent needs escalating through providing a timely and preventative response, either through coordinating multi-agency services or identifying the need for specialist services.

Rather than exclude pupils, in September 2007 the school created an AP site for its most 'disaffected' pupils and partly funded it by accepting extra pupils from elsewhere locally that had been excluded from school. It was located half a mile away in a community hall, and received key stage four pupils aged 14 to 16 who were not succeeding in mainstream schooling. They may have been in danger of exclusion, or in the case of the Local Authority (LA) pupils (pupils coming from schools other than the one affiliated to Eastbank and now in the care of the LA), have already been excluded from school. There were sixteen places offered: initially ten for the school and six for the LA, with a later ratio of 12:4 in the last year before the site closure. When I arrived, twelve places were filled, with two pupils having been recently permanently removed from Eastbank: one for knife possession and the other for slapping the forehead of a temporary support staff member. In both cases, the staff at Eastbank opposed the exclusions. Such a decision ultimately rested either with the secondary school or the LA, depending on

the exclusion status of the pupil. The site was run by one lead teacher and three specialist teaching assistants, one with training in social care, all with training in behaviour management. Due to the visual arts status at the secondary school, some funding had been given to the AP site for visual artists to work as artists in residence with the pupils. This led to other music and theatre artists also building relationships within the site to work on projects.

The articulated aim of Eastbank was to help every child to reach their potential, so that they may be able to make a positive contribution to society. It worked to achieve its aim through the following objectives, which were written by the lead teacher in an unofficial document. This is not included in the appendix for reasons of anonymity.

- promotion of the school ethos through consideration of rights and responsibilities (not stated whose);
- improved attendance;
- accreditation (AQA awards/GCSEs/ASDAN);
- pupils being encouraged to live healthily and behave safely; and
- pupils being prepared for life after school, either at college or work.

In terms of practices and procedures, the approach was informal, with no uniform and adults addressed by their first name. Pupils and staff ate breakfast together, read daily newspapers and discussed the stories and personal news before lessons began. Small group work was encouraged, and pupils worked at their own pace, sometimes on individual programmes of learning. Alongside English, Maths, PSHE (personal, social and health education) and IT (information technology), activities were aimed at promoting confidence and social skills. All pupils were enrolled in a 'Learn 2 Work' programme, an LA initiative to engage low aspiring pupils in local schools, which was organised by the secondary school. Two days a week, pupils attended practical courses at colleges, designed for key stage four pupils (pupils who are aged 14-16, in their last two years of compulsory education). Work experience was also arranged by Eastbank where possible. Each day ended with a meeting with pupils who were at the unit that day to discuss how it had gone.

The AP site was shut down in July 2010 with very short notice for a combination of reasons. The secondary school had suffered from budget cuts and was forced to cut back on provision somewhere. At this time, the trustees of the community hall in which Eastbank had been housed, and which the secondary school was renting, had just given Eastbank notice as they wished to use the space for another purpose and had found the AP to be challenging tenants. Some pupils at Eastbank exhibited unruly behaviour, which upset immediate neighbours and the trustees. Despite this particular situation being resolved through a community restorative justice meeting, the trustees felt it was time to make changes to help their own set of challenges. Now the secondary school was constrained financially and could find nowhere to house the AP at such short notice unless it was back on their premises, which

52

was deemed potentially detrimental for various reasons. Another contributing factor to the closure was that Eastbank, like all AP, was difficult to understand, track and monitor. This made it harder for the secondary school to fight to keep the AP site and to promote it to new venues. Eastbank had focused on accreditation as one its five objectives; most pupils had worked towards English and Maths GCSEs but this was not pursued to successful outcomes by staff at the cost of a focus on, for example, living healthily and behaving safely. Due to these combining factors, within four weeks of being given notice to move, the AP site had closed. This was half way through my planned two year ethnographic case study.

The practitioners in my study are:
- Dave (real name, as requested) – the lead teacher of the AP site;
- Beth, Helen and Rosa (pseudonyms) – behaviour specialist teaching assistants (referred to as STAs), with specialist training qualifications in behaviour management;
- Geoff (real name, as requested) – musician artist in residence;
- Wolf and Water team of five artists (real name, as requested) – arts company artists in residence.

Dave, Helen, Beth and Rosa had been employed at the AP site since its inception in 2007. Dave and Beth had previously worked in mainstream education, whereas Helen and Rosa had trained specifically to work at Eastbank.

The pupils in my study are:
- Thirteen pupils: four girls and nine boys (I had planned to work with 14 pupils, but one pupil had been moved to another site when I arrived, which became permanent later in the year).

I have focused on the twelve pupils registered at the AP site, plus one girl who had just been excluded from the site by the secondary school in her final year (the forehead slapping incident), but still attended the Learn 2 Work course with the other pupils. She had spent three years at Eastbank and wanted to be included in the interviews and online community. Including her, there are four girls and nine boys in my study. They have all been given pseudonyms.

Pupils and their details are not specifically listed, despite pseudonyms, to maximise anonymity in relation to the specific incidents described. There are photographs of faces (with permission); however, no pupil names are attributed to those faces, to avoid linking the faces to the stories in my study.

3.2 Development of the research questions

My research questions evolved over the duration of the study. After reviewing literature and in the first days of data collection, I began with the questions:

- How did pupils at Eastbank feel about their educational futures?
- How did these perceptions change over time whilst at Eastbank?

The focus was on the pupils' perceptions and voices, viewing the approaches at Eastbank through the lens of these perceptions, over two academic years. However, upon entering the research site, it became clear that it would take me considerable time to gain the pupils' trust in order to interview them. For the first four months, I set up no one-to-one recorded interviews with pupils, except for a few initial attempts. In that time, I gathered a large amount of data on the practitioners' values, approaches and reflections, through practitioner interviews and field notes. I made field notes on how the pupils seemed to be responding to these values and approaches, alongside noting how it appeared that pupils felt about their educational futures. Slowly, it began to occur to me that I could still offer fragments of the pupils' lived experiences by approaching the data through the focus on practitioners. I began to wonder if this fragmented or discontinuous narrative was more preferable than me trying to promote a coherent narrative of the pupils' experiences, as to achieve a sense of completeness involves suppressing or making a detour around certain data (Stronach and MacLure, 1997).

As I was accepted into the group and started to interview the pupils, I discovered that they found it extremely difficult to think about and articulate how they felt about their future, despite creative framing on my part. Some were only just beginning to be engaged in the present, or present in the moment, so I was asking them to do something that did not come naturally to them and to which they could not become present. When this happened, I stopped the interview process and spent the time connecting over whatever or whoever was catching their attention at the time. Throughout these months of early interviewing, I continued to gather data that mapped the practitioner approaches at Eastbank and my perception of pupil response to this.

The sudden announcement of closure of the AP site in May 2010 helped to make the decision. I had four weeks left on site when I had planned another year in which to map any changes in pupil perception. I shifted from a main focus on the pupils' perceptions to one on practitioners' approaches, which reflected the majority of my data collection. I briefly worked with a research question that asked, 'How did Eastbank foster aspiration?' but soon realised that I was assuming an outcome of aspiration and drawing on existing vocabulary and concepts, without waiting to see what would come out of my analysis. I was in danger of creating a narrative that promoted coherence, singularity and closure, which might have been conservative and uncritical. My new research questions presented themselves out of a rigorous questioning of what, other than the initial research questions, I had really been asking in the time I was at the research site, which coalesced into:

- What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?
- Where did these approaches lead?

Working in the field of AP, I was aware that I might be faced with situations changing suddenly, which could affect my research design. Changing my research questions once most of my data was collected is not ideal. However, I am pleased with the way that I was able to work with the situation in hand and

find a way through that worked for the study. I have been able to retain a fragmented narrative of pupils' lived experiences whilst examining practitioner approaches.

3.3 Underpinning perspectives influencing research design:

My theoretical perspective embodies a certain way of understanding what is and what it means to know. To ensure coherence throughout, it is important to expose and discuss the foundations on which my study rests. These foundations in turn drive the wider theoretical frame, which informs the choice of methodology and methods. My perspective on ontology – what it means to say that something exists – is a relativist one: I argue that the way things are, is the sense we make of them, and thus that there are multiple 'realities' reflecting multiple sense-makers. The epistemology – what it means to understand the world and to make valid explanations – falls under 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, p.42). My ontological and epistemological viewpoints inform my theoretical perspective, which reflects a relativist and constructionist way of understanding *what is* and *what it means to know* as I ask my research questions. I am not looking to 'discover' one unitary set of meanings or objective truth, as different participants may construct meaning in different ways. Despite constructionism and constructivism often both being expressed as being about the socially situated construction of meaning, Crotty (1998, p.58) makes a distinction: between constructivism – the meaning-making of the individual mind – and constructionism, with its focus on the collective generation of meaning: 'constructivism tends to resist the critical spirit, while constructionism tends to foster it'. The latter reflects the spirit of the following theoretical perspective.

My theoretical perspective began by being driven by a critical theory approach (Horkheimer, 1937; Habermas, 1963). Critical forms of research 'call current ideology into question, and initiate action, in the cause of social justice' (Crotty, 1998, p.157); commonly held values and assumptions are interrogated and conventional social structures challenged. A critical theory approach is fuelled by concern with issues of power and oppression with a particular focus on power relationships within society. As Crotty (1998) states: 'It is at all times alive to the contribution that false consciousness makes to oppression and manipulation' (p.157).

By aligning with a critical theory approach, I accepted these basic assumptions (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994, p.139-40, as cited in Crotty, 1998, p.158):

- that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social in nature and historically constituted;
- that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from ideological inscription;

- that the relationship between concept and object, and between signifier and signified, is never stable and often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption;
- that language is central to the formation of subjectivity, that is, both conscious and unconscious awareness;
- that certain groups in society are privileged over others, constituting an oppression that is most forceful when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary or inevitable;
- that oppression has many faces, and concern for only one form of oppression at the expense of others can be counterproductive because of the connections between them;
- that mainstream research practices are generally implicated, albeit often unwittingly, in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression.

Therefore, critical educational research highlights the relationship between power and culture, where the emphasis is placed on understanding the causes of 'powerlessness, recognising systemic oppressive forces and acting individually and collectively to change the conditions of life' (Usher 1996, p.22). It unmasks ideologies that maintain status quo 'by restricting the access of groups to the means of gaining knowledge' (Usher 1996, p.22). Criticalists recognize that culture is 'not a realm apart from the give-and-take of everyday society but mirrors its contradictions and oppressions' (Crotty, 1998, p.159). This stands apart from an interpretivist theoretical perspective, which tends to place confidence in accounts of experience, recognizing them as descriptions of authentic lived experience. Instead, these accounts are viewed alongside inherited tradition and a prevailing culture, with an aim to detect them to avoid distortion. Furthermore, 'criticalists insist that the culture and the accounts it informs be radically called into question' (Crotty, 1998, p.159).

My methodology and methods are framed by an interest in how schools perpetuate or reduce inequality, whose interests are served by education and how legitimate these are (Cohen et al. 2007, p.26). I am interested in bringing into focus the restrictive conditions of the status quo and acknowledge the transformative intention and empowering nature of critical research, which seeks to provide a powerful explanatory lens and potential framework for social action in relation to themes such as exclusion, disaffection, creativity, educational futures, aspiration and pupil voice.

Although my qualitative methodology makes use of the explanatory lens and framework for social action that critical theory offers, by the end of my thesis, my theoretical perspective had shifted. This process is discussed in my conclusion, but it is worth noting here that through undertaking my PhD study as a critical researcher, I have become a post-critical researcher. In outlining what being post-critical means, I refer to a post-critical framework as detailed by Sullivan and Porter (1997), who specify several agendas for the post-critical researcher. They include:

- conceptualizing methodology as praxis
- using postmodern mapping to understand and articulate one's relationship to the various features of the research project
- considering ethical implications at all stages of the process: respect difference; care for others; promote justice and empower participants

(Sullivan and Porter, 1997, p.110)

I focus here on Sullivan and Porter's (1997) framework because it draws upon and responds to multiple methodologies and theoretical traditions. A post-critical perspective of methods as 'dynamic and negotiable' (Sullivan and Porter, 1997, p.46) emphasizes the heuristic quality of methods, so that there can be a dialogue between educational methodological expectations and the reality of the research site. It involves examining the merging of the applications and the contexts in which they were actually used: the site should shape the methodology. Postmodern mapping allows a researcher to illustrate the complexity of a site, especially in relation to previous research, and demonstrate how the site is articulated and the researcher's positioning within it (Sullivan and Porter, 1997, p.99). Sullivan and Porter promote four overlapping principles which they articulate as counterbalances to each other: '(1) respect difference, (2) care for others, (3) promote access to rhetorical procedures enabling justice, and (4) liberate the oppressed through empowerment of participants" (1997, p.110). The first two principles respond to the participants as individuals and the latter two principles position the participants as members of various communities.

Rather than re-write my methodology to present my chapter from a post-critical perspective, I have instead left a trail of practice; the thesis itself has been methodologically dynamic and negotiable and I am at a new stage and awareness of positioning as a result. It is consistent in its movement and an example of dialogue between methodological expectations and the realities and complexities presented by the research site.

3.4 Methodology: ethnography

3.4.1 Critical and classical ethnography

The methodology used in this study is ethnography, in particular, critical ethnography. In critical ethnography, those studied are located in contexts of power and interests, and questions of legitimacy, power, values in society and oppression are fore-grounded (Cohen et al, 2005, p.153). Carspecken and Apple (1992, p.512) identify five stages in critical ethnography:

- stage one: compiling a primary record (unobtrusive – researcher writing notes to self)
- stage two: preliminary reconstructive analysis (attempt to uncover the taken-for-granted components of meaning that participants have of a situation)

- stage three: dialogical data collection (data generated by and discussed with participants, enabling them to have a voice, to democratize the research)
- stage four: discovering system relations (relates the group being studied to other factors that impinge on that group)
- stage five: using system relations to explain findings (matching theory to data)

(As quoted in Cohen et al, 2005, p.154)

These stages were not rigidly pursued, but were used as part of my ongoing reflexivity. In terms of dialogical data, practitioners, at times, used my transcripts to explore the extent to which they were fostering enabling conditions for creativity, in particular, possibility thinking. Pupils took photographs within the site of their experiences of Eastbank and the practitioner approaches.

Critical ethnography emerges from classical ethnographic research, which has proved extremely successful in developing understanding of social and cultural processes in educational settings, as Jeffrey and Troman (2004) point out. In their work they give a broad overview of its successes, from facilitating the generation, testing and development of differentiation, to contributing towards the generation and development of sociological theories of educational identity and learning. Within ethnography, the intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice. This can be referred to as 'thick description' - a term first used by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) when writing about an interpretive theory of culture. An ethnographic approach to social research has moved beyond cultural anthropology, yet its definition still has its roots there. Classic ethnography can be defined as a qualitative research process *or* method, in that researchers *conduct* an ethnography and the *outcome* of this process is an ethnography, whose aim is cultural interpretation. In moving beyond reporting events and giving details of experience, the ethnographer seeks to explain how these represent what Geertz (1973) calls 'webs of meaning', the cultural constructions around us. Cultural understanding is generated through representation of an 'insider's point of view', with an emphasis on allowing categories and meanings to emerge from the encounter rather than drawing them from existing models. It is developed through close exploration of several sources of data alongside a cultural frame of analysis.

Geertz is opposed to notions of ethnographic research that promote being objective, detached and uninvolved in the community being researched. He champions a self-reflexivity which recognises a researcher's positioning as an observer. This positioning is discussed in section 3.7 when considering my role as researcher.

Ethnography sits well with a constructionist epistemology: meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between participants and their world, which takes time and in-depth immersion to research. Length of time varies within ethnographic work, but the period of my study, an academic year, is indicative within the field of being sufficient to investigate thoroughly and give insight into the world view of the participants (Cohen et al, 2005). I would place my study

within a 'selective intermittent time mode' (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004), which involves a very flexible approach to the frequency of site visits (that can be over a period of anything from three months to two years). A selective intermittent time mode is one of three modes put forward by Jeffrey and Troman (2004), in work which shows that there are different types of time in ethnographic research. A compressed mode involves a short period of intense ethnographic research for up to a month, offering a snapshot in time. A recurrent research mode gains a picture by sampling the same temporal phases, such as examination periods, or where researchers sample a regular, predetermined basis irrespective of specific events. At Eastbank, the frequency often depended on the events happening; if many pupils were out on work experience, I might wait to visit the AP site until a day when they were site-based. If the comedy show was nearing completion with daily recording, I would attend every day. On average, I spent three days a week either at the AP site or at the Learn 2 Work venues, later influenced by selecting particular foci as the research developed. Building in space between visits gave me time to reflect, organise my data and explore ideas. It also avoided participants being initially suspicious of a `total gaze' (Foucault, 1977) and to feel comfortable (so accepting more readily) that only some of their life or work was open to scrutiny (Goffman, 1961). Whatever the period of time on site, there is a sense that ethnographic projects are never finished, only left, with their accounts considered provisional and tentative (Walker, 1986).

3.4.2 Virtual ethnography

From November 2009, when I came regularly to Eastbank, I connected with pupils online when not at the AP site. Cyberspace was a natural and safe space for them, and so it seemed a common sense and ethical decision to ask questions and observe in a space in which they were happier to answer questions. I had no idea, however, that it would become the only source of contact I would have with them the next year, and for some of them, with each other. No two pupils went on to the same establishment after the AP site's closure. This situation led to a deeper look at the methodology of virtual ethnography and, as such, this section of the methodology is a later reflection.

I engaged, and occasionally still engage, with the young people online through Facebook, a social networking site. This has been in two ways: firstly through a group that we set up together, instigated by one of the pupils, with only the members of Eastbank in it. Through this we shared news, photographs, including all my research photographs, and also started discussions. Secondly, we followed each other's lives through giving access to our Facebook profiles, by befriending each other. It might have been wiser to only partake in the group space without becoming friends on Facebook, as the latter could be an ethical minefield. However, the young people in my study seemed to need to know that I was interested in them beyond being pupils that were useful for my study, and pushed me on the issue of befriending them online. Eventually, I decided to accept their Facebook friend requests after several ethical issues were considered. We established rules very quickly, such as only contacting each other through the group site and not through an 'inbox' or instant messaging, to keep our contact visible.

These rules were never compromised whilst Eastbank was in existence, but I have since wished them happy birthday on their own profiles and commented on the girls' status updates when there has been a major incident, for example, giving birth. Pupils had an opportunity to see the photographs that I was using in my study as I went along and ask for any to be removed, within the online group. They could also download photographs that they took on my camera. I limited my profile, so that the pupils did not have access to my child's photographs and videos; they were not aware of this limitation and I am not aware of any limitation they have put on their own profiles. In this way, we had the freedom to allow each other to find what we were comfortable to share. When using Facebook, pupils were not considering that what they were writing on their own profile might be used as data, which needed to be respected. Therefore, I have chosen to only use their responses on the Facebook Eastbank community page, which we agreed together could be mined for evidence. Occasionally, permission was sought to use a status update of the girls with whom I had stayed in contact online, much later in the process, when I sensed that they were comfortable enough with me to say no. However, I could not unread what I had read on pupils' Facebook profile walls, and though not using it as data, I was gaining more understanding of the social context of my research site by having access to their Facebook profiles. Pupils were made aware of this upon requesting my friendship and given the opportunity to withdraw it. Through having access to my Facbook profile, pupils were offered a degree of reciprocity.

There are clear advantages to virtual ethnography. Hine, (2000) explains: 'The ethnographer can be time-shifted so that the ethnographer's engagement can occur after the events with which they engage happened for participants. Ethnographer and participants no longer need to share the same time frame (p.23). Also, ethnographers in cyberspace can 'lurk in a way that face-to-face ethnographers cannot readily achieve' (Hine, 2000, p.48). The nature of virtual ethnography sets out to suit itself to the conditions in which it finds itself, which is extremely flexible and relevant to engaging with young people. By meeting in person regularly over the year, I was able to verify things said online about their offline lives. This can be presented as a way of triangulating findings and adding authenticity to them; it can also be seen as a result of the pursuit of ethnographic holism. Hine (2000) also suggests that visiting the Internet focuses on experimental rather than physical displacement: 'As Burnett (1996) suggests, 'you travel by looking, by reading, by imaging and imagining' (1996, p.68, as quoted in Hine, 2000, p.45) I do not consider it as a space detached from any connections to real life and face-to-face interaction: rather having rich and complex connections with the contexts in which it is used. Rather than being inherently sensible, it acquires its sensibility in use.

Therefore, it is important to engage in the challenges of this medium. A major issue to be confronted is the appropriate way of interacting with the subjects of the research. 'The challenge of virtual ethnography is to explore the making of boundaries and the making of connections, especially between the 'virtual' and the 'real'. Along with this goes the problem of knowing when to stop' (Hine, 2000, p.64).

Also, it raises the question whether interactions in electronic space can be viewed as authentic, since the ethnographer cannot readily confirm details that participants tell them about their offline selves. Hine (2000) sees this as a redundant question as,

> the person might be better thought of as a convenient shorthand for a more or less coherent set of identity performances with reference to a singular body and biography...Standards of authenticity should not be seen as absolute, but are situationally negotiated and sustained... the informant is a partial performer rather than a whole identity' (Hine, 2000, p.49).

I have been aware that this (virtual) approach is partial, and do not see this as limiting. By the time that Facebook was my only access to the pupils, I had turned my data collection period into one academic year, rather than two. Although I have captured screenshots of status updates as triangulation for my data, it was to bring extra insight to my data set. The ethics involved are discussed later in this chapter.

3.5 Research methods

3.5.1 Grounded Theory

I have drawn on grounded theory: a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data 'systematically gathered and analysed' (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p.273), and used it flexibly and in my own way. Its traditional characteristics include theory that is emergent rather than predefined and emerges from data, instead of data emerging from theory (Cohen et al, 2007). It combines inductive and deductive approaches: theoretical propositions are drawn from data that are then checked against other data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). However, I agree with Charmaz' (2006) argument that we are not compelled to view grounded theory as discovering categories that inhere in data in an external world, or as an application of procedures (p.178). I see grounded theories as 'products of emergent processes that occur through interaction' and that I have constructed this study's products out of the fabric of those interactions (Charmaz, 2006, p.178). This interpretation reflects realist ontology in its view that the way things are is the sense we make of them. Figure 3.1 shows the grounded theory process that I anticipated loosely using:

FIGURE 1.1 The grounded theory process

Figure 3.1: The grounded theory process (Charmaz, 2006, p.11)

Once on site and with insight into what could work both for me as a researcher and in the light of my participants and situation, I forged my own version of this process, again from which to loosely work, shown in figure 3.2. The first difference in approach is that at each stage of writing and making sense of my memos, I began diagramming concepts, rather than leaving this until the end as shown above. This helped me to integrate my ideas and establish the logic of my ordering as I progressed. As I began to explore story as methodology through my life writing (see section 3.9), this was also woven into my flexible grounded theory process, initially as a response to the data collection and later triggered by diagramming and conceptualising.

Figure 3.2: My emerging grounded theory process

I also gave theoretical sampling a light touch. Although I had planned to use this strategy of obtaining further s elective data to refine and fill out my major categories, I had planned to do this most in the second year of data collection, which suddenly disappeared. Within the academic year on site, I did seek specific new data based on some tentative categories and emerging, incomplete ideas. However, at that stage, I also found myself resisting the fact that theoretical sampling directs the researcher where to go, when the reality of my setting often required me to be totally flexible and not draw attention to my agenda. By engaging in theoretical sampling, I was being prompted to predict where and how I could find needed data to fill gaps and to saturate categories, when at the time I was comfortable with the uncertainty of the 'gaps'. As a result, I did not rigorously chase down saturation of categories, instead 'picking my battles' in terms of finding moments to do this in a research setting that needed not to be hit with my research agenda. The ever-present realities within the research site helped me as a researcher using grounded theory to locate the participants in their social world and arenas of negotiation.

3.5.2 Where grounded theory meets ethnography

As outlined in section 3.4, my study has drawn upon critical ethnographic approaches. Grounded theory and ethnography have been hailed as being highly compatible: grounded theory ethnographers 'can go deep into experience to make an interpretive rendering' (Charmaz, 2006, p.25) and 'the two methods combined may produce a level of detail and interpretation that is unavailable from other methodologies' (Pettigrew, 2000 p. 260). I mainly refer here to Charmaz' (2006) description of grounded theory ethnography, as hers is a reading of grounded theory to which I relate. Rather than a focus on description or setting, grounded theory ethnography 'gives priority to the studied *phenomenon* or *process'* (Charmaz, 2006, p.22). From the start of data collection, a grounded theory ethnographer will 'study what is happening in the setting and make a *conceptual* rendering of these actions' (p.22). Charmaz highlights several positive effects that grounded theory has on ethnography, expressing that, if used with care and thoroughness, grounded theory methods help in maintaining control over the process because they assist the ethnographer in focusing, structuring, and organising it. They are summarized here:

- Ethnographers can make connections between events by using grounded theory to study processes.
- A grounded theory emphasis on comparative methods leads ethnographers to compare data with data from the *beginning* of the research, not after all the data are collected, to compare data with emerging categories and to demonstrate relations between concepts and categories.
- Grounded theory strategies can increase ethnographers' involvement in their research inquiry, despite pressures they might face to be full participants in their research settings.
- Grounded theory methods move ethnographic research toward theoretical development by raising description to abstract categories and theoretical interpretation.
- Grounded theory methods preserve an open ended approach yet add rigor to ethnographic research by building systematic checks into both data collection and analysis.
- Moving back and forth between data and analysis also helps you from feeling overwhelmed and to avoid procrastinating. Both can happen when researchers collect data without direction.

(Charmaz, 2006, p.23)

She also highlights how ethnography remedies weaknesses in grounded theory studies:
- Some grounded theory studies rely on single accounts given to field investigators, even though how people explain their actions to each other may not resemble their statements to an interviewer.
- Participants' most important explanations may consist of tacit understandings. If so, then participants seldom articulate them out loud among themselves, let alone to non-members.
- Understanding derives most directly from the immediacy of our participation in social actors' shared worlds (Prus, 1996).

- Grounded theory studies often move around what they are studying to get to know it; these methods generate a map of the object of study from the outside, but may not enter it. Grounded theory ethnographers can go deep into experience to make an interpretive rendering.

(Charmaz, 2006, p.25)

The combination of the two approaches can be a powerful guide, helping me to negotiate my research setting without being pulled too far in one direction at the expense of my overall methodology.

3.5.3 Case study

I have undertaken a case study as it is a natural fit with my desire to investigate Eastbank as an AP site. Case studies have been defined in multiple ways over the years by as many researchers: the examination of an instance in action (MacDonald and Walker 1975); a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon (Sturman 1994); and an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin 1994). It can have a range of meanings, and is often sub-divided. Bassey (1999) identifies several different kinds of educational case study: theory-seeking, theory-testing, story-telling, picture-drawing and evaluative case study. Stenhouse (1985) identified four broad styles: ethnographic, evaluative, educational and action research case studies. Using these categories, I define my study as an educational case study, located in the field of educational research, rather than discipline research in educational settings. However, it is also ethnographic, and offers 'standpoint explanations that emphasise causal or structural patterns of which participants in the case study are unaware' (Stenhouse, 1985, p.49). My underlying aim is to contribute to understanding effective AP in England, thus seeking to inform educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action: improving action through theoretical understandings (Bassey 1999). Due to the nature of the research questions, 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' and 'Where did these approaches lead?' my case study involved theory-seeking, story-telling and picture-drawing.

I subscribe to Bassey's (1999) definition of an educational case study as an empirical enquiry which is:

- conducted within a localized boundary of space and time;
- into interesting aspects of an educational activity;
- mainly in its natural context and within an ethic of respect for persons;
- in order to inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners/policy makers;
- or of theoreticians who are working to these ends;
- in such a way that sufficient data are collected for the researcher to be able

a) to explore significant features of the case,
b) to create plausible interpretations of what is found,
c) to test for the trustworthiness of those interpretations,

d) to construct a worthwhile argument or story,

e) to relate the story to relevant research in the literature,

f) to convey convincingly to an audience this story,

g) to provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate/challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments.

(Bassey, 1999, p.58)

The above goals marry well with grounded theory ethnography, and providing an audit trail by which peers may hold the work to account resonates with my journey towards post-critical research.

My study also reflects Stake's (1998) discussion of case study, not as a methodological choice, but as a choice of object to be studied. The case itself is a bounded and integrated system, where 'it is not always easy for the case researcher to say where the child ends and where the environment begins. But the boundedness and the behaviour patterns of the system are key factors in understanding the case' (Stake, 1998, p.87). My study falls into Stake's category of 'intrinsic case study' as I was curious about a certain AP site and needed to know about that particular case. This is as opposed to 'instrumental case study' – particular studies of general issues where the focus is the issue rather than the case – but also has elements of 'collective case study', as I have chosen to study a group of practitioners at the site. I spent time considering the nature of my case study as the methods are different according to intrinsic and instrumental interests.

One of the advantages cited for case study is its uniqueness, and its capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts (Simons 1996). It is certainly the case that 'sometimes it is only by taking a practical instance that we can obtain a full picture of interaction' (Nisbet and Watt, 1980, p.5). Furthermore, a case study can enable readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together (Nisbet and Watt 1984, pp.72-3). Case studies are very strong on reality and can build in unanticipated events, which is useful when working with pupils in AP. This design has highlighted unique features of these pupils' experiences that may have been lost in larger scale data.

Case study can be a prime research strategy for developing educational theory which illuminates policy and enhances practice (Bassey, 1999). This links with Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2007) description of case studies as a 'step to action' (2007, p.256): researchers begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use; for staff or individual self-development; for within-institutional feedback; for formative evaluation; and in educational policy-making. The case study, therefore, links well with the critical approach.

Historic criticisms of case study serve as a warning to minimize dangers. Walker (1983) warned that case study can be an uncontrolled intervention in the lives of others, can give a distorted view of the world and can have a tendency to 'embalm' practices which are actually always changing. Atkinson and Delamont (1985), long-term critics of some forms of case study, highlighted the lack of a definitive

account of case study approaches, the tendency to reinvent the wheel and that the concern for ethics too often can supplant issues of theory and practice. They also showed concern at the stress upon the unique leading to the rejection of generalization; without studies being developed into more general frameworks, they are at risk of remaining isolated affairs with no sense of cumulative knowledge or developing theoretical insight. However, Simons (1996) saw the paradox of uniqueness and the corresponding difficulty of generalizing from a single case as yielding 'unique and universal understanding' if acknowledged and explored in depth (Simons,1996, pp.237-8).

3.6 Data Collection methods

I have used several methods of data collection: interviews – oral and written, virtual and in-person observation, one participant's blog, screen shots, life writing, photography (taken by myself and the participants), video performances from the comedy show and inadvertent primary sources such as administrative lists. The main period of data collection was from November 2009 until June 2010, although I visited Eastbank twice in the October to meet the participants and discuss with them what I was doing, and twice in the July during packing down of the classrooms before vacating the building. I was asked not to begin my study in the September as pupils needed time to settle after the summer holidays. An overview of the methods used are shown in appendix 2.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews have the great advantage of adaptability. As Kvale (1996) states, 'The use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations' (p.64). This flexibility allowed me to give space for spontaneity, especially when with pupils, whilst at times tentatively holding a sense of direction. Insights gained in a collective fashion have also resulted in a deeper exploration of issues by those involved. I adopted a narrative way of interviewing. Interviews with pupils, practitioners and artists in residence were mainly unstructured, with an occasional semi-structured approach, and recorded with a Dictaphone. Participants were offered the option of not using the Dictaphone each time, and on occasion, a pupil would accept the opportunity to say no to being recorded.

Interviews with pupils

These took place after I had been at the AP site for approximately ten weeks and once I sensed that the pupils were willing to trust me enough to answer my questions. Initial attempts were made, but it quickly became apparent that more trust needed to be established between pupils and myself before pupils were willing to share with me. There was a key moment of initiation ten weeks in, when pupils took me to the height chart to add me to the community of names on it. I began interviewing shortly

after this. Initial interviews asked what had brought them to Eastbank, how it compared with their out of school and previous school experiences, what they felt characterized the practitioner approaches at Eastbank and how those approaches made them feel in the moment and about their future. Further into the process, I asked them to answer the last two questions about specific incidents or sessions as they happened. Over time, we discovered ways of interviewing together that suited the pupils. These took two main forms: face to face interviews that were undertaken whilst a pupil was playing a game on the PC and did not have to sit facing me and had something else to focus on; or online within our Facebook community, on the discussion board.

I did not interview all pupils equally. Although this had been my intention, interviews depended upon how pupils were coping with situations in their lives, and so when pupils were going through a particular challenge within, for example, a change of care, becoming parents or gaining a protection order, I relied on observation rather than interviews. Occasionally I would ask and be declined, but generally, I came to sense when was appropriate and when a pupil needed space. This meant that an interview schedule was difficult to adhere to, although I interviewed three pupils a week on average between February and June 2010.

Interviews with permanent staff

Interviews with the four permanent members of staff began at the beginning of the data collection. The specialist teaching assistant interviews were in person and undertaken on site, once a term. The same questions were asked of each of the TAs, except for some additional specific questions about a pupil in their particular group in class if an incident arose. The questions were very similar to those asked of the pupils, but asked in detail about their approaches towards the pupils and the work. Dave, the lead teacher, undertook one interview via email and several face-to-face, over the three terms, usually during lunch time or after the pupils had gone home. There were also very short interviews with little notice, immediately after incidents that had just occurred, to get his perspective on what had happened and why he approached it in the way he did.

Interviews with artists in residence

Interviews with the theatre arts group took place on site when they were in residence between January and the end of March 2010. There were five members of the group, but interviews tended to be with the two members who ran the group as they came most often and felt most at ease with the interview process. I sought to understand the philosophy behind their practice and how that translated in the sessions, capture stories from the recent work at Eastbank and their understanding of the community there.

I undertook a written interview with the music artist in residence just before he arrived on site in March 2010. This was to ascertain his approach to his work, his expectations of Eastbank and what he was planning to do there. Most other interviews were face-to-face on site between March and May in breaks and at the end of the day. There was also another written interview in October 2010, with set questions that I sent in relation to his and the other practitioner approaches at Eastbank, where he felt they led and his experience of being at the site.

Within my data collection, I adopted a narrative way of interviewing: 'When the interview is viewed as a conversation – a discourse between speakers – rules of everyday conversation apply: turn taking; relevancy; and entrance and exit talk to transition into, and return from a story world' (Riessman, 2004, p.709). When using this form of interviewing, I found that I had a part to play, and invited stories that were meaningful for participants rather than assume they had answers to questions that I might have posed. I found it a useful way of acknowledging the shifting power in the research conversation and allowed the interview to have a life of its own. This links well with my dialogic approach to understanding the shifting role of teacher, artist and pupil. In the context of narrative inquiry, talk is interactively produced and performed as narrative. There is also a dialogue between researcher and researched, text and reader, knower and known. In terms of analysing and writing about my data, therefore, I come from the perspective that language is not a form of expression: its use in life is (Wittgenstein, 1972). It is integrated into transactions and behaviour, being context dependant and purpose related.

3.6.2 Observation

Observation offered me the opportunity to collate data from the working day at Eastbank. This took place between October 2009 and July 2010. In sessions and free time I observed interactions between practitioners, practitioners and pupils, pupils with pupils (and practitioner responses to this), and all participants with external partners, such as teachers from the secondary school, parents and Connexions staff. There was not a great deal of external partner observation, as teachers, parents, police and Connexions staff did not visit very often. On the occasions that they did, they usually came for a private meeting, so my time with them was minimal. My main observation with external staff was during one community reconciliation meeting on site. I also observed how and what practitioners presented in or contributed to sessions; a session might be an hour of English, Maths, Art, Music with Geoff, the comedy show with Wolf and Water or Learn 2 Work, the vocational course at the local college. There were no strict end times to sessions, but they generally lasted for an hour before everyone took a short break. Learn 2 Work was on a Wednesday and Friday morning, either at the carpentry, plumbing and bricklaying college site, the vehicle college site or a local agricultural college. I observed these twice a week for most of the academic year, mainly focusing on the interaction of the

permanent staff with the pupils. I did not observe at the agricultural college as no Eastbank staff went along with the one student attending there.

To an extent, the sessions dictated whether I used non-participant or participant observation; I was expected to be part of the comedy show put on by Eastbank, and there was an 'all hands on deck' attitude to Learn 2 Work courses, where I wore my overalls and steel-toe cap boots to mix cement, hand over tools and hold ladders. However, English and Maths sessions involved pupils working at their own level in two groups, one in each of the teaching rooms, and unless I was asked for help, I sat back and observed the sessions. I rarely took photos during this time, as pupils could become too easily distracted or uneasy with attention during a session that they might find very challenging. Art seemed to be a session where pupils 'zoned out' and it was often silent, with them listening to music on their mobile phones. They were happy for me to take photos of them working, but I rarely joined in, unless particularly tempted by some fresh clay.

I did not write any observations on my laptop whilst on site. I brought it once, but typing about what was happening seemed to highlight my presence as 'other', even causing a rise in suspicion as to my motives. Scribbling messy notes on A4 paper at intervals never seemed to cause the same reaction, so became the way I recorded observations. This was not an issue when observing online on the Facebook group page or profile pages. Here, I collected data by capturing screen shots or making notes on an event. Occasionally, I took screen shots that were from Facebook status updates, for which I asked permission to use on an individual basis. An advantage of observation is that it balances data from interviews, as what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides another valuable angle. The virtual ethnography that took place provided such an angle, where pupils were very relaxed whilst interacting as part of an online community.

As part of my grounded theory methods, I wrote memos, sometimes triggered by questions and thoughts scribbled in the margins during an observation. I did not write the full memo during observation, instead waiting until I had some quiet time on my own. Life writing became part of my data collection, as fully explained in section 3.7.1. This was hand-written, and may have been initiated by a memo which quickly took on another form. Again, this took place in places such as my car during a lunch break when pupils might be off-site, in one of the small offices on site, or, as was most usual, in a 'splurge' of expression when I got home. It did not seem to be something I switched on and off – I either had the urge to write creatively or I did not.

3.6.3 Visual methods

The use of visual methods – video, photography, pictures and images – is gaining momentum in qualitative research and has become increasingly significant to ethnographic research (Russell, 2007). Yet it lacks an agreed theoretical and conceptual framework, which is currently complex and

disorganised (Emmison, 2004). So, without a clear path to define, conceptualise, use and analyse them, I have forged my own for my use of photography and video, with methodological guidance from sources such as Russell (2007), Pink (2001) and Thomson (2008). I have taken images which I used to elicit data, and also used pupil-produced photographs. The latter was not initially intentional, but it became clear that pupils wanted to use my camera to capture the essence of Eastbank, and that my agreement meant a lot to them as they had not had the opportunity to use a high-spec camera. The photographs taken by the pupils had two roles: they were used to elicit data as the content contributed to answering my research questions about practitioner approaches, and they were the actual data because the action of taking the photographs of practitioners, pupils, surroundings and activities reflected practitioner approaches. I have made these distinctions transparent as they complicate the notion of the observed and the observer, researched and researcher: 'the use of visual methods by participants enables them to shift their positions in the research' (Russell, 2007, p.41). Furthermore, agreeing for pupils to take photographs of their experiences of Eastbank gave them an accessible way to articulate their experiences: 'analysing child produced images offers insight into how the arts can act as an inclusive and in some cases exclusive medium for young people to explicate certain dimensions of their identity' (Russell, 2007, p.41).

In Thomson, Hall and Russell's (2006) report for the ESRC, ' Promoting social and educational inclusion through the creative arts', the reported research used visual media to gather information on the inclusive and exclusive pedagogical practices that helped form identities of a school and its pupils. The school's participants were used to being filmed and photographed, making the use of visual methods acceptable. The school culture and the research topic influence if and how visual methods are introduced and used (Russell, 2007). In my case, the pupils were not used to being photographed and videoed. Photography was seen by pupils as a means of celebration and validation of pupils' activities and was quickly and calmly accepted. The camera also had a video feature, but on the few occasions I used it early in the data collection period, pupils made it their only focus and it caused wild and destructive excitement. It was quickly established that I would not be using video taken by myself in my study. I did not include the videos already taken as part of my analysis. However, I did use video footage that was part of the comedy show, taken by pupils in a controlled setting with professional cameras and boom, of rehearsed comedy sketches that incorporated practitioners in the action.

I will discuss the approach to analysis of the visual data within the next section.

Finally, before moving on from data collection, it is worth noting that I had planned to gather inadvertent primary sources such as attendance figures and behaviour agreements made by pupils and the secondary school. However, despite efforts, I was not given information that was of relevance to my study. I did receive one term's attendance percentages for pupils at Eastbank, but the secondary school had not kept and compared this to attendance records before attending Eastbank to track progress. Although I was told that none of the pupils had SEN statements, I did not see any Individual Education Plans to ascertain pupils' SEN status.

3.7 Role of the researcher in data collection

As Denzin (1997) points out, ethnographic methodology has changed because the world that ethnography confronts has changed. The ethnographic project has passed through various historical moments: traditional (1900 to World War II), modernist (World War II to the mid-1970s), blurred genres (1970-1986), a crisis of representation (1986 to the millennium) and into the new millennium (Denzin, 1997). As a result, Malinowski's (1961) definition of ethnography – to find out the typical ways of thinking and feeling, corresponding to the institutions and culture of a given community and formulate the results in the most convincing way: connecting meanings to the observable action in the real world – is no longer as workable in 2012 as it was in 1961. Today, reality is much more 'mediated by symbolic representation, by narrative texts, and by cinematic and televisual structures that stand between the person and the so-called real world' (Denzin, 1997, p.xvi). The crisis of representation, as portrayed by Denzin (1997), makes a key assumption that qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience, which is instead created in the social text written by the researcher.

This section describes my use of life writing and reciprocity in my research, with a focus on my role as researcher. These methods were generated as a response to and flowing from the research setting and participants. As there can never be a final, accurate representation of what was meant or said, my methods offer textual representations of different experiences. Denzin (1997) calls for a reflexive form of writing that turns ethnographic and theoretical texts back 'onto each other', creating the conditions that locate the social inside the text. My use of life writing and reciprocity are my way of attempting to grapple with creating such conditions as an ethnographer, whilst acknowledging that reflexivity does not produce a solidified ethnographic identity (Denzin, 1997). Trinh (1992, p.140) describes ethnographers working with a 'hybrid' reality, and as a certain identity is not possible, I need to ask 'Not Who Am I?' but 'When, where, how am I (so and so)?' (Trinh, 1992, p.157). My generated methods seek to do this. My aim is embodied representation of experience, agreeing with Lather (1993, p.3) in observing the end of 'pure presence'. Without presuming a direct link between experience and text, my life writing is a potential response to Trinh's (1991, p.162) call for the production of texts in which experiences are evoked, not explained.

3.7.1 Using storytelling as method

My own history plays a part in my choice to use storytelling as an ethnographic method in my study. In recent years I have realised that I write about life as a way of being in the world. I undertook an MA in creative and life writing and, since then, have embraced what I so far understand as 'life writing as ontology'. I see life writing as a recording of selves, memories and experiences, whether another's or my own. Ontology, as already expressed, is the science or study of being. Whether it is that I am writing myself into being or acknowledging that, in essence, I am a writer, I do not yet know. When I am

engaged in life writing I feel fully myself and experience engaging with being human. It made sense, then, as I undertook my data collection, analysed my data and began to discuss my findings, that I engaged in life writing. I had not anticipated that I could incorporate this into my thesis, and engaged, to an extent, in secret writing. Two years into my PhD, I realised that to fully own the process and inhabit research as writing, it was time to understand how my life writing could intermingle whilst weaving through my thesis. I braved sending sections to my supervisors, with tentative ideas of integration. Gallagher (2011) was particularly influential in my process in terms of expression of perspective and vivid description, so I refer to her search for a theoretical basis for storytelling in educational research here. It was the closest match to what I have been calling life writing as ontology as I could find.

Gallagher (2011, p.52), in her perceptive look into the work of Arendt, describes using stories methodologically, as spaces for 'probing rival musings and interpretive openings'. Arendt considers storytelling to 'transcend the limitations of facts and information' to tell a provocative and principled story ('On the nature of totalitarianism,' 6, cited in Disch, 1994, p.140). For Arendt, 'facts' alone cannot determine a historical narrative. This is part of my reasoning behind including the writing in my thesis. By weaving in life writing, I am subscribing to Gallagher's perspective that 'stories, whether theatrical or narrative, demand interpretation; they cannot be taken literally' (Gallagher, p.52). Although written about real events and remaining true to my sense of the events, they are not straight observations, rather textual construction. This acknowledgement can heighten awareness of the 'tyranny of the text' (Stronach and Maclure, 1997) and that texts suppress in order to achieve a sense of completeness.

Gallagher (2011, p.52) also highlights the argument of Lyotard (1984) that:
> it is their capacity to hold fragments together, which make stories a particularly powerful
> postmodern force. To provoke contestation, offers Lyotard, over the rules that constrain the
> production of new ideas, is the potential force of storytelling.

Life writing is present in my data collection and analysis because it opens new ideas on answering my research question. It honours the data in a fresh way. 'After having pulled it apart through 'objective' research methods, storytelling as method puts research back together as a partial and intersubjective critical experience' (Gallagher, 2011, p.53). I see the inclusion of story as a more thorough approach.

My relationship to the staff, pupils and data is an intrinsic part of considering ethical issues. Gallagher uses an example of Henry James who,
> after struggling in vain to illustrate a text on the aristocracy by working with authentic models,
> the artist finally has his servants pose, and it is their perception of class difference that strikes
> the gestures he draws. His canvas depicts a relationship to the phenomenon rather than a
> display of the thing itself' (Gallagher, 2011, p.52).

I feel that, in the same way, life writing depicts relationship to my research rather than offers an exact representation of events. I believe that critical thinking is born of experience. Storytelling, for me, is a way of inviting situated critical thinking into my research, out of inspiration. Disch (1994) calls for 'a way

of proceeding in which critical categories are not imposed on but inspired by one's engagement with a phenomenon' (Disch, 1994, p.144). Gallagher also argues that 'stories provide their listeners with orientation and direction in the world: This is so because each story contains a moment of judgment that is shared by the storyteller and her listeners' (Gallagher, 2011, p.53). Through life writing, I am not so much directly answering the research question as offering the consideration that there is a continuation to the story of those at Eastbank - within which my data sits - that is always unfolding.

A story as 'a case' is importantly different from storytelling as method (Gallagher, 2011). Storytelling can 'perform a multiplicity of potential understandings rather than a confirmation of what is already understood' (Gallagher, 2011, p.54). I have not used life writing in a deductive way when answering the research questions, but rather to challenge the status quo of my inductive approach so far: 'the act of telling the story opens up interpretive and relational possibilities' (Gallagher, 2011, p.54). In weaving life writing through my thesis, I am attempting to wrestle with the challenge that 'educational storytellers will need to break new ground and do so in theoretically robust ways; their stories, in both form and content, need to provoke new imaginings' (Gallagher, 2011, p.60). This thesis is the beginning of a journey of contributing to the field of story as method. This approach has the capacity to reveal the failures of traditional analysis and conventional theory; 'the times exceed the categories' (Gallagher, 2011, p.54).

Despite debates on boundaries (Riessmann, 1993), story as methodology converges with narrative inquiry. Narrative research is research that is concerned with stories told and stories into which we enquire; it uses and tells stories. Narratives are not simply a set of facts, but social products produced within the context of social, historical and cultural locations. They are interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and interpret the world, with a focus on the meanings of things above what happened (Trahar, 2010). Narrative inquiry advocates pluralism, relativism and subjectivity (Lieblich et al., 1998) and subscribes to constructions being the product of social forces, either structural or interactional (Burr, 2003). It often expresses journey over destination.

In drawing on ethnographic methods , I am mindful not to try to convince the reader that had they been there, they should have seen what I saw, felt what I felt and concluded what I concluded (Stronach and Maclure, 1997). This line of thinking has led me to question recognition, authenticity and validity as being methodological phenomena, and consider that they might rather be textual ones (Stronach and Maclure, 1997, p.49).

Trahar (2010) highlights some challenges to this approach that I have taken into account: narratives are often collected and celebrated in an uncritical and unanalysed fashion; they should not be treated as unmediated representations of social realities; stories are shaped by cultural conventions and conform to conventions of genre; and autobiographical accounts are no more authentic than other modes of representation. Despite these challenges, I subscribe to Trahar's conclusion that if we want to access

the meaning of others' experiences, we must be able to imagine a world other than the one we know. Narrative imagination is 'the seeing of difference' (Trahar, 2010). Narrative inquiry and using story as methodology have been a tangible way for me to reveal that 'we never come innocent to a research task or situation...we constitute them as expressions of ourselves' (Clough, 2002, p.64).

3.7.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity, the give and take of social interactions, is an important part of my study. I am specifically drawing on Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton's (2001) paper as a basis for my understanding of it within my research. It claims that through a judicious use of self-disclosure, interviews can become conversations and richer data can be possible (p.323). By asking participants to comment on and use the photographs on our group Facebook page and examine field notes, I was able to give something back to participants, including the opportunity to ask to remove photographs from the study. Lather, as quoted in Harrison et al (2001), argues that 'by attending to reciprocity, research and researchers can work to empower the researched' (p.323), which sits comfortably within my critical theory and more recently, post-critical approach. Researchers are increasingly answerable to their communities of interest (Hooks, 1984), and the criteria of reciprocity answers the call through its 'intense sharing that opens all lives party to the inquiry to examination' (Lincoln, 1995, pp. 283-284). As a researcher, I make conscious and unconscious political decisions when deciding how to do the asking, observing or measuring and when making decisions about who the final authority will be. The give and take involved in reciprocity and trustworthiness can lead researchers to be 'clear to ourselves and with our participants about our obligations, what it is we hope we have given or still hope to give our participants, and what it is we are taking, that is, how we benefit' (Harrison et al, 2001, p.325).

My relationship with my participants was not, and continues not to be neatly defined. For example, I am not intending to end my communication with the participants now my study is over. Unless they cease contact, I will continue to be friends with pupils on Facebook and have a virtual relationship, which in itself is bonding. Emotion is part of my research process and needs to be examined. Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) raise interesting questions:

> What differences might it make that we are drawn to or repulsed by our participants and by their lifestyles? How are our senses of obligation affected when we feel our participants' anger or their affection? With Stanley and Wise (1993), we would claim that emotion is an aspect of the research process, which, like any other aspect, can be analytically interrogated (Harrison et al, 2001, p.326).

These are questions that I too ask in my study. Harrison et al (2001), in struggling with this complexity of shifting and permeable locations of both researchers and participants, looked to Reinharz's (1997) framework to explore the complexity of researchers. This is based on the argument that being a researcher is 'only one aspect of the researcher's self in the field, and although one may consider being a researcher one's most salient self, community members may not agree' (p.329). Reinharz identified approximately twenty different selves from her field notes that she categorized into three major groups:

researcher-based selves, brought selves, and situationally created selves. In this way, I have also committed to identifying my own identities within my research. I have asked myself how my particular involvement at Eastbank shaped my construction of my data. I have also asked how being reflexive about the negotiations between researcher and researched selves contributes towards the trustworthiness of my research.

I feel drawn to feminist theory that highlights the importance of intimacy and friendship in research relationships and of engaging in dialogues with participants (Bloom, 1997; Busier et al., 1997; Larson, 1997, Fine, 1994). Fine (1994) describes attending to relations between researcher and researched as,

> working the hyphen' between Self and Other to unravel, critically, the blurred boundaries in our relation, and in our texts; to understand the political work of our narratives; to decipher how the traditions of social science serve to inscribe; and to imagine how our practice can be transformed to resist, self-consciously, acts of othering' (Fine, 1994, p.75).

Although not coming from a feminist perspective per se, there are clear resonances with it in my approach. In particular, my rationale for using Facebook as a medium for my research comes out of feminist theory. Larson (1997) highlights the importance of researchers engaging in dialogue with participants:

> Dialogue makes understanding the life world and lived realities of others possible. When researchers share their ways of seeing, understanding, and interpreting life events with story-givers, they surface the fissures between their own life worlds and those of the people they portray. Disparities between the meaning that researchers make of the lives of others and the meaning that story-givers make of their own lives become points of entry into understanding human experience. . . . By failing to engage in deliberative dialogue and inquiry, researchers put themselves at greater risk of not seeing, not understanding, and misinterpreting people whose lives and life experiences differ from their own (Larson, 1997, p.459).

Through giving the participants at Eastbank access to my own Facebook profile, alongside creating a Facebook Eastbank group together, I aimed to share something of myself, bringing together our life worlds. I also gained direct access into the meaning that the participants give their own lives through their Facebook profile and therefore give space to holding that against my own perception of their lives. This is a reminder that I am only a partial meaning-maker. It also reminds me that I will change my participants in some way, just as I speak into my other 'friends'' lives on Facebook. I am reminded to remain open to change; much of my interaction with them has been in reaction to their posts on Facebook. I am also pressed to read the interpretations of other Facebook posters to my participants, giving me greater perspective. As Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) state:

> The obligations of witnessing, then, extend beyond access and data production, beyond analysis and writing, beyond the end of a study: Both witnessing and renewal are ongoing, continuous processes that turn themselves over, seemingly as often as the tides. . . . We carry our fields with us and we have a responsibility to consider both what we learn from and what we

have to offer in those fields . . . to take an active part in the discourses that frame our lives and our work (Harrison et al, 2001, p.337).

I embrace this ethical responsibility. Busier et al.(1997, p.165) claim that, 'intimate relationships, the process of 'being in relation,' are vital experiences which move us into learning and understanding more about others, ourselves, and our world'. In the same way that Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) do, I believe that notions of reciprocity are central to my account.

3.8 Data Analysis:

As this is a purely qualitative study of a complex phenomenon (practitioner approaches and their evolution), the credibility of the research rests on the rigour with which the data has been recorded, organised, studied and presented. It also rests on the rhetorical force of the case made in laying out an interpretation of the meanings of the data. The data analysis – making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen et al. 2005, p.461) – was approached within the critical theory paradigm, and revisited from a tentative shift into post-critical theory. I understood the need to be clear as regards what I wanted the analysis to do, as this determined the kind of analysis that was undertaken. I wanted to describe, portray, interpret, discover patterns, generate themes, raise issues and examine the operation of the same issues for different participants.

Giving clear evidence for practitioner approaches and charting where they led is made complex by the fact that they are realised in, and expressed by, each individual uniquely in their exact context. Signs of practitioner approaches can be recognised, but not attributed with absolute certainty or to a measurable degree. Given this, I made an assessment of commonalities across participants: evidence from the coding that were recurrent themes arising during the academic year at Eastbank, and significant outcomes among the participants as a whole in relation to those themes. I also made an assessment of personal judgement: of participants' professed understandings of their insights and approaches, pupils' responses to these, and my own judgements.

3.8.1 The coding process

The outline for the structure of the analysis, shown in figure 3.2, shows that I undertook some initial coding early on in the data collection, so that the generation of emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns could be formed (Glaser, 2002). I used progressive focusing: taking a wide angle lens to gather data, and then by sifting, sorting, reviewing and reflecting on them, the salient features of the situation emerge (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976). I coded my observational field notes, interview transcripts, photographs and screen shots, blog, also diagramming and using memos and life writing to make sense of what was emerging. I was not selective as to which field notes, interviews, photographs, screen shots and blog posts were analysed; all data was coded within NVivo (qualitative data analysis software), using open, axial and selective coding, with the exception of life writing, as explained further

below. This was analysed, but not analysed and coded within NVivo. Near duplicate photographs were also excluded.

During the coding process the aim was to code descriptively at the lowest level to reduce the amount of conformity to existing theoretical frameworks. In forming a higher level of coding, the following factors were influential:

- significant events / activities / interactions
- emergent themes deemed significant by several interviewees
- ideas referred to specifically in interview questions

At the end of the initial coding process, lower level codes were cross-checked to eliminate redundancy. Then higher level codes were merged or grouped as appropriate. Where links existed but substantial differences remained, they were linked as part of a set. These codes or sets were extracted as main themes for the reporting of the data.

A main benefit of NVivo is its provision of a 'hall of mirrors' effect, allowing glimpses of the data from surprising angles and from perspectives different from your own. A detailed and descriptive coding process helped such categories to emerge, and made it harder to read data solely from the perspective of pre-existing theory or bias. A detailed coding process also allowed for acknowledgement of contradictions that appeared in participants' accounts.

In analysing interviews undertaken, I used the Cohen at al. (2005, p.471) break down of interview analysis as a model:

- transcription
- bracketing and phenomenological reduction (setting out to understand what the interviewee is saying rather than what I expect the person to say)
- listening to the interview for a sense of the whole.
- clustering units of relevant meaning (what naturally clusters together?)
- determining themes
- summary of each interview
- conceptualisation of themes
- composite summary

For this particular case study, it became important to use some verbatim conversations, reporting direct phrases and sentences in order to be faithful to the exact words used. This became a reason for not being selective as to what was transcribed. Although at times I presented data by individuals, and then amalgamated key issues that emerged, I mainly presented the data by research question, as it is a very useful way of organizing data, pointed out by Cohen et al. (2005, p.474) :

> …it draws together all the relevant data for the exact issue of concern to the researcher and preserves the coherence of the material. It returns the reader to the driving concerns of the

research thereby 'closing the loop' on the research questions that typically were raised in the early part of an enquiry.

Geoff and Dave undertook some interviews by email, giving them time to formulate their thoughts and articulate them. Geoff also blogged/wrote a diary each time he visited the AP site, which was available only to myself and the other practitioners. This was a useful comparison to my own field notes of the sessions.

In systematically coding the photographs, content analysis (Rose, 2004) was used to describe the composition of the images. When coding photographs taken by the pupils, I used compositional interpretation (Rose, 2004), considering the content, colour and spatial organisation. I employed discourse analysis in two ways: firstly, placing the discourse of the visuals in the social context, thus examining social construction and themes and commonalities within a collection; and secondly, focusing on the institutional message through the visuals. Interactions, spaces and processes were also examined in relation to other data within NVivo.

3.8.2 Non-coded data

Life writing was introduced as data once existing open and axial codes were already being built. To avoid the life writing being analysed in a deductive way and so look for confirmation of what is already understood, I put all coding aside and instead made a space for rival musings and interpretive openings. I applied the research questions fluidly, opening awareness for a discourse to 'shimmer' and catch my eye. As storytelling can be a treasure trove of potential understandings, I tried to remain present to the text without relying on structure, which challenged the status quo of my inductive approach so far. This involved following trains of thought triggered by the text and acknowledging emotions I had as a researcher. To code small sections would be to pull it apart when its purpose was to put research back together as a partial and intersubjective critical experience (Gallagher, 2011). The principled and provocative nature of story was protected, whilst being mined for a moment of judgement and a narrative beyond 'facts'. This meant that analysis was often written in sentences that spilled beyond the research questions. The analysis inevitably included a reflexive examination of my role as researcher in my setting. The two sets of themes – one from the data coded in Nvivo and one from the life writing – were then merged to create one set of data.

3.9 Tensions and dilemmas:

As previously discussed, the sudden closure of my research site created various tensions and dilemmas; it was final confirmation that I needed to change my research questions to focus on practitioner approaches. Alongside these difficulties that I have highlighted, the following points list other tensions and dilemmas, and initial thoughts on my approach towards them:

Critical theory has a deliberate political agenda as discussed above, yet it could be argued that the task of the researcher is not to have an agenda (Morrison, 1995); therefore it is important to be reflexive and remain accountable to peers and established voices within the field in this matter. Furthermore, Gore (2003) warned against critical theory researchers themselves working in an 'unreflexive' fashion as a result of agenda. To an extent, the warnings of voices in the field were triggers for me to think more reflexively, leading to a shift towards post-critical research. This brings its own tensions and dilemmas, as I am in transition, not only as a researcher, but in the midst of this piece of study. In this way, I have tried to be as transparent in my positioning as possible, without forcing and contriving a stable theoretical position for the sake of others and a perceived role of methodology. In questioning the knowledge being produced in my study, my underpinning assumptions about the world and how I was directing them and who they were serving – which I see as good research practice – it was always likely that I would change in how I conceived the world and its possibilities. If 'all research is researching yourself' (Walford, 2001, p.91), reflexivity throughout the analytic process is vital; my life writing and discussing concerns with established voices in research helped this process.

Case studies have weaknesses. They are not easily open to crosschecking and are prone to observer bias. Generalization is not always possible as Denscombe (1998, p.36-7) states: 'The extent to which findings from the case study can be generalized to other examples in the class depends on how far the case study example is similar to others of its type.' I have been mindful to offer my processes and conceptualisations as examples for those in AP to customise or from which to create their own.

Nisbet and Watt (1984, p.91) warned researchers to avoid journalism (picking out sensational aspects), selective reporting (to support a particular conclusion), anecdotal style (allowing tedious illustrations to take over), pomposity (generating profound theories from low-level data) and blandness (unquestioningly accepting only the respondents' views). Although I would agree with their views on selective and sensational writing, I have come to value story as methodology. I found the differing voices in this regard a tension and dilemma that I resolved over time, bringing the life writing out from being secret writing and weaving it into my academic writing.

Interviews are time consuming and rely on a subjective technique, risking bias; manner can have an effect on the respondents. Self-awareness has been key; it was also necessary to consider other data collection instruments to help to reduce such possible effect. I needed to develop ways of researching the pupils' thoughts and feelings that were appropriate to their situation, as they have had negative associations with interviews. From the start, I began to talk to the pupils in our online community within Facebook. However, virtual ethnography became much more key once the AP site closed, raising further tensions and ethical dilemmas, as previously discussed. By identifying the potential difficulties and acknowledging others as they emerged, the aim has been to strengthen the study at each stage.

3.10 Ethics

Throughout the design of my research study, I have considered how the research 'purposes, methods, reporting and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices' (Cohen et al, 2005, p.51). I have specifically referred to BERA (2012) guidelines (these current guidelines post-date my research phase) and undertaken the University of Exeter ethics procedure, included in Appendix 6. The issue of ethics has been carefully considered as it is important to conduct research in ways that are respectful of participants, and that will not damage the future enquiries of other researchers, and to seek to enhance the image of research. I will discuss ethics relevant to my research under three headings, as modelled by Bassey (1999): respect for truth, respect for persons and respect for democracy.

Respect for truth:

Clearly, it is vital to be 'truthful' in data collection, analysis and the reporting of findings, by which I mean not deceiving others intentionally. Equally, I have been mindful of not deceiving myself and others unintentionally. This highlights the issue of trustworthiness in case study research. I have been ruthlessly transparent in presenting my positioning.

Building on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of trustworthiness, Bassey (1999) suggests asking eight questions in order to illuminate the ethic of respect for truth in case study, which I have applied to my research:

1. Has there been prolonged engagement with data sources?
2. Has there been persistent observation of emerging issues?
3. Have raw data been adequately checked with their sources?
4. Has there been sufficient triangulation of raw data leading to analytical statements?
5. Has the emerging story been systematically tested against the analytical statements?
6. Has a critical friend thoroughly tried to challenge the findings?
7. Is the account of the research sufficiently detailed to give the reader confidence in the findings?
8. Does the case record provide an adequate audit trail?
(Bassey, 1999, p.75)

In order to avoid misleading ideas, I sought to spend enough time at Eastbank to be immersed in its issues and build trust with participants. Through methodological triangulation, I aimed to strengthen confidence in evidence collected, through drawing on different methods of enquiry and by bringing together data from different sources. I have strived to be in a place of relationship with peers, participants in the study and others who have felt able to question the research processes and outcomes, knowing that I would seek to receive this openly.

Respect for persons:

Respect for persons is central to undertaking research from a critical theory perspective. Critical theorists, as with other theorists, believe that all research contains values but these "values are only dangerous when they are not recognized or acknowledged" (Littlejohn, 2002, p.229). According to Lindlof & Taylor (2002), 'Centrally, this work involves an ethically heightened and politically reflective study of the relationships between power, knowledge, and discourse that are produced in contexts of historical and cultural struggle' (p.47). Ethical issues are foundational in understanding the lived experiences of people in context and their social conditions, especially when there is the intent of uncovering power imbalances and a conscious effort is made to fuse theory and action.

Certain specific ethical issues need to be addressed when undertaking critical theory research. If the researcher is positioned as the ultimate possessor of 'the truth' and overlooks the needs of research participants, they may continue to promote maintenance of the dominant social order (Bishop, 2005). I have been aware of defining and conducting research from a privileged position (Bishop, 2005), and have looked to avoid the research doing little to advance the causes of disaffected pupils. According to Lee (1993), 'Not until we start to ask ideologically informed questions, *Whose problems are articulated? Whose problems are ignored systematically? What are the alternative ways of defining problems, and whose definition of problems dictates solutions?* can we discover an intimate relation between power, the right to define problems, and the ability to mobilize solutions' (p. 221, italics mine). Even in framing the research problem, questions and methods and in making choices, research participants can unintentionally be denied power since researchers have their own cultural agendas, concerns, and interests. I have been keen to acknowledge my subjectivity and account for any biases regarding participants with an aim of reflexive practice.

Through dialogue between myself and the participants, as expressed in my methodological section on dialogic education, my aim has been to allow each person's voice to be heard in the research, recognizing them as real people with real agency. It is important for me to acknowledge that my answers are not superior and that my research may have consequences in the lives of real people. I aimed to make the decision-making in the research to come out of working towards an equalized power relationship where I became attuned to the everyday concerns of those involved. Without critical listening, critical theory research is at risk of deciding for the participants that they are oppressed or that they need an advocate for a certain issue. In fact, 'Many have rightly questioned the arrogance that may accompany efforts to emancipate 'others'' (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 308).

Kincheloe & McLaren (2005) claim that 'Critical theory should always move beyond the contemplative realm to concrete social reform' (p.308). In doing so, Droogsma (2005) suggests asking two questions before undertaking research from a critical theory perspective, that are closely linked to ethical issues :

1. Could participants benefit from my advocacy?
2. Do I have access to resources/skills that these persons do not that could help meet the groups' needs?

Although these questions lean more towards Activist research, it was useful for me to ask these questions in relation to Eastbank at a difficult time of its closure.

In terms of the finer details of ethical issues, I sought to gather data from others in ways that respected their initial ownership of that data, and their entitlement to dignity and privacy. I gained informed consent from pupils, teachers, parents and creative partners and offered them opportunity to discuss the process and findings as they unfolded. The case report required the agreement of the head teacher of the secondary school before being made public, and the head teacher and lead teacher at Eastbank reserved the right to request that the school be given a pseudonym with its location disguised along with contributing individuals. Disguising places or people is not easy, especially as this school and unit were unique in lots of ways. Certainly within the institution, participants are likely to be recognized. Therefore, these issues have been approached with the lead teacher throughout the process. Those participating have the right to withdraw at any time for any or no reason.

I ensured that permission was given to conduct the research, in full knowledge of nature of my study. I have agreed arrangements for transferring ownership of my records to myself of participants' actions, writing and speech to feed into my case study. Analysis of raw data was sent to the lead teacher to feedback on, although the process became more difficult after Eastbank closed, relying on email and an occasional phone call. All participants have approved any photos used, as they are uploaded onto our Eastbank Facebook group. Participants have been reassured of safe and confidential storage of data. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) indicate that the problems of risk and vulnerability to participants must be addressed; steps must be taken to prevent risk or harm to participants...Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p.54) extend this to embarrassment as well as harm to the participants (Cohen et al., 2005, p.142). I would hope that by engaging with the issues outlined above, that I have keep participants' best interests in mind.

I have remained in contact with the lead teacher and seven of the pupils by accepting their friend requests on Facebook. All of the pupils are members of the online Facebook group page, so although I do not have access to their daily lives, I can send them a message and they can do the same.

Respect for democracy:

Researchers in a democratic society can expect certain freedoms, as laid out by Bassey (1999, p.74): 'the freedom to investigate and to ask questions; the freedom to give and to receive information; the freedom to express ideas and to criticize the ideas of others; and the freedom to publish research

findings'. These freedoms are subject to respect for truth and persons being upheld. I clarified the guidelines for possible publication before starting the research.

Stenhouse (1985, p.53) claims that 'In educational case study where the purpose of the research is to improve educational practice and hence the lot of children and the professionalism of teachers, there is at least some room for consideration of the responsibility of subjects to take risks on professional grounds'. Where there has been tension between respect for democracy, truth and persons, I have taken counsel from other researchers, especially my supervisors, and include in my thesis various discussions of the issues involved and how I have struggled to resolve them.

3.11 Summary

This chapter has introduced the research site and research questions for this study: 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' and 'Where did these approaches lead?' It details the underpinning perspectives influencing research design of relativist ontology and a constructionist epistemology that are driven by a post-critical theory approach. I outline how I have drawn on grounded theory, ethnography and story as methodology, case study as research design, with interviews, observation, blog and photography as chosen methods of data collection. A data analysis rationale has been given and issues of reciprocity, ethics, tensions and dilemmas discussed. I have made a case for my approach and how the parts fit together to firmly hold my findings, which are discussed in the next chapter.

4 Findings Part 1:

What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my findings as I sought to answer my first research question:

1. What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?

The next chapter will present my findings to the question:

2. Where did these approaches lead?

The first question has been given much more weighting than the second. This was, in part, due to the sudden closure of the AP site, but also because I wanted to go into sufficient depth so as to perceive and interpret the practitioner approaches. As already expressed, I have chosen the word 'approaches' without preceding it with, for example, pedagogical, pastoral or philosophical. The aim is to keep the question open and without compartmentalisation by simply defining approaches as ways of dealing with something.

The participants that I am referring to throughout my findings are described in section 3.1 and listed here as an additional reference for this chapter.

The practitioners are:

- Dave (real name, as requested) – the lead teacher of the AP site
- Beth, Helen and Rosa (pseudonyms) – behaviour specialist teaching assistants (referred to as STAs), with specialist training qualifications in behaviour management
- Geoff (real name, as requested) – musician artist in residence
- Wolf and Water team (real name, as requested) – arts company artists in residence

The pupils are:

- four girls and nine boys, all with pseudonyms. I had planned to work with 14 pupils, but one pupil had been excluded when I arrived. Also, one of the girls was only part of the Learn to Work programme at the local college after being excluded from Eastbank by the secondary school just before I arrived.

Pupils and their details are not specifically listed, despite pseudonyms, to maximise anonymity. There are photographs of faces (with permission); however, no pupil names are attributed to those faces, to avoid linking the faces to the stories in my study. Interviews, field notes, memos and Geoff's blog have been coded by number, and dates and context of each are referenced next to that number in appendix 3.

I have occasionally used wider reading in presenting my findings; this was done to further explain terms, which I did not see as needing to be limited to discussion and literature review chapters.

4.1.1 Introductory overview of findings

In answer to the first research question, my analysis showed that Eastbank's practitioner approaches were characterised by:

1. reflecting
2. building principles
3. exploring practice

The practitioners at Eastbank reflected on practice, continued to build principles and explored practice, individually, collaboratively and communally. As one process stimulated another, the practitioners constructed, experimented and interpreted them, whilst allowing context and complexity to speak into their decisions and actions. Central to these overlapping approaches was a marriage of **empathic engagement** and **mission**. These are key themes that I will explore further in 4.5, later in this chapter. These findings are shown in diagrammatic form in figure 4.1:
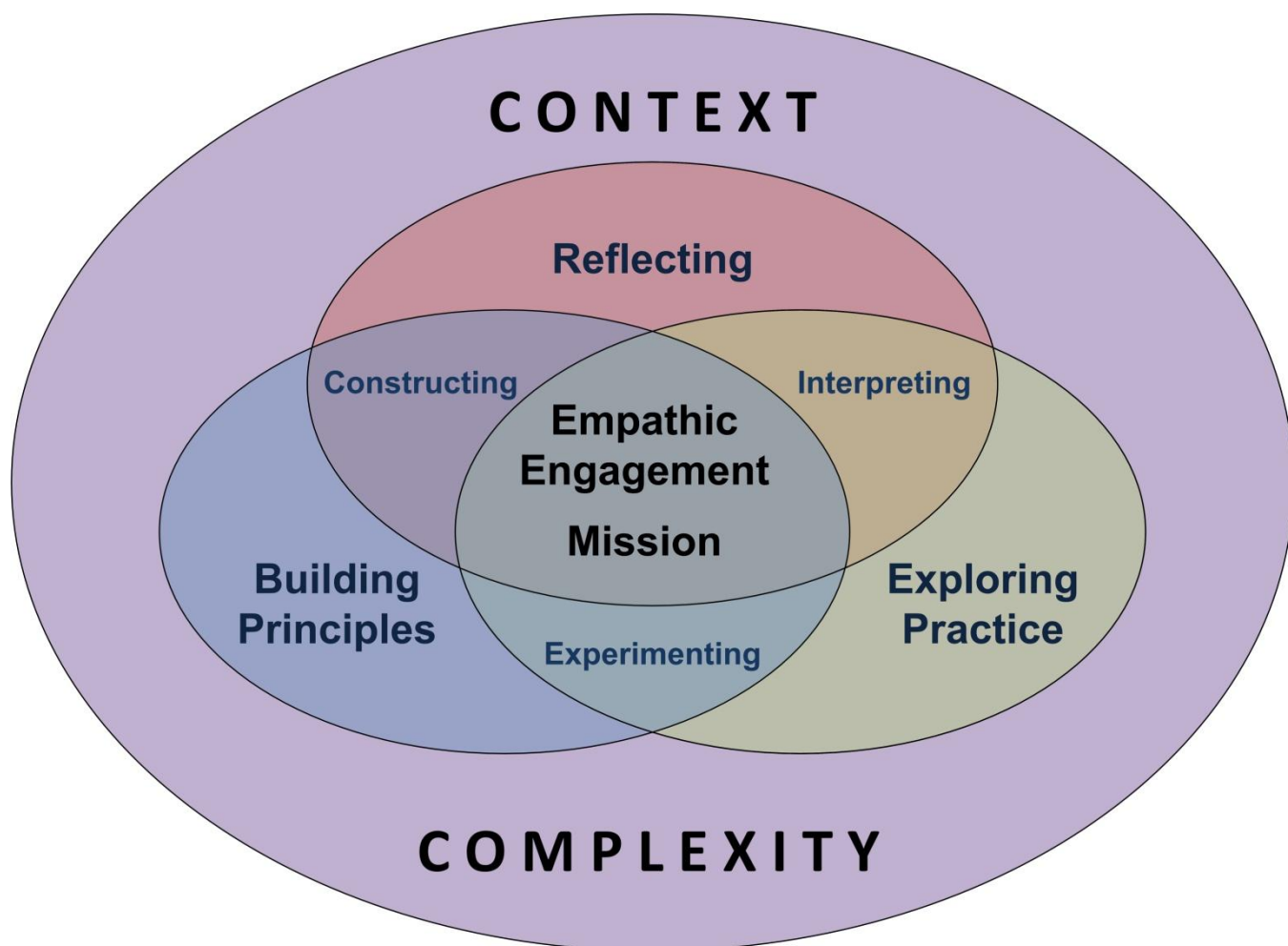
Figure 4.1: What characterised practitioner approaches at Eastbank? In diagrammatic form (source: author)

Each part of this diagram will be discussed in detail during the chapter.

4.2 Reflecting

Reflection is thinking for an extended period of time, linking recent experiences to earlier ones in order to promote interrelated and more complex thought. Dewey thought of reflection as a form of problem solving that chained several ideas together by linking each idea with its predecessor in order to resolve an issue (Dewey, 1933). This is a key approach used by practitioners at Eastbank. Community reflection was timetabled into the day, with a meeting for pupils and practitioners followed by a meeting of practitioners before everyone went home.

Figure 4.2: Reflecting

My interviews with practitioners and Geoff's blog revealed much reflection. Wolf and Water reflected on context, current practice and through voicing ideas as an arts company, so although I could witness reflection occurring, I had less data for them as practitioners than the rest of the group.

The full time staff and the professional artists in residence reflected in four ways, which are discussed below:

- reflecting on context
- reflecting on their biography
- reflecting on their own current practice
- through voicing ideas/speculating

4.2.1 Reflecting on context

There were consistent examples of the practitioners at Eastbank referring to context surrounding the participants, considering its influence and reality. In particular, the social context of the pupils was considered. Dave, lead teacher, had been thinking about the delicate balance of moving pupils away from low aspiration without being counter to the culture in which they were living. He wanted them to acknowledge their cultural roots and grow rather than turn them against their heritage:

> It has often been said that (name of the town) people – pupils – suffer from poverty of aspiration. That is a culture that we need to be aware of and try to work against without putting ourselves in a position of conflict, which has a negative impact' (written interview 2).

There was reflection on the role of Eastbank in some of the pupils' lives and the effect of being a
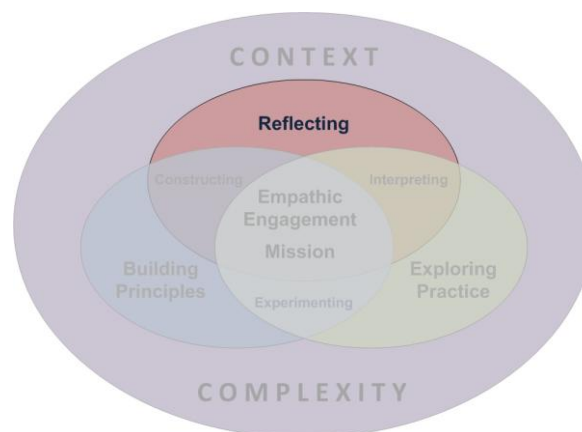
consistently calm presence within pupils' difficult situations. Beth, specialist teaching assistant, described the reality:

> A lot of young people haven't got the stability and the support from families or whatever - this, we, are their support. They know every day they have to come here and that, you know, whatever frame of mind they're in or whatever's happening we will be okay. They wake up in the morning and something's happened or there isn't that support and that stability – they probably won't go to college, they probably won't go to work...and they end up just actually not doing anything which does spiral quickly (interview 1).

Beth reminded herself of this often, to help her understand why her reactions to the pupils needed to be consistent. When pupils had recently learnt that Eastbank was closing, Dave came to the conclusion that any surprises affected them more than usual: 'It's a bit colder today than they're expecting and it's unsettling them' (interview 4).

The practitioners gave time to thinking about the details of the pupils' out of school realities. This, understandably, would impact on how practitioners related to pupils and gave them a way of contextualising their behaviour and ability to study. Helen, specialist teaching assistant, described one pupil's situation:

> He's been in my class Year 10 and 11, and he makes me laugh, but that's not the reason why I like him. He has a shit home life, a real shit home life. He's had a step-dad who's been abusive to the family, to mum, nasty to Damon. And he never mentions any of it. Then we had a meeting and it came out there...The social worker says what his home life's like, windows broken and boarded up. I think he comes here into what's normal and then he has to go home to that. And he's a good kid. And mum, I don't know, he doesn't say a lot about mum but we heard she drinks a lot. You know, he hasn't been in Thursday, he hasn't been in Friday, he hasn't come in today. One alarm clock in the house so he misses the taxi – she did tell me this the other day...I would like to stay in contact with him. I don't think I'd be allowed to (interview 7).

Damon was being put on a protection order (the family courts have the power to make orders to protect children from harm caused by abuse or neglect), hence Helen wondering if she would be able to stay in contact once he left. Practitioners did not separate pupils' out of school realities from what they expected pupils to achieve and do whilst at Eastbank, which came from extended consideration of context. This led them to want pupils' learning to make sense to them within the context of their social situation. Helen thought aloud when in interview, after a long morning of a pupil moaning, 'He moans about coming here some days but he *does come* and he knows...he feels safe here, he's been here a long time' (Helen, interview 7). She was sensitive to this sense of safety because she was aware of the lack of safety beyond Eastbank. Part of the sensitivity came from immersion in the social context:

> I don't know, I mean I've known Jay a long time because I actually went to school with his mum. So I know what the whole family's like and he's just - he knows what he's doing, he is quite

clever...he has just behaved the way the rest of his family has. He's not the odd one out in his family' (Helen, interview 7).

Two of the permanent staff lived and raised children in the town in which several of the pupils lived. They were experiencing the pupils' lives from the inside, rather than from the outside looking in. There was also pondering on the pupils' stages of maturity, 'I'm worried about him; I don't know what he's going to do. He's been offered some work with a football club, groundsman-type work but I don't think he's mature enough yet for that' (interview 4). Dave was considering the wider context of the pupil's life and was able to follow up based on this. The permanent staff spent time organising work experience that was realistic for the pupils' maturity and social context. Even then, extra support was sometimes needed. Dave explained, 'Charmaine's brain is still going through a huge wobble at the moment... it took a lot of persuasion from me and mum to get her to go today' (interview 4).

Geoff, the music practitioner in residence at Eastbank, reflected on the how his subject interacts with disaffection and how it could engage with the pupils' social context:

> Music is an area that can have a lot of appeal to disaffected students for all sorts of reasons, one of the main ones being that it gives people the chance to express a lot of emotions that are otherwise forbidden – anger, confusion, depression. It is also an area where students can develop ideas in their own way...It also carries a lot of status in their peer group; it's pretty cool to be able to play or sing, rap or produce beats (written interview 1).

Geoff saw an opportunity to facilitate a space for the pupils in which they could channel emotions that might have caused them shame, and instead find creativity within the process. Whilst reflecting on his practice, he was also setting the groundwork for exploring pedagogical approaches.

Alongside reflecting on social context, practitioners showed an awareness and reflection of the politics of the school system. By this I mean the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy within mainstream school. Through experience, Geoff had become aware that, in this context, being given meaningful choices during a music session was sometimes not straight forward:

> And it may be that if students have little experience of making meaningful choices in school that they could find it initially stressful, frightening, bewildering; they may well not trust that they are really being given a choice or trust their own ability to make choices or to deal with any 'mistakes' they make. So it is possible that some of them would need a lot of support in the initial stages. Others would take to it like a duck to water. Making choices takes practice and making effective choices works best when we know what we need from a situation (written interview 1).

Such a comment is relevant to all pupils, but particularly for pupils who have not been trusted in a school context, sometimes for many years. This written interview was from just before Geoff arrived at Eastbank. However, once there, he found that pupils had built relationship and trust with the permanent staff and that several pupils could quickly enter into the space he had made. Through his reflection,

Geoff was also having ideas about exploring practice in terms of scaffolding decision making. Beth and Rosa also showed awareness of politics – the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy in mainstream school – during a discussion:

> Me: Which part of how Eastbank is run works for you?
>
> Beth: We don't have the same politics that a school has.
> Rosa: We don't work in black in white, we work in grey. So over the years we've given a lot. A lot of the children that come here are very damaged in one way or another (interview 28).

Practitioners understood how the school system worked and where that clashed with certain pupils. They could also see how Eastbank differed from mainstream school, both in terms of its advantages and drawbacks. These issues were often reflected on collaboratively during the afternoon meeting. Geoff had come to feel particularly strongly about how the pressures on a school could affect the quality of his work as a paid artist in residence, and so came to work at Eastbank as a volunteer.

> Part of the reason for wanting it to be on a voluntary basis rather than paid is because of the freedom it gives me both in terms of how I work and dealing with expected outcomes. My experience of the education system leads me to believe that most management teams will feel that they have to judge the value of any work by the degree to which students are moved towards scoring points for the school rather than measuring whether the students themselves feel it has been of value to them. I will stress here that this is not a piece of cynicism, rather it is based on my observations of how the system works...So I am putting myself in a position where I am able to explicitly state that I have no vested interest in the school and makes my principle aim more believable – that I am there to help the students with what THEY need (written interview 1, original emphasis).

Geoff was committed to meeting the pupils' needs and was seeking ways of doing so within his awareness of the reality of some school politics. This and other reflections on the education system led to strengthening and clearly articulating his values, showing the interrelationship between reflecting on practice and building principles. The practitioners' reflections on the social and political context show it to be an important, if implicit, part of their approach to working with the pupils.

4.2.2 Reflecting on their own biography

Geoff (musician) and Dave (lead teacher) were the only practitioners to explicitly draw on their own histories as a resource for their current approaches. However, two of the teaching assistants mentioned over coffee that they decided to work at Eastbank after watching how the AP site helped their sons a few years before. They believed in what they were doing because of personal experience. They did not want to give any further details, but whether explicit or implicit, sensitivity to one's own biography was a part of how Eastbank was run. Geoff reflected on his previous teaching approaches, as a full-time music teacher:

Some time back, a colleague had a poster up (aimed at teachers) which I can't quote exactly but it was something along the lines of "I make the sun shine, I make the clouds grey" that reminded me not only that I had the responsibility but the power to exert a tremendous influence in my classroom (written interview 3).

He was pinpointing an awakening of awareness to his own influence that still remained with him in his current practice. He continued,

I had some basic classroom management skills and by behaving as a fascist dictator I was able to maintain reasonable order most of the time. I found this way of teaching exhausting and there were still students who would not comply. I'm tempted to say that they failed to comply because my attitude at the time was that they should come in prepared to behave. I thought it wasn't my job to get them to behave; that was their parents' job; my job was to teach them music. And my way of dealing with the problem was to exclude them from my class (written interview 3).

This reflection on previous teaching attitude helped Geoff to map his teaching journey and fully own where he was now. He then described a revelation through reflection that he continued to keep at the forefront of his mind:

Around this time I was looking for an alternative to teaching. Instead I found an alternative way to teach...I began to look seriously at what was my crap and what was the students' in terms of how I was reacting to what was happening in the classroom...And I went on a couple of courses run by Peter Hook and Andy Vass and through them found the work done by Bill Rogers. The day with Peter Hook particularly was a life saver; the idea of teaching rights with responsibilities and drawing classroom rules from that where rights and responsibilities include the teacher; the idea that I want to influence behaviour rather than control it. And his idea of an emotional bank account that I need to make deposits (positives) in before I can make any withdrawals (negatives) (written interview 3).

His ongoing reflecting process helped him to see universal benefits:

The big surprise for me was not how well this worked with my "difficult" classes but the effect it had on my "good" classes. Or to put it another way, while I had begun to recognise that the students who were being disruptive probably had needs I was not meeting, so did many of my compliant students' (written interview 3).

Geoff's story mattered to him. On days where he questioned his current route – he had previously been seen as a very successful head of music – he could refer back to his own story that he kept to hand and know that his old route no longer worked for him. Dave too, had decided to pursue an area of interest, simply because it mattered to him:

My M.Ed work was driven by wishing to follow a really interesting line of enquiry. There was little to be gained professionally, although I suppose it show prospective employers that I have a certain mindset and openness to furthering my knowledge and developing my practice (written interview 2).

The 'really interesting line of enquiry' had later brought him to Eastbank. Geoff, Dave and to a lesser extent the Wolf and Water company and the teaching assistants reflected on their own stories whilst at Eastbank, keeping them as part of their awareness, and so easily relating recent experiences to earlier ones, to find robust and interrelating ways forward.

4.2.3 Reflecting on their current practice

My examples above were of practitioners' own biographies, which included history of their teaching practices. However, the following examples are focused on current practice. All of the practitioners reflected on their approaches with ease. Geoff, in particular, questioned his impact:

> I was not sure that I was offering them anything meaningful...Now, did it do anything for them apart from while away an idle hour? How interested were they? They were all very civilised but did I start any fires? (Geoff's blog 1).

Geoff was not satisfied to have simply got through the session. He wanted to learn from that session and bring those revelations to the planning of the next one. Dave, too, could see what he felt was a key weakness to Eastbank's timetable and was looking for a workable way ahead:

> I mean there are lots of holes in our curriculum... I don't think we've done especially well this year because of that (Learn 2 Work programme) in terms of outcomes that they're going to get exam-wise and accreditation-wise, and questions could be asked about what we do here and why we're here (Dave, interview 4).

Dave could see that Eastbank might be criticised by funders for a lack of tangible outcomes whilst focusing on tailor made work experience and building relationships with colleges that would take on the pupils after year 11. This focus took pupils away from trying to gain GCSEs, which was a key part of government criteria. Practitioners also reflected on this together at afternoon meetings.

Dave reflected on the effect of the practitioners' own emotions on the pupils, especially after hearing that Eastbank was about to close:

> Where are we going to be working come September? The school will offer us jobs but is it the sort of job we want? Change can be frightening and it makes us feel unsettled and that can have an effect. Even if we try our hardest not to let it affect us, it still will, and probably the pupils will pick up something maybe subconsciously, but ultimately will pick up something in the way we are (interview 4).

Helen, too, was aware of her own emotions surrounding the closure, and that it was affecting her relationships with colleagues.

I go to college (Learn 2 Work) on Friday with a member of the main school who works in the Support Centre. She's a good friend and she keeps saying to me 'well who are you having next year, we haven't heard who you're having', and I'm having to lie to her, and I don't feel comfortable with that...because we were told not to say anything to anybody yet, and it's hard (interview 7).

Having awareness of their own emotions and identifying and owning the effects of them was part of the practice employed at the AP site. This was practised individually, but also modelled at the daily de-brief.

There were also positive reflections. Geoff reflected on the underlying motivations behind his activities:

My expectation is always that young people will make choices (given the chance) based on what they value. The activities I set up were designed to give them choices. And they were activities without any "right" answers. They were processes of expression and exploration with the freedom to make and learn from mistakes (written interview 3).

This is linked with the other venn diagram circles, 'building principles' (4.3) and 'exploring practice' (4.4). The above quotation shows Geoff reflecting on his practice in a way that acknowledged where his values lay. He was explicitly thinking about the underlying methodological principles upon which he was basing his exploration of pedagogical approaches. Although he was reflecting on practice, he was simultaneously giving credence to his values and methodology, therefore strengthening and developing them. He was continuing to explore his pedagogical approaches through his reflection of his practice. Scanning back to consider his whole time at Eastbank, he wrote:

I saw a lot of students choosing to engage with what I'd set up. But more than that a lot of the students chose to engage with me and they wouldn't have done that unless there was something there that they valued. And it's the stuff that we intrinsically value that we keep with us through our lives. So yes, I was cool about the job I'd done (written interview 3).

Through reflecting on his overall time at the unit, he identified the importance of the pupils engaging with him alongside the activities set up. He thought that they showed evidence of valuing his presence and engagement, which he felt was a key factor in the experience having an influence on the pupils. Geoff's reflection is a comment on aspiration. He had been an influence on their lives for a short while, which links to Quaglia's (2012) eight conditions that make a difference in raising aspiration, specifically 'heroes': having someone who believes in you and who is there when you need them.

There was a reflection on the nuts and bolts of the sessions as well as a wider reflection, such as:

I need to rework material to give them better access and also to better reflect contemporary practice, compared to my background of more traditional musical skills. Samples, samples, samples! Edit and load some of their loops into the NN-XT sampler on Reason so they can trigger them live from the keyboard. Try chopping up the Chiddy Bang track "Opposite of Adults" that Les said he liked. Try to find out which tracks and artists they like. Big trust issue around that because it is so personal (Geoff's blog 1).

This particular reflection also links to the second venn diagram circle, 'building principles', in terms of adapting to pupils' needs, outlined next in this chapter. It also links to the third circle, 'exploring practice' in terms of learner agency and adapting creatively to pupils' ideas.

Geoff and Dave became interested in 'possibility thinking', explained in detail in my literature review, after reading some of my observation and memo notes. Geoff studied his own diary notes to identify where the enabling conditions for possibility thinking occurred in his sessions. He also looked to see if and where possibility thinking was occurring alongside pedagogy that was nurturing it, as shown in figure 4.3:

My job is to try and work out what they need though I do start from the idea that what the students need is someone who believes they are worth the time and effort, someone who believes they have something to say and is prepared to listen. I'm not going in with lesson plans and schemes of work so in a way I'm trying to avoid a situation in which I second guess what they need. I'm trying to create a space for them that enables them to work/play and through that begin to articulate their needs. While they are working I may just listen, I might join in if I think they need the support, I might just join in because they've got a groove going and I feel like it. I might step back and observe, step back and not observe, leave them to it and go out of the room. I do reiterate to them that if they need me all they need to do is ask.

Comment [GM1]: Enabling conditions – Standing back, offering time, offering space.

T , K , L , and L (who's role again is as audience) taking part with me. L helped unload. T , K and L doing music most of day.

Comment [GM2]: Immersion

So we set up together and they start jamming straight away. selected a beat from the guitar FX box and improvised a song (sort of Frank Zappa lyrics, explicitly about sex) with L playing guitar and me on keyboard. K is there as audience. It has helped me a lot that T , who is a class leader, has taken me at face value. So the impression I get is that this is something T wants to say. Yes it's amusing, yes he's aware of the audience but he's not attempting to shock and they seem to trust me to understand that. T then asks me to set up Cubase so that we can record it.

Comment [GM3]: Self-determination

Comment [GM4]: Risk taking, being imaginative, play

We set up to record, I switches to bass but then Margo came in so T changed direction and instead of his first song now improvises a romantic love song to Margo – "Oh Margo" is the hook, something that to me is reminiscent of Captain Beefheart. There are also rock n roll references in it. I think all the boys have a crush on Margo and I think it says a lot for T s ability that he manages to articulate this honestly and with an appropriate emotional maturity so that something potentially embarrassing comes over as very genuine, something I felt was appreciated by his audience.

Comment [GM5]: The change of direction here highlights the inentionality of both songs.

Now I've said that I'm happy for the students to use the equipment while I'm out of the room but Dave feels a member of staff should be there. So as the boys and I go off the three girls (unbeknownst to me) go in with Margo. (See photographic evidence.) It makes me feel again how important it is that the students have space on their own, that at the moment I can't even explicitly make an offer to the girls; I have to set up the space and then disappear.

Comment [GM6]: Enabling conditions

At the end of the day T , I and K all help to tear down and load up.

Comment [GM7]: I'm not sure if that ties in with possibility thinking but it gives them ownership. It also shows that I trust them and that I can express a need to them i.e. I need you to help me pack up.

Westend 17th May

T and L (I think) help unload. T wants a neater set-up so I leave him to organise that while he asks lots of questions about how to connect everything up. I've also brought a lead so that we can route an internet connected computer to the mixer for playing songs from YouTube.

D is in (Margo thought because he knew I would be in). No K or L as they are on an exclusion for some rather drastic graffiti on the outside of the building.

They want a Dub Step beat. T tries to find something on the guitar fx but no go. D and L search on YouTube, T and I fool around on Reason. I write a basic beat which T then modifies. I chose a tempo of 65bpm which is a fairly standard Dub Step speed. T recorded a track from YouTube and then remixed it with his beat from Reason and they synced up! (It's really difficult to do unless you have the right bits of software so he was just jammy!)

Comment [GM8]: Self-determination

Figure 4.3: Geoff's reflections on his diary notes (names removed digitally)

Reflecting on his practice this way helped Geoff to identify enabling conditions for fostering creativity and further build on them. Identifying evidence of possibility thinking, such as self-determination, intentionality, immersion, risk-taking, play and being imaginative, was an encouragement to Geoff that the small things happening in the session were a positive part of a bigger picture. I would agree with Geoff's annotations, although would add that there was also risk-taking and playful exploration shown in Tim's humorous love song to me. In my literature review, I discuss a 'possibility space'. There is evidence at the end of figure 4.3 of Geoff playing in the possibility space with the pupils, which he did not identify, and which I raised with him later. Dave then reflected on Geoff's thinking:

Figure 4.4: 2009-12-10:66 Dave reading Geoff's annotations

Figure 4.4 shows Dave reading Geoff's reflections and annotations of those reflections, part of which is shown in figure 3, as he was interested to learn more about possibility thinking and its enabling conditions. Here there are multi-levels: Dave reflecting on Geoff's reflection on previous reflecting.

All the practitioners, in their own ways, reflected on the session content and the motivation behind it, the emotional issues and ethical considerations and the impact of what they were doing. This made space for the awareness of the social context, practitioners' own histories and, in Geoff's case, current theory, to influence their current practice.

4.2.4 Reflecting through voicing ideas/speculating

Reflecting through voicing ideas and speculating was part of the process that led to building principles and to interpretation of practitioners' exploration of practice. Dave and Geoff, in particular, explored their own ideas about Eastbank, on teaching and the way that the world operates. Dave was very concerned with the pressures from performativity,

A conflict that I am aware of is the pressure that central government puts on schools for pupils to gain qualifications that pressure is passed to us to get our pupils to take courses and exams perhaps before they are ready. THIS IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF PRESSURE FOR US I.E. THE PRESSURE TO PUSH THE PUPILS TOWARDS ACCREDITATION; OFTEN BEFORE I THINK THE PUPILS ARE READY' (Written interview 2: original emphasis).

Dave was formulating his ideas as to where he stood on this issue and in which direction he would take Eastbank in relation to the pressure. He also acknowledged from his own past that, 'to achieve my aspirations I had to achieve certain goals, i.e. gain qualifications. Those goals/ stepping stones are important motivational forces when it comes to working hard at school/college' (Written interview 2). The space to think through these tensions helped him to construct and interpret principles and practice in a holistic way.

Geoff was concerned with disaffection and its root causes:

So in my opinion the most significant failure is likely to have happened at home. This does not mean that I blame the parents; I'm assuming they've done the best they can. Likewise I assume teachers, schools, social services, politicians, police etc have done the best they can. I don't believe that our best is good enough but it's where we are' (written interview 3).

Even though he saw this as the case, he also saw how blaming parents is detrimental:

Putting it down to bad parenting enables us to demonise them, the outsiders (the idea being that when we feel bad instead of feeling that pain we dump it on someone else). And we can only do that if we no longer have to treat them as human beings' (written interview 3).

Again, these tensions were given space, thus bringing strength to his foundations of building principles. Geoff was committed to pinning down what it was that he rejected in the current schooling system. To build new principles and interpret new explorations, one needs to know what does not work currently and why. Geoff reflected through voicing ideas as to why the young people had ended up in an AP site:

We want them to be ambitious, to desire power and superiority over others. We do not want them to be balanced, decent human beings…We do not want them to aspire to being loved… What do we do then with a child who is in such a poor state that they can't even play the compliance game in the hope it will help them to survive? Exclude them, punish them, disconnect them from the rest of society...A proposition – the students ended up at Eastbank because they have suffered a failure of care...The problem of a lack of care is compounded by an unhealthy core value...I believe that we are not caring for young people very well and I believe that is because we were not cared for very well… Where we recognise manifestations of the problems our expectation is still that the student needs to change to conform to our view. We refuse to countenance the idea that what we are doing is wrong (written interview 3).

Geoff was bringing his propositions and speculations to me as one of his peers as part of his process of

reflecting. He gave this time and came to the conclusion that this was because, 'I believe we operate from certain unquestioned assumptions and this fundamentally effects what we do.' Furthermore, 'We do as we were done to and unfortunately the road out of that requires each of us to look at ourselves and then do something about it; and that can be a long and painful process' (Written interview 3). Reflecting through voicing ideas and speculating brought Geoff to the point of owning his need to question his and others' assumptions and then act on revelations.

Jules, a Wolf & Water theatre practitioner, also theorised about the set-up of places like Eastbank:

> They do get the best that they can out of everything that they've got, which is little. But when you go to other places it's very similar actually – no, scratch that. You go to places, it just seems that these sorts of groups, they've either got a lot of staff and absolutely no facilities, or there is hardly any staff and no facilities (Interview 36).

Each of the practitioners were looking for patterns, that often led them to reflect on their role in AP, which could lead to constructing, experimenting with and interpreting that role.

Throughout my time at Eastbank, practitioners showed curiosity and contemplated meaning. Dave used phrases beginning with 'perhaps' or 'I wonder', such as, 'Perhaps it is something that I should give serious consideration and encourage other staff to think about as well', 'Perhaps I am getting worn down by the experience of working with them to feel this may be the case. Working with them can be very draining' and 'I wonder how much thought the pupils give to their future' (all from written interview 2). He also acknowledged his own and the other staff's questions: 'So already our minds are in a bit of a whirl and there's all sorts of questions that are unanswered. What do we do after half term when we've only got four students, where are we going to be working come September?' (Interview 4). This was all part of the construction process of his identity as an educator.

Geoff asked himself questions regularly, to challenge himself: 'How interested were they?' (Geoff's blog 1). He asked wider questions:

> Are these symptoms the result of a lack of aspiration? If not, will fostering aspirations as a means of tackling the symptoms be successful at overcoming the underlying problems? Do these symptoms/problems demonstrate a failure on the part of the individual, of society, or somewhere in between? Whose failure is this perceived to be?' (written interview 3).

He spent time contemplating and looking for meaning. He also used 'I wonder' at various times: 'Three of the girls did come in around lunchtime and have a mess around for a couple of minutes... I wonder if the girls would find it a less intimidating arrangement if they were mainly with their peer group rather than a teacher' (Geoff's blog 3).

4.2.5 Constructing: where reflecting meets building principles – to conclude

A great deal of the reflection outlined in the previous sections fostered practitioners building and consolidating foundational principles. Through practitioners reflecting on the social context of the pupils and wider context of the AP site, their own biography and current practice and voicing their ideas in dialogue with peers, they made space for forging identity and an implicit mission statement individually, collaboratively and communally. This forging of principles, or forming a way of being by bringing together various reflections is represented by 'constructing'.
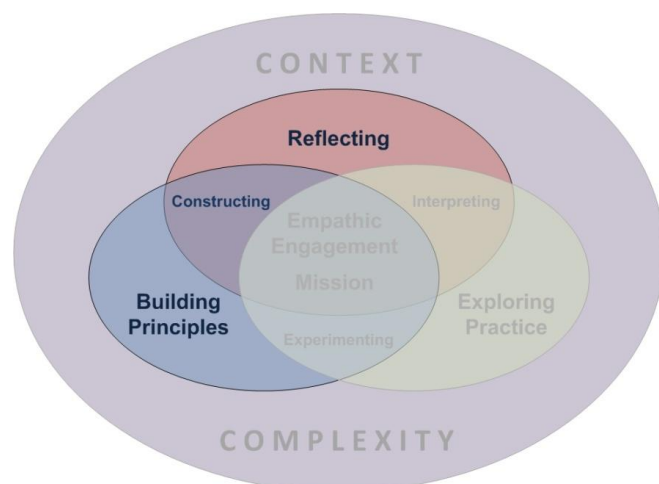
Figure 4.5: Constructing

Reflection helped the practitioners to pinpoint the gap that was sparking their interest and empathy. Be it pupils' need for consistency, care, the arts or choice, through reflection the practitioners were constructing a reason to be there, a sense of mission. They needed to understand what it was they could offer to counter the gap about which they were also passionate. By identifying these gaps or areas of concern, practitioners then began to channel their passion with awareness into expressible values and methodologies. The constructing process was a bringing of awareness to their passion about the gap they could counter and making it expressible; it was carving their practice as a 'labour of love'. For Geoff, a burning issue became a lack of care for young people; for Dave, a key issue was about pushing pupils before they are ready; the specialist teaching assistants came to express that what mattered was love and nurture; Wolf and Water had come to express that it was important to enjoy and celebrate what young people had and were in the present. This process did not necessarily all happen in the time I was on site; for some it had taken years, for others, the questioning of a researcher had triggered or sped up the process. These expressions were carved into a more defined shape: specific values and methodologies within the context of Eastbank at that time.

The constructing process also worked the other way: building principles helped to form new ways and depths of reflecting, which will be reflected in the descriptions in the following section as I discuss the building of principles. It is also worth highlighting that reflection also fostered practitioners' 'interpreting' of practice that led to further exploration of practice, which will be discussed in section 4.4.4.

4.3 Building principles

Principles are about the basics: a basic truth, law, assumption, or quality that determines characteristic behaviour. Principles incorporate both values and methodologies. Values are standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life. Methodologies are the particular principles that determine *how* specific procedures are deployed and interpreted; the underlying logic or philosophical basis of those procedures.
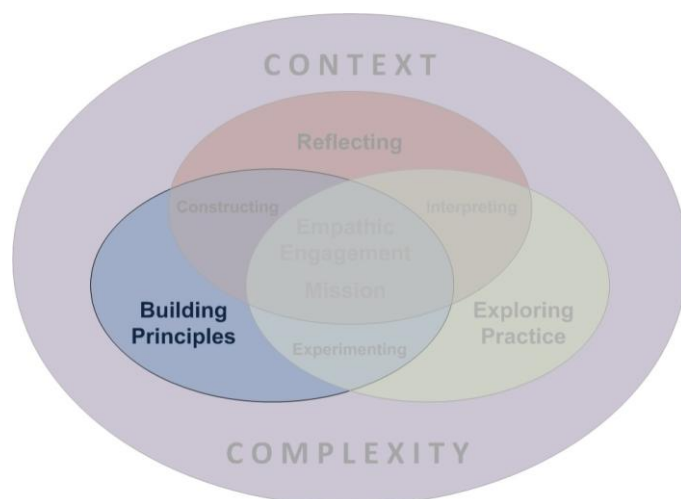
Figure 4.6: Building principles

I have called this theme 'Building Principles' as practitioners at Eastbank were building on what was already being constructed out of their reflecting and being experimented with in their practice, coming to basic truths, assumptions and qualities. The practitioners built and developed both individual and collective principles. Being visitors, the artists in residence brought their own principles underpinning their work with them. However, these principles consistently concurred with those of the permanent staff at Eastbank. This was perhaps why one was drawn to the other and began working together. It is worth noting that I brought Eastbank to Geoff's attention, though the decision for him to begin as an artist in residence was between Geoff, Dave and the secondary school.

I have not felt it necessary to separate out individual from collective principles. The nature of the way that the AP site was run was such that any values or ways of working that jarred with others would have been discussed and resolved. Therefore, my sense is that the individual was supported by the collective and the collective supported by the individual. The following are collective principles, apparent across practitioners' statements and actions:

- Adapting to pupils' needs, including time being seen as flexible and opportunities being given to be oneself
- Building trust and relationship, including offering quality time and a sense that practitioners were 'for the pupils', managing behaviour through relationship, offering a relaxed atmosphere (including physical environment) and discipline
- Teamwork
- Nurture, including a focus on self-esteem and a future orientation

4.3.1 Adapting to pupils' needs

Practitioners felt that it was important to adapt to the needs of the pupils. As already expressed in 4.2.1 Beth (STA) had come to value being a consistent force that would not react in fear or anger at the pupils' feelings and circumstances. Geoff was explicit about valuing adapting to pupils' needs:

> I take the view that we behave the way we do for a reason. Children behave in a way that disrupts a classroom because they have a need that is not being met. The disruption is a signal that all is not well. Those needs may be connected to what is happening in the classroom or may be external...When our reaction to disruption from young people is largely punitive (and I would rank exclusion, given the way it is used and as the term itself suggests, as a punitive action) we fail to address the underlying motivation. At best we give ourselves some respite (written interview 1).

He made clear that people still needed to be held accountable for their actions, but that a largely punitive reaction missed opportunities to make progress. For this particular project in Eastbank, Geoff deliberately made space to allow the pupils' needs to surface. 'I'm not going in with lesson plans and schemes of work so in a way I'm trying to avoid a situation in which I second guess what they need' (written interview 1). What might appear from the outside to look chaotic was in fact a methodology that sought out a sense of relevance and ownership. Geoff believed that, 'students should be able to choose whether or not they want to work with me and we need to be flexible about allowing that to change from day to day, moment to moment. So we escape the standard workshop format which hasn't always worked for them' (written interview 1). Wolf and Water also took the same approach. The pedagogical approaches taken by both artists in residence (outlined later in section 4.4), stem from this principle.

Time was seen as flexible in the unit, by all practitioners, as part of adapting to pupils' needs. Dave explained that, 'our flexible timetable provides lots of time for conversations with the pupils' (written interview 2), whilst Rosa expressed it through analogy, 'We're the grey area, not the black and white' (Rosa, interview 28). Note here the use of 'we'. There was a clear sense when talking to the permanent staff that they saw themselves as one unit, rather than as individuals with separate values. Helen expressed a sense of Eastbank being greater than the sum of its parts, 'It's just that we – you just do it and you behave like that...because that's what Eastbank is' (Helen, interview 28). Helen had got to a point of internalising the values and methodology of the unit and because they resonated with her own, had let the pedagogical approaches and social responses happen as second nature.

The principle of "being allowed to be you" was also a key part of adapting to pupils' needs. Helen described what was meant by this:

> And they can be themselves, there's no pretence is there, if they have a bad day we say it's a different day tomorrow. There's no hard feelings. There's nothing like that, they just come in and

start again the next day. It's just – there's a lot of places don't work like that (Helen, interview 28).

The practitioners did not seem to keep a record of wrongs, which allowed for pupils to turn up exactly as they were. This meant that there was more risk of temper flare ups, but once some emotion had erupted and there was little angry or fearful reaction, the pupil in question usually calmed down before doing something very serious. This lack of holding a grudge is also an important part of building trust, as explained in the next section.

Pupils also spoke of feeling as though they were allowed to be themselves – a key indicator that adapting to pupils' needs was an established principle in the unit:

> Instead of teachers trying to hold you back and not letting you be you, they allow you to be you, they actually talk to you like a human being, they don't treat you like this piece of nothing and like they give you some choice. If you want to go to the shop they'll allow you to go to the shop as long as you are back in time. Instead of, 'no you are not doing that, you're not worth it, why should we let you?' kind of thing. That's how I felt at [last school named] because they just pretty much wanted you not be allowed to do anything at all, it was like a forced work camp really, where here it is a bit more loose, everyone is nice, the teachers I get on with well (Kirk, interview 14).

This sense of being allowed to be yourself included practitioners. In a discussion with the teaching assistants, they explained:

> Rosa: You can come in with your lunch, you can sit down, know that someone will make you a cup of coffee, you can read the paper and the magazine, and you can chill out.
>
> Helen: ... and take the mick [laughter and fake glares] (interview 28).

The practitioners' relationships with each other and with their roles at the AP site modelled this way of being. They embraced the principle as a methodology for working with the pupils, whilst experiencing it themselves whilst there. Rosa was not speaking of walking into a staff room to relax; the staff used one of the two classrooms in which to have their lunch and read, often accompanied by the pupils. On this particular day, Beth had come in from a difficult meeting at the secondary school and felt drained. One of the pupils had made her a cup of coffee when she came in.

Practitioners adapted to pupils' need to self-express. Jim often had various hair colours and styles, which was not against the rules at Eastbank. As there was no boundary to push against, I did not sense reactionary decisions regarding piercings, hairstyles and tattoos. Often pupils mentioned their ideas to staff and discussed it with them sensibly. Figure 4.7 shows a pupil exploring identity through colour and style of hair.
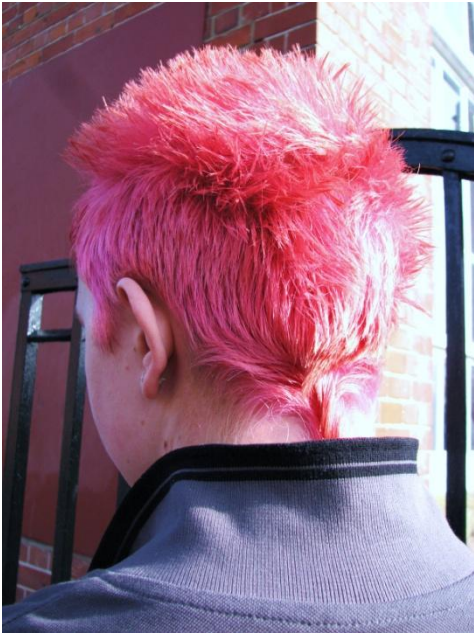
Figure 4.7: 2010-03-03:142 Pupil self-expressing through choice of hair colour.

Another way of adapting to pupils needs was to start the day with breakfast and a hot drink, as shown in figure 4.8. The unit provided toast, spreads, hot drinks and newspapers, and pupils brought in instant noodles and other snacks. Eating, chatting and reading the paper eased the pupils into the work day, helping them to shed the negative emotions that some arrived with, as well as aid any physical symptoms from substance misuse. Practitioners ate with the pupils; the hand shown belongs to Dave. I brought the popcorn shown here as it was a pupil's birthday. English and Maths work started after breakfast, at 9.30am. Offering breakfast was also a way of building trust, spending quality time and nurturing the pupils, which are discussed shortly.

Figure 4.8: 2010-05-28:18 Breakfast

4.3.2 Building trust and relationship

The second principle that emerged was building trust and relationship. Building relationship was important to these practitioners as a value, and within that the principle of trust was an intentional methodology that determined how the pedagogical procedures were carried out. Dave stated, 'In my opinion, the most important aspect of our work at Eastbank is to build relationships with the pupils so they can trust us' (written interview 2). He believed that by journeying alongside them, levelling the hierarchy as much possible considering their behavioural histories, they would feel safe enough to learn and grow. He continued,

> Something I am constantly trying to avoid is the 'them and us' situation that is often apparent in the main stream. My philosophy is to get alongside the pupils, gain their trust and work *with* them rather than be *in front* of them in a position of authority' (written interview 2).

One way that this was manifested was that pupils always sat next to practitioners and approached a task or conversation together. As an example, figure 4.9 shows a practitioner (STA) and pupil creating a joint art project together.

Figure 4.9: 2010-01-16:13 sitting alongside and exploring together

However, it is worth highlighting the pupils needed firm boundaries, and were often disciplined for dangerous or reckless behaviour. Therefore, there was authority and hierarchy within the AP site. Yet the sense that the practitioners were 'for' the pupils created an understanding that they were 'all in this together'. In particular, although pupils were shouted at in the midst of doing something dangerous, there was an absence of there being a continuous black mark against their name. Rosa described the lack of holding grudges at the unit:

> They learn the fact that we don't hold grudges, they learn not to hold grudges. A lot of the students come here and they're very anti aren't they, and then they suddenly...it takes some of

them a long time to actually realise we're on their side, we care, and we've got time to do that (Rosa, interview 28).

This lack of grudge as a value and methodological basis for practical methods called forth a way of behaviour into which the pupils could grow. It also created a safe space to unprotect the self. It was not simply a case of forgiving and forgetting. Practitioners could hold pupils accountable for a particular action and state that 'you are at fault' without expressing more widely that 'this is your fault'. There were times when the wider context needed to be addressed, but this was carefully approached at a separate time.

Quality time was a vital element to building trust and relationship. When asked how Eastbank as a site helped the pupils, Helen and Rosa offered answers such as, 'good social skills, spending time with them, giving them confidence that some of them haven't got' (Helen, interview 28) and 'or just sit and listen to them' (Rosa, interview 28). The STAs expressed quality time as a value more than the artists in residence and Dave in his lead teacher role. Helen felt that 'we give them time more than anything really, to be there for them' (interview 28). Focussing on quality time was a philosophical basis for the methods they employed and one they defended keenly:

> What a lot of people don't realise...they can come in here and any member of staff can be sitting chatting to one, two, three students, and it doesn't look like any work is being done, but actually it is. The work is in the sitting and chatting and listening to them and about the weekend and falling out with mum and I hate my step dad and you know (Rosa, interview 28).

Listening and supporting is only one part of the quality time that practitioners were offering. However, it was important part of the methodology. I found that photography was an excellent way of capturing moments of quality time. The various photographs helped me to gauge how important building trust and relationship through quality time was to the practitioners. For example, figure 4.10 shows four photographs from a day out to a theme park. Instead of the staff and the pupils going their separate ways until lunch time, mixed groups wandered around the park.

Figure 4.10: 2010-05-18:327; 313; 384a; 334

I became chief photographer of the many combinations of cut-out face possibilities. Pupils and practitioners enjoyed posing together and laughing at others posing. The top photograph was taken by a pupil as I was a turtle in this particular configuration. Dave's stance in the bottom photograph portrays a feeling of ease and enjoyment to be posing with a pupil and STA. Dave getting drenched on the water slide with a pupil drew a large crowd and caused much hilarity. Both could be heard screaming throughout the ride and both spoke of the shared experience once back at the AP site. Beth raced several of the boys on a sack slide. They seemed happy to spend their time with her and hear her scream on the scary rides. Towards lunchtime, pupils and full-time staff began texting and phoning each other so that they could tell each other stories and arrange to meet. The activity itself seemed to be a bonding experience for those involved. All photographs were put on the Eastbank Facebook page for everyone to enjoy and comment.

Quality time also happened during lunchtimes. Figure 4.11 shows an example of a summer and winter lunchtime where practitioners and pupils spent time together.

Figure 4.11: 2010-5-28; 2009-11-23 Quality time at lunchtime – building trust and relationship

Helen decided to lie on the grass with the girls to read her paper; the relaxed chatter between them was jovial and the periods of silence easy. Dave overlooked the large amount of swearing during the card

game and chose not to tone down some of the boys' reactions. They were enjoying being in the same space. Dave often played cards with the boys. Lunchtimes often involved practitioners spending time with same sex groups, which practitioners said was initiated by the pupils. Quality time was rarely mentioned in interviews, but was prevalent visually, making photography a useful analytical tool here. Another example of quality time was Friday quiz morning, which was thoroughly enjoyed and taken very seriously. Having staff and pupils competing against each other was an effective way of building relationship.

The practitioners were also 'for' the pupils, and underlying the methods employed was a sense that they valued the pupils as they were – a key part of building trust and relationship. Helen described how she saw them:

> I don't know, they all turn out to be good kids. You can have one of them come and you think 'oh I don't know what to make of *them*'. You don't say anything but in your head you think 'I don't know', and within a short period you *know* there is a good kid in there and it's just the face they put on. They are all good kids, they *are*. People see them and they think '*oh God'*. Like when they leave here and they're in town and there's five or six of them and you'd think oh God if you didn't know them, I understand that's why people say that. But if you do get to know them, it is different (interview 7).

Sometimes this being 'for' the pupils was implicit. However, there were opportunities in meetings to be explicit in front of them. At a restorative justice meeting with the police, pupils, community members and trustees of the building that Eastbank hired, permanent staff expressed how 'for' the pupils they were:

> I'm disappointed to find myself back in this situation. I'd like to ask the people that do have the influence to give us a chance. These kids are worth it. Give us a chance to make things right. If we can't do that that's partly our failure as well, but every one of these kids that are here have got something, they've got something good, give us a chance to bring that out (interview 26).

Although Rosa is referring to 'us' as the staff, from this statement it shows that she saw herself as part of 'team Eastbank' (my term to describe the stance), therefore sharing any potential failure. She was not on the outside of the pupils' situation, simply representing them. Helen also expressed that she had bought in to 'team Eastbank':

> Well I would be gutted if this place shut. Obviously I'd lose my job, but like Dave said we could hopefully get one somewhere else. But I don't actually want one somewhere else, I *like* working here, and I like working with all you students, past and present students. I understand what the neighbours are saying, and people that don't know you see you out – four, five, six of you – and you look like yobs. Your language or whatever is not acceptable, but actually to sit in a room with you day after day, and spend time with you: you are all good kids, and I *like* it. I would be very sad if this shut down (tearful at end) (interview 26).

Pupils witnessed that the permanent staff valued them greatly and enjoyed being with them. This led to bonding, which will be discussed fully when answering the second part of the research question, 'Where did these approaches lead?' Helen acknowledged that bonding had taken place, 'The one that I've probably bonded the most with is Les because we've had him longer' (interview 7). I needed to take this bonding into account when I arrived at Eastbank, as my presence might have been seen as a threat to the environment that had been created together. For example, after being at the unit for two weeks, a pupil questioned my attitude:

> At break time, in the classroom with several others, Jay called over to me, 'Margo, do you love me?' I replied, 'With all my heart, Jay'. 'I love you too', he said. I have no idea why he asked, or if I did the right thing, but it didn't seem to feel a sexual question, more an initiation into being accepted by him. He seemed satisfied with the interaction, and more comfortable with me being there, for the rest of the day (field notes 11).

The question had been posed as a kind of joke, which was reflected in my reply. However, I felt an undertone of uncertainty as to whether I would threaten or add to this particular methodology at Eastbank. It was decided after a few public interactions like this that I would not threaten their safe space. If I did not 'love' Jay, then I posed a threat to his safe space and he wanted to know where he stood. The value and methodology of building trust and relationship, particularly through being 'for' the pupils, had a big impact on my approach as a researcher. I had not anticipated the extent to which I would be looked upon to buy into the methodology in order to undertake my research.

The practitioners also valued managing behaviour through trust and relationship. They grew increasingly aware of what each pupil needed in order to calm down and how far pupils could be made to calm down without causing further eruption. Rosa explained, 'Yeah, once you know the students you know how far you can, well just in managing them, you know how far you can go' (interview 28). When one pupil became angry once, a practitioner laughed at the gesticulations and they both ended up howling with laughter – with another pupil that would have been a disastrous approach. This methodology underpinned specific methods, such as awarding behaviour and achievement points during the end of day meeting, which helped to win the coveted pupil of the week award. These points were negotiated by everyone: 'There was a lot of, 'that's not fair' and 'I got a point knocked off for that, but she didn't!' but by 3.15pm everyone was satisfied with their points' (field notes 9). Figure 4.12 shows the pupils and practitioners gathering at 2.50pm for one of the daily end of day meetings, whilst Wolf and Water were in residence at Eastbank. It shows a relaxed scene of people inhabiting the same space as they prepare to discuss how the day has gone.

Figure 4.12: 2010-02-11:72 Inhabiting the same space

Geoff, as an artist in residence, did not have relationship history to fall back on as a first port of call, unlike the permanent staff. Whilst he was keen to manage behaviour through trust and relationship, he also made it clear that, 'While I consider it vital to give the students choice I am not suggesting that I abdicate my responsibilities as an adult and I would make that explicit. If I see little Tina tearing little Johnny's head off I will intervene' (written interview 1). This was written in advance of his first visit and he did not need to intervene during his time at Eastbank.

A specific incident that demonstrated managing behaviour through relationship involved two pupils who moved a sofa from the office and placed it on the classroom cluster of tables. They then set about watching pretend TV and creating role play scenes. Although this was unacceptable behaviour, the pupils' humour was acknowledged whilst chiding them and instructing the return of the sofa. Unfortunately, during its return, a cushion was thrown and hit a pupil's sunburn. He punched one of the boys and was sent home as he could not calm down and the scenario had to be dealt with more forcefully.

Figure 4.13: 2010-05-28 Theft of the sofa from the office

The physical environment of the unit was an expression of building trust and relationship. Photography was an ideal way to capture this. Helen described Eastbank as 'a relaxed atmosphere' (interview 28). The following photographs show a sense of trust and relationship that was implicitly built into the environment. There was always a jigsaw in process in the back classroom. Often it was a member of staff who spent time quietly hunting for pieces, but pupils would come and go, enjoying a moment to themselves or with a member of staff, without talking. Although it was never spoken of, it was seen as a carved out place to sit and be. In the time I was there, I never saw anyone sabotage the jigsaw and staff members were outwardly proud when they had finished one, calling pupils in to see.

Everyone had their own personalised mug that sat amongst ex-pupils' mugs. Rather than have my own, I used various ex-pupils' mugs and people took delight in telling me various stories about them over the months. They were told in the spirit of family stories rather than gossip. The stories included the teaching assistants' sons, but all were treated with the same fondness.

Figure 4.14: 2009-11-23:08 personalised mugs

Pupils worked at one large workspace, which is where they also stopped for tea and biscuits and to discuss and read the paper. Mobile devices were allowed as long as they were used with no sound into the room. Although pupils worked at their own pace, there was often discussion across the table about the task, and there was an ethos of helping each other before anyone became overly frustrated. Figure 4.15 shows a typical working desk at Eastbank.

Figure 4.15: 2009-11-23:47 Main desk in classroom 1

4.3.3 Teamwork

Another principle underpinning the specific methods used was teamwork. Once the staff realised that the AP site was closing, they began to talk about Eastbank as a very special place. This prompted me to ask the question, 'What is the magic at Eastbank?' Helen replied: 'I would say one thing, and I would say it's teamwork.' Rosa answered: We're relaxed, we all work from the same sheet, we're all slightly bonkers' (both interview 28). There was a sense from the replies that the permanent members of staff were at ease with each other and their job, that they were generally content with the communication between them and felt accepted in their way of being. The imminent closure and splitting of the team caused much reflection. Two of the staff accepted teaching assistant jobs at the secondary school, and spent time grieving the current set up before being able to move on. Helen explained on two occasions:

> Plus I like working as a team, which I'm not going to have any of that, I'm not going to be with Beth, Rosa and Dave, I'm just going to be on my own going into the mainstream (interview 28)

> I just think that's what we're going to miss at the main school. I like working, I love working with the people that I'm working with, but I also like working as a team. I think the four of us down here do make a good team, and it's obviously worked (interview 7).

The closure highlighted the close working relationship between the permanent staff and brought sadness over the team being split up.

As expressed in section 4.3.1, the staff hinted at Eastbank being more than the sum of its parts. The earlier example was of Helen expressing 'because that's what Eastbank is'; Rosa made a similar remark:

> I mean we're told what we have to do; we're TAs so we're kind of told really what the expectations of us are. But I've always kind of had a problem with a student sitting there... He'll say 'I can't do this, I'm not good at it' – 'Oh that's all right, here's another page'. Why can't we spend more time talking to them, nurturing them?
>
> Me: Do you feel you've been able to do that at Eastbank?
>
> R: Yeah, because that's how we operate down here (interview 28).

The words 'that's how we operate down here' speaks of teamwork that has become an entity, that can simply be referred to as 'we'. It could also be indicative of falling in line and following the party line, but I saw no evidence of this in the attitudes and actions whilst I was there.

Permanent staff spoke to artists in residence in a way that drew them into the team. For example, although Geoff only came for one full day a week, one day when a withdrawn pupil was fully engaged in the music and made an interesting composition, Rosa called across the room to Geoff in front of everyone, 'Can you come in every day please?' (field notes 17).There were implicit and occasionally explicit messages that said 'you are part of Eastbank: we value what you have to offer and we want you here.'

4.3.4 Nurture

The practitioners at Eastbank held nurture as a high value for the pupils and developed a 'principle of nurture' that underpinned the methods used. Geoff was explicit in his methodology in this regard, whereas the other practitioners felt their way through instinctively. Geoff explained:

> Can we do anything? As individuals we can neither change society's core values nor its failure to care for young people but I can choose not to subscribe to this. As an individual I can choose to give young people the care they deserve...I believe that this is the only effective way to work with people, young or otherwise. If we care for young people they will care in their turn, for each other, for their children, for the whole planet (Geoff, written interview 3).

In terms of translating this to his work as a teacher, he explained the message of care that he wanted as a foundation to his teaching:

My job is to try and work out what they need, though I do start from the idea that what the students need is someone who believes they are worth the time and effort, someone who believes they have something to say and is prepared to listen (Geoff, written interview 3).

He built his music sessions around this principle.

Rosa looked for opportunities to nurture within her role: 'Even just taking them out into the town and showing them how to do practical things, skills for life, play games that they've never had the opportunity to learn, never had anyone just to play a game with them' (interview 28). Her nurturing may well have come out of compassion, as she linked these experiences with emotive phrases such as 'never had anyone just to play a game with them'. Helen also showed concern for their welfare. Here she speaks about a boy with whom she might lose contact when the unit closes:

I don't know if I'd be allowed to take a number and ring. I don't know, I haven't been asked. But like, I don't know, see if somebody could give him a ring in a few weeks, or a few months down the line just to see what he's up to. But there's nobody at home to look after him, and it's sad because he is such a good kid, you know, he is (interview 7).

It was helpful to get Geoff's perspective as a practitioner coming in to Eastbank for a period of time. He felt that needing and giving 'care' was at the heart of AP site's values:

They (the pupils) aspired to be cared for, to be in a loving relationship with their carers, the significant adults in their lives and their peers. I think that's why so many of them turned up every day. And the staff at Eastbank responded to that essential need. I also believe that as individuals the staff recognised the importance of that need and made an individual choice to work at Eastbank rather than in a mainstream school (written interview 3).

Geoff made an interesting point that nurture - caring for and encouraging growth or development – held the AP site together, causing the pupils and staff to keep coming back. I did not have evidence that nurture was what bound the AP site together, but that it was one of the key principles underpinning it.

Part of the methodology of nurture was to focus on self-esteem. Dave believed that:

part of building a positive frame of mind is building self-esteem. Self-esteem grows when the pupils do something successfully. One of the purposes of getting groups like Wolf and Water and Geoff with his music to work with them is to build that self-esteem/confidence. Then we can look at bringing their thoughts to attending college courses...' (written interview 2).

Dave had a clear sense of order in which to work. 'Before the pupils can consider the future properly I think they have to develop a positive view of school/college...immediately before Eastbank I don't think they have had positive views towards schooling' (written interview 2). There was a focus on a realistic future with optimism, but this was not rushed. Rosa further explains: 'Well whatever's happened to them before, they haven't fitted into mainstream school, so what we try to do is when they leave we've put

them together again, given them confidence, self-belief, a bit of ego' (Rosa, interview 28). Nurture involves encouraging growth or development, which is future oriented, but it also involves caring in the present. The practitioners at Eastbank were very aware of this and did not rush ahead to presenting them with the future. Yet the practitioners themselves were aware that caring in the present was, for them, all about the future. Rosa explained the focus:

> It's not only about school work and going to college – they are encouraged to go on to college – but...we say if you don't pass this exam now you're not a failure. Just because you've failed you're not a failure, you just haven't succeeded yet. And you will (Rosa, interview 28).

The practitioners held to a value and methodology that was based on believing in the pupils where they were in the present in order for the pupils to commit to their future. 'Because nobody's ever told a lot of them that they *can*, that they can succeed at anything, so we tell them that they can. [Helen cuts in]: You'll get there in the end' (interview 28).

Through caring in the present, Dave felt that the pupils would be better placed to face the future:

> Some are likely to cope well. What we've done for them is... often it's what some people call the hidden curriculum, the caring side of our work, the always being here with a cup of tea and words of advice and somebody to talk to and that sort of thing. Some, like Charmaine and Jolie, will probably go to college and make something of their college time.

Dave invited Wolf and Water to Eastbank to build pupils' self-esteem. Jules, a Wolf and Water practitioner, expressed that their specific methods were based on celebrating who the pupils were in the present. She gave examples of doing this:

> Lee's really buying into the project, because the things that he would normally be told off for saying, we can steer and cultivate and push into a sort of comedy project. So the things that he would have been told off for in class, we can actually capitalise on and it's made him think about his own options outside of school and doing a BTEC Performing Arts (interview 37).

Jules also explained that their specific methods were based on celebrating skills the pupils had, and gave an example:

> Sometimes it's just being told that they're good at something. For Tim, I think he really buzzed off the fact that we got so excited because he actually has so many skills – creative media skills that students coming out of college don't have the grasp of, the software that Tom's already got. And yet he didn't even recognise that himself, that actually 'that's quite specialist skills you've got there already!' (interview 36).

By believing in pupils where they were in the present, Eastbank hoped to re-awaken their aspiration.

4.3.5 Experimenting: where building principles meets exploring practice – to conclude

To sum up the second circle in the venn diagram 'building principles', practitioner approaches had a foundation of:

- adapting to pupils' needs, incorporating time being seen as flexible and opportunities being given to be oneself;
- building trust and relationship, incorporating offering quality time and a relaxed atmosphere, managing behaviour through relationship and a sense that practitioners were 'for the pupils';
- teamwork; and
- nurture, including a focus on self-esteem and a future orientation.

The building of these principles and exploring the practice built on them overlapped through experimenting (see figure 4.16). Experimenting involved considering what the principles looked like in practice and being innovative – trying something new in order to translate the principles into action whilst being guided by context and complexity (explained in section 4.6).

Figure 4.16: Experimenting

It was where ideas for practice were generated and given form. Exploring practice involved moving forward with generated ideas and their form, investigating their capacity and following where they led. Practitioners were constructing a vision and through experimenting they made it tangible.

It was easier for me to gather evidence of the artists in residence experimenting, as they were either new to the AP site or this group of pupils, so setting up from scratch. For example, artists in residence had decided to not bring lessons plans in advance, and to allow the pupils choice as to whether they wanted to participate as part of their experimenting. I was able to watch them arrive and bring their tangible ideas to the pupils. Whereas, the permanent staff were experimenting with expressing their principles tangibly towards individual new pupils or as a situation arose, such as the sofa incident, or a new form of pupil self-expression; they had been building and exploring since the site's inception in 2007. They were still experimenting with what operating out of the 'grey area' looked like, but in specific ways, such as deciding not to keep a record or wrongs, avoiding the 'them and us' situation, or expressing 'you are at fault here' not 'this is your fault', permanent staff had been exploring practice for some time, with pockets of experimenting built in to that.

Experimenting also helped to sharpen expression and development of practitioner principles; it was not

simply one way. The Wolf and Water team, for example, expressed that through experimenting with gaining pupil participation, they realised that they gained a greater sense of the importance of their own energetic participation as a value and methodology.

Experimenting further enabled practitioners to explore practice stemming from principles that mattered to them.

4.4 Exploring practice

A key emerging theme when asking 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' was exploring practice. Exploring practice involved practitioners moving forward with ideas generated from principles in their practical form, investigating the capacity of those ideas. Three main areas of exploration of practice emerged from the data:
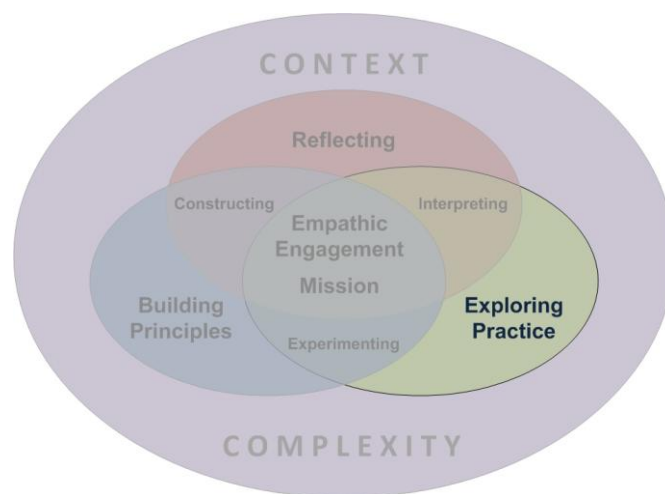
Figure 4.17: Exploring practice

- offering space: practitioners standing back and giving space and pupils being able to observe without having to participate (pupils opting in and out);
- fostering learner agency: offering independence or idea generation; practitioners adapting creatively; pupils being offered a voice; allowing mistakes and judgements;
- working alongside: practitioners joining in activities and incorporating in the Learn 2 Work course.

When examining practitioners exploring practice, I prioritised the artists in residence sessions and the Learn 2 work courses. This still involved the permanent staff, as they participated in both. I also looked at exploration of practice during general time at the AP site. However, individual Learn 2 Work courses ran concurrently to the English and Maths sessions, and were held in a nearby city, forcing a choice between the two. Therefore, I made a choice to prioritise the courses and spent less time researching the pedagogical explorations of permanent staff as they helped pupils work through their English and Maths workbooks for online tests. There are references to these academic lessons, as I spent short periods observing them, but it is not an in depth study of exploration of practice in these subjects. I had planned to look further at this part of the study in my second academic year at Eastbank, but the AP site closure prevented this.

4.4.1 Offering space

Within the sessions, practitioners deliberately chose to stand back and give the pupils space. What I mean by 'stand back' is to not scaffold pupils tightly and keep them close to the specific criteria. By 'space' I mean an uninterrupted period of time to engage without being corrected or steered in a direction. Geoff mentioned this process several times in his blogs:

> While they are working I may just listen, I might join in if I think they need the support, I might just join in because they've got a groove going and I feel like it. I might step back and observe, step back and not observe, leave them to it and go out of the room. I do reiterate to them that if they need me all they need to do is ask (Geoff's blog 2).

He mentioned different levels of standing back and giving space, from observing at a distance to focussing attention elsewhere, to leaving the room. Figure 4.18 shows two examples of Geoff standing back and giving space during music sessions, with the same pupil:

Figure 4.18: 2010-04-28:09; 2010-03-16:32 Giving space in a music session

In the second photograph, the pupil was self-protecting in terms of his use of clothing and seeming to need a space around him. Pupils self-protecting was an influencing factor on the practitioners' pedagogical approaches, and on how they reflected on practice and developed methodologies. This will be discussed further in the next section. Geoff was busying himself with other tasks, which may have given the pupil a sense that he did not have an audience. By now, the pupils had become very used to my camera and did not give the impression that they noticed it.

The first photograph shows Geoff sitting back away from the pupil, observing him. Here, the pupil was very engaged by the music technology and was open to Geoff's attention. Geoff would get a sense of

what was needed and try that approach, changing it if the 'vibe' was uneasy. A short while after this photo was taken, Geoff decided to leave him alone for a short while:

> Geoff: 'You ok to carry on for ten mins while I go out for a fag?'

> Pupil: 'Yeah.'
> In that time, the pupil tried various drop out ideas and came up with an atmospheric sub-bass sound. He remained on task. He tried something and erased it a couple of times before settling on something he felt worked. He seemed to enjoy being left to use the equipment without Geoff's supervision, with body language leaning in over the laptop (field notes 6).

Giving a greater space at this stage empowered the pupil to own the use of the gear and enjoy the challenge of working without help. At other times, Geoff's suggestion was not quite right:

> Geoff also offered to leave the room for a few minutes when they were experimenting, although neither of them wanted him to, as they didn't feel confident enough with the software to be without guidance (field notes 6).

Geoff used an empathic process to work out a direction to take next. This empathic approach, also in evidence in each of the areas of reflecting, developing values and exploring approaches, emerged from the data to become central to practitioners' approaches at Eastbank, and will be discussed in the next section. Geoff's motivation behind standing back and giving space was described in his blog: 'I'm trying to create a space for them that enables them to work/play and through that begin to articulate their needs' (Geoff's blog 2). Sometimes, giving pupils space allowed them to explore humour that might not have otherwise emerged:

> Geoff goes for a cup of tea and a cigarette and leaves them alone to explore the software and instruments. They carry on, as focused as before. Kirk plays a few samples and pretends to sing along to 'Oh God Save Me', seemingly a little freer to have fun with it. He explores drum and bass loops (field notes 17).

At other times, Geoff setting up the space and then leaving the room enabled pupils to even show an interest. For example, after he left the room three of the girls came in and played on the instruments, having fun but also wanting to explore and experiment. Geoff commented on my feedback of the event in his blog, 'It makes me feel again how important it is that the students have space on their own, that at the moment I can't even explicitly make an offer to the girls; I have to set up the space and then disappear (Geoff's blog 2).

Jules, from Wolf and Water, explained the attitude of the company towards participation:

> But you can't make anybody do the things that we do, you kind of, you just know that if somebody's not going to work with you for a while, you just let them be for a bit and then you'll have a really nice surprise that they'll start working with you again later (interview 36).

There was evidence of an ease with which the Wolf and Water practitioners accepted the pupils' ability to participate at any given time. Perhaps due to this, I found that pupils were drawn in by the participation of the Wolf and Water team. My impression was that the team were creating momentum, starting to make a comedy show there for broadcast, and anyone wanting to join in or make suggestions was most welcome. The team got on with having a brilliant time, which sucked the pupils in to wanting to be there a lot of the time. The venture did not seem to be fully dependant on the pupils, which removed pressure from them. However, as pupils came forth with idea generation and a willingness to have a voice, the team let go of the reins and became more invisible. Much of the output was steered by the pupils, but they did not seem to notice the transition. Figure 4.19 shows a piece of drama involving both the Wolf and Water team and pupils. The team set the tone for dressing up by being dressed up wherever possible on the project. This particular skit was inspired by the pupils. There is an Eastbank practitioner looking in through the window, giving the team and pupils space to create. Permanent staff came in when invited to watch the finished performance.

Figure 4.19: 2010-02-11:55 Filming of comedy scene

The tactic of letting pupils decide when to opt in and out that Wolf and Water employed was also apparent throughout Eastbank. Pupils could opt in and out of lessons and activities, with the exception of the Learn 2 Work course, which is outlined shortly in this section. During the time when the pupils were opting out of an activity, the disengagement was clear. As an observer, I found it difficult to see anything positive about a pupil's inertia. I was shocked by a sometimes lengthy period of time that a pupil did nothing and where the practitioners did not push for them to enter back into the activity. One particular example stood out for me:

Jack did nothing the whole session. He is good at maths and goes to the school three times a week for GSCE Maths lessons. His exercise and text book hadn't been sent back to Eastbank, so he picked at a radiator cover for 40 minutes and eventually broke a section off. He seemed very disinterested and restless. The specialist teaching assistant who was in there for the session left him alone, apart from two suggestions of something for him to do (field notes 9).

Still fairly new to the AP site, this scenario was surprising to me. I found it uncomfortable to witness and felt critical towards the practitioner for what I thought was neglect. It seemed a waste of valuable time considering Jack was in his final GCSE year and a capable mathematician. The suggestions that the teaching assistant made were good and could have been enforced. I was aware of my feelings and the impact they would have on my data collection. It is only looking back at my initial reaction to pupils opting out that I can now see that my understanding has changed. Certainly, the opting out was not ideal. However, pupils were often living with unpredictable change and uncertainty outside of the AP site. They had to remain in that uncertain space sometimes for years. Therefore, at times, when let down by something such as books not arriving for the session, a pupil might become unsettled or stressed. It was a 'safe' disappointment to become angry at or withdraw from, whereas situations outside of the site were less conducive to reaction. The teaching assistant seemed to gauge from the reaction to the suggestions she made and from the intense picking at one item for forty minutes that giving this pupils space was the best course of action. I did not follow this up with the teaching assistant; I notice that this was a common occurrence in my first weeks at Eastbank. If I was thrown by events, I missed opportunities to get a better understanding from the practitioners, who were sometimes suddenly thrown into conflict resolution and busy. I got better at this as I settled in to the AP site.

In Geoff's sessions, pupils came and went as they pleased: 'They'd had enough after half an hour. I assured them that it was up to them how long they stayed' (Geoff's blog 1). However, it was common for some pupils to want to observe without having to participate. Geoff welcomed observers, making it clear that the 'you stay you play' rule often found in schools did not apply to his sessions. L was the most regular observer to the sessions. Figure 4.20 shows L observing a composition session.

Figure 4.20: 2010-03-16:22; 2010-03-16:26 The role of audience

At first glance, it might seem that L was relaxing and enjoying the music. However, L was dealing with several emotions coming to the surface. When I asked him how he was, he replied, 'I hate music. Well, I don't hate music, I just hate doing music. There's no point trying to make music 'cos only the really good people can do it well. So there's no point trying' (field notes 6). From my conversations with L, it seemed to me that he was passionate about music and was feeling the injustice of not having the skills necessary to produce something good. Whereas the other pupils had fun trying and exploring the instruments, L did not want to put himself through the pain of hearing himself play something basic and untrained. Geoff offered him ways around this, to no avail:

> Geoff: Do you want to do the engineering on this bit? (offering him a different role)
> L: Na, I don't know how to do it.
> L continued to look uncomfortable (field notes 6).

In the second photograph, T had run out of ideas for playing on the keyboard, so Geoff started to improvise and encouraged T to try out the pitch bender. This proved a great hit and in the excitement, L moved from the sofa onto one of the chairs, to better observe. He was fully engaging in his role as audience and the heaviness surrounding him appeared to lift. However, when Geoff made any occasional moves to include him, he would make comments, such as, 'I don't think I'll be able to even do it' (field notes 6). He seemed afraid to try, or of the embarrassment he might feel to hear something basic compared to the music to which he loved to listen.

Observing without having to participate was a pedagogical approach also adopted by Wolf and Water and the permanent staff at Eastbank. The wider outcomes of this will be discussed in the second findings chapter which looks at where the approaches led. Specifically to the sessions, L relaxed over

the sessions, often laughing and enjoying how the other pupils engaged with the instruments, Geoff and each other. I once saw him press a key of the keyboard after the others had left. In the penultimate session, he offered to dash home to get an USB cable for a phone, during the karaoke experimenting. The sessions seemed to help him to be less angry about his lack of music training and be present to his current opportunity.

4.4.2 Fostering learner agency

To have agency is to have the means or mode to act instrumentally. My analysis showed that, pedagogically, practitioners at Eastbank offered pupils independence and idea generation. They also offered pupils a voice and adapted to pupils' responses. I shall explore each below.

One of the reasons that I felt confident that the practitioners fostered learner agency was that the pupils themselves spoke about it. It was rare to glean feedback from pupils in an interview setting, but in this regard, I gained several comments. Tim, in particular, was a pupil who needed to be instrumental in his own learning. His perceived lack of opportunity for this in mainstream school was the reason he cited for causing trouble and being in AP. Here he comments about both sets of artists in residence:

> It gives you the freedom to…they give you independence as well. They just let you get on with what you want to do. You give them ideas instead of them giving you ideas. And it's just basic fact that you're there doing your own thing, what you like doing, what you enjoy doing, and that's it really (interview 33).

Tim felt that he was being given the opportunity for independence and idea generation. His phrasing of 'it's just basic fact that you're there doing your own thing...' expressed with emotion, gave me a sense of how important this opportunity was to him: that, bottom line, he was respected to pursue an idea and he could enjoy his learning. Specifically about the Wolf and Water comedy show project, he commented, 'It's fun. They've done what I like; it's easy to get involved. You can really do whatever you like really. You have no limits of what you can do' (interview 40). Being limitless seemed to be an important value to Tim in his learning, although he did not articulate it explicitly. As a self-taught talented IT specialist planning to start up his own business one day, he needed an open-ended approach in order to learn and work. Without it, he would kick against the metaphorical walls around him. He was also comfortable with a focus on process and experimenting, without the need for an outcome. After one of Geoff's sessions he said, 'Yeah it was fun. It was experimenting. Don't really get no music out of it – that's the whole point – but yeah it was fun, really fun, good bloke, yeah' (interview 34). There were moments in this particular experimental music session where Tim would appear euphoric in the process of simply following his creative mind and then hearing the results.

In terms of idea generation, Wolf and Water practitioners celebrated the unusual rather than steering creative ideas to be more palatable to others. For one drama sketch, a pupil suggested that he and a

124

practitioner be conjoined twin experimental scientists, which was welcomed as an idea and taken up immediately. Figure 4.21 shows practitioner and pupil working out which costume might work best, whilst also practising how to move about together. The photo also highlights a lack of hierarchy; here are two people having fun whilst designing comedy. The next section, 4.4.3, will look in more detail at practitioners joining in activities as a pedagogical approach, so is only touched on lightly here.

Figure 4.21: 2010-02-11:47 Opportunities for idea generation

The language used by Wolf and Water, in particular, was celebratory of idea generation. During an animation session, encouraging feedback was given, such as:

> Tony (W and W): What happens to the cat?
>
> Jolie (pupil): gets squashed by a car
>
> Jules (W and W): Gets squashed by a car – fantastic
>
> Jolie (pupil): or we could have a big cat, little car!
>
> Tony (W and W): That'll look great. Right, here's the card, let's get drawing it (field notes 14).

From such interactions, I perceived that understanding emerged within the creative space, that following one's imagination and inspiration brought rich material and was not to be blocked by fear of what others might think. Fostering idea generation is closely linked with standing back and giving space, described earlier in 4.4.1. Standing back and giving pupils space does not automatically foster pupils' idea generation, but my understanding was that these actions contributed as enabling conditions to creating a space in which idea generation was more likely to happen.

The 'space allowed for self-expression' discussed in 4.3.1 naturally extended into learning sessions, where pupils also felt allowed to be themselves. In one session, two of the boys explored rapping over the mikes (see figure 4.22) expressing something of themselves and their culture in a way that was

natural to them. They took risks in terms of content, but in doing so, were motivated by connecting with what they really wanted to say.

Figure 4.22: 2010-05-10:17 Self-expression through rap

Learner agency can involve the mode to act instrumentally – a manner or way of expressing from which acting instrumentally can spring forth. The boys engaged with a focus and strength of conscience or honesty through rapping that encouraged them to think that they had a voice and the authority to use it.

A theme characterised by Geoff's sessions was pupil independence. This is also linked with standing back and giving space: they were enabling conditions for independence to flourish. Geoff talked about offering pupils independence in his blog:

> My experience is that delegating some of the responsibility about learning to the students is very positive. I'm still the adult but it reminds me of my aim – to help these young people to grow into healthy, happy, responsible adults themselves rather than neurotic drones. Well, these students were doing the job and having set it up I didn't really need to be there; they were getting on with business (Geoff's blog 3).

Geoff was linking his pedagogical approach of setting up the task and then leaving the space to his underlying methodology on which his methods were based. He valued pupils taking responsibility above pupils conforming. In another blog, Geoff talks about Tim taking ownership of the way that the gear was set up and his response to that:

> Tim and Lee (I think) help unload. Tim wants a neater set-up so I leave him to organise that while he asks lots of questions about how to connect everything up. I've also brought a lead so that we can route an internet connected computer to the mixer for playing songs from YouTube (Geoff's blog 2).

Offering independence was a way for Geoff to foster Tim's ownership of the session. I will discuss where these pedagogical approaches led in 4.7, later in the chapter. The quotation also highlights Geoff adapting creatively to pupils. Pupils had been accessing YouTube (video sharing website) from their phones to sing and play along to in a previous session and so Geoff was looking to work with their ideas. Wolf and Water practitioners also adapted creatively: after encouraging idea generation, they adapted the comedy show to incorporate whatever those ideas grew into. This pedagogical approach stems from the practitioners' values and methodologies relating to adapting to pupils needs, as expressed earlier in section 4.3.1. Geoff did not use set lesson plans for each session and so could run with new ideas and how the pupils were coping that day. In his blog we wrote:

> I try playing the opening riff and ask him to improvise over it. He's not sure what to do and I'm not sure that me showing him some scales and things is going to help at the moment so I go back to just playing and he plays along. We do get something going. Quite a lot of building a feel together and playing off each other. Exchanging a few smiles along the way (Geoff's blog 4).

Geoff also blogged about accepting mistakes and judgements, which was evidenced in his sessions: 'Trying throughout to give them permission to engage, to try things, to make mistakes and try again, to make judgements' (Geoff's blog 1). This pedagogical approach also stems from section 4.3.1, from the value of being allowed to be you. As described there, practitioners held no grudge; pupils could return repentant the day after a costly mistake or error of judgement and know that they were accepted. Such values extended into creative processes during learning, where a practitioner might say 'Have a go; it doesn't matter if it goes wrong' or 'Make a judgement call; we're here if it doesn't work out' and pupils would believe them. The comments had weight from their social experience at the unit. The artists in residence benefited from the long-term message that the permanent staff had communicated to pupils; once the pupils knew the artists could be trusted as people, they could draw on the practice they had had in trusting the message and follow their imaginations. Geoff underlined in one particular session that if he explained something that they didn't understand, 'that was his fault, not theirs, and they can simply say they don't understand and he'll have another go at explaining' (field notes 6). This shifted the responsibility for understanding back to the practitioner and evened out the responsibility for success.

4.4.3 Working alongside

Part of practitioners exploring practice involved the idea of working alongside. This was evidenced in:
- joining in activities with pupils
- incorporating the Learn 2 Work programme into their timetable

Both approaches will be discussed in this section.

As an outworking of practitioners reflecting that they didn't want a 'them and us' situation and a philosophy building from that of levelling the hierarchy, practitioners sat amongst pupils during the Maths and English sessions. These lessons ran concurrently with the Learn 2 Work programme at

various local colleges, and on the mornings that pupils were not on a vocational course, they spent time in very small groups working towards GCSE Maths and English language. Figure 4.23 shows a Maths session, with an STA sat alongside the girls. She undertook the same exercises as the girls and they all worked through the steps together.

Figure 4.23: 2009-12-10:56 Pupils working alongside practitioners

Practitioners joined in all activities. The artists in residence would sometimes engage in an activity as a way of starting something, giving pupils an opportunity to join them or not, (linking with pupils opting in and out in section 4.4.1). Practitioners joined in activities for a variety of reasons, however. Geoff, for example, loved to play music and would play either the guitar or keyboard even in the breaks as a way of relaxing. His natural instinct was to join in where he felt it was appropriate:

> Dean was finding guitar tabs on the internet. He showed me what he was doing and asked if I could help so we played around with it for a bit. I was trying to show him that sometimes you can finger a chord shape that is used all the way through a bar so that you can finger the shape rather than each note one after the other. He was having a go at *Stairway to Heaven* (a song that is now banned in many guitar shops) and of course I had to have a go at it as well (Geoff's blog 2).

Geoff's love of playing music and joining in may have translated to the pupils that he was there because he wanted to be. His approach of joining in playing helped to level any hierarchy, which in turn promoted learner agency: pupils were not presented with Geoff as someone instructing them, but as someone joining in with their musical journey. The pupils were not afraid to use Geoff as a resource to better their creations, for example, 'Tim then asked Geoff to add a guitar solo to his Margo song' (field notes 3). It did not appear to be any less their own creations when Geoff was involved, as the pupils

made the decisions when and where to use his expertise. There were times that he steered them in a direction, but he was careful to do so as one of the group, rather than as an instructor: 'Dean suggests that they start recording a known song – creating a cover together. They start to decide which song it might be. "Why don't we do that one, cos we all know it?" suggests Geoff' (field notes 1). By joining in the activities, Geoff was able to take on leadership and then pass it on.

Wolf and Water practitioners took a similar approach to Geoff. They appeared to love drama, comedy and animation and came at it with energy, joining in wherever they felt it was appropriate. They were part of the comedy show alongside the pupils, which modelled a level hierarchy. Figure 4.24 shows a Wolf and Water practitioner sat with pupil, creating pieces for an animation. They discussed ideas together and experimented with perspective and making limbs move.

Figure 4.24: 2010-01-29:06 practitioner and pupil creating animation

What struck me about this moment was the easy manner between them as two members of the team working together. This was maintained for about an hour, which was unusual as the pupil was often restless after short bursts of concentration. Neither one was leading the activity, with both really enjoying what the other was creating. Both seemed happy to be there and engrossed in their work. At the time, I wondered if the pupil would have stayed focused so long had he been supervised and not worked with alongside by someone passionate in his artistic field.

Practitioners sometimes joined in activities as a way of sharing experiences with pupils. This overlaps with building trust and relationship (4.3.3), within the 'building principles' venn diagram circle. As the practitioners valued building relationship, their exploration of practice incorporated moments of quality time. For example:

> Rosa came in to ask Dean about what he's doing and to show an interest; I don't think he could think of what to say. Dean and Rosa played on the bongos for a while, keeping a rhythm together. She then asked him about his guitar tab writing and what it all means. He seemed pleased to be able to talk about it. Rosa then watched Tim teach Lee a new riff (field notes 4).

It seemed that Dean could not find a way to bring Rosa in on his experience. Her playing on the bongos with him brought her in to his experience for him. Rosa then asked a more specific question about guitar tabs that she had not been able to think of before she felt part of the experience, which helped Dean to share his discoveries with her. Rosa then took on the role of observer so that the boys could focus on each other. Rosa also took the same approach when accompanying pupils on the Learn 2 Work course. Figure 4.25 shows Rosa in her overalls and steel toe-capped boots learning to lay bricks. Everyone had the same corner activity to attempt, so they all set off together. Just before this activity, she had mixed lime mortar for pupils as they practised. Once she had built up a few levels, she stopped her activity and helped pupils to get the levels right.

Figure 4.25: 2009-11-25:44 STA bricklaying

Rosa expressed a genuine interest in learning how to lay bricks; she partly joined in because it was a challenge. She also wanted to share the experience with the pupils and identify with their tasks. This proved useful when the tutor cut the pupils' break short as their coach had arrived late and they had a lot to get through. The pupils reacted in a hostile way to this and after joining in the activity, Rosa quietly negotiated a better break for the pupils as she had a clear sense of how much the activity would have exhausted the pupils' concentration and confidence during a daunting task.

The Learn 2 Work programme was an LA initiative to engage low aspiring pupils in local schools. It offered practical work in colleges that would provide an introduction to further courses post sixteen and was started at Eastbank at the beginning of the academic year that I was there. I have not researched

the Learn 2 Work practitioners' approaches, as they were not part of Eastbank. Also, Dave, as lead teacher, did not choose for the AP site to participate in the programme: it was mandatory. I have instead researched the permanent staff at Eastbank as they interacted with the pupils during the Learn 2 Work programme.

For many of the pupils, being on the Learn 2 Work programme was a whole new experience. It had similar characteristics to mainstream school in that it was imperative to abide by the rules and pupils were taught by one instructor with inflexible discipline boundaries. However, there was a higher expectation for being responsible for one's own mess, which in bricklaying, decorating or mechanics could be considerable. Pupils had to follow a clear method with impeccable safety awareness; the stakes were higher than perhaps they had experienced in school. They were surrounded by many 16-18 year olds, who had chosen to study the courses as a career, took the work seriously and displayed their work throughout the workshop. For legal reasons the teaching assistants had to accompany them, but were free to sit and wait in the cafe until the session ended. Where possible, they chose to observe or participate, helping the pupils to adjust to the setting appropriately. There were issues surrounding the programme that caused the permanent staff at Eastbank concern and problems. Firstly, Dave believed it only suited some pupils: 'I don't think it was thought through properly and for some may have had a negative impact because not all our pupils are "ready" for such work' (Dave, written interview two). For this reason, instead of the Learn 2 Work programme, the staff arranged for a few pupils to do a day of work experience instead, working at an agricultural college and a hair and beauty training college. Secondly, Dave struggled with the pupils being set up to fail, 'It is a pity it was set up as mandatory and then when pupils have failed to attend it is seen by staff from the main site who set it up as failure on the pupils' part' (Dave, written interview two). Thirdly, the programme changed what was possible to be done in terms of academic sessions back at the site, potentially risking the perceived value of the AP site.

> The group dynamics keep changing when they go off to college and come back and there's a few left here – you think 'Ah great, we can really get on with some work' but they find it difficult to settle because they're readjusting the group dynamics again, I think. I need a psychologist to help me out with that. I don't think we've done especially well this year because of that, in terms of outcomes that they're going to get exam-wise and accreditation-wise and questions could be asked about what we do here and why we're here... The Learn 2 Work came in and it somehow undermined the more academic work we were doing (interview 4).

Dave was very aware that the AP site was judged in terms of outcomes, but struggled to juggle academic outcomes with vocational training within the context of pupils who are easily unsettled. It is possible that this dilemma contributed to the closure of Eastbank.

Eastbank's STAs seemed to have the role of 'safety net' whilst overseeing the Learn 2 Work sessions. Pupils knew that if they worked hard, they were likely to be offered a place on one of the courses once

they had left Eastbank, despite not having the required grades. They wanted to remain on the course, but inevitably, found the expectations and pressure difficult. The teaching assistants were able to step in and metaphorically catch them as they fell, helping them to make good choices to avoid being thrown off the course. At times, one of the STAs would see potential trouble ahead based on knowing the pupil well, and would mediate, communicating on a pupil's behalf if he or she were unable to do so without becoming angry at an injustice. The break time being cut short was a typical example of this.

Pupils also struggled to listen to instructions at times. The STAs needed to judge a situation and, being aware of what was current in that pupil's mind, decide whether to let a pupil learn the hard way, or guide them through by telling them each step as and when they needed it. This pedagogical decision was linked to being sensitive to the wider context (4.2.1) and experimenting with putting their principles into tangible form. It seemed to me that the STAs were using empathy and observation to guide them in how they helped individual pupils. In their role of 'safety net', the STAs enabled pupils to benefit from working alongside professional carpenters, plumbers, decorators and mechanics who could teach them a valuable trade.

Working alongside adults, especially practising professionals in their field, enabled pupils to engage with professional equipment. Much of this was not accessible to the pupils outside of their school experience, and often had not been accessible whilst at previous mainstream schools due to punishments. My photographs were the best source of data for showing the many focused interactions pupils had with technical gear. Although looking specifically at Learn 2 Work here, this is also highly relevant to the musical gear that Geoff brought and the recording and animation equipment and props brought by Wolf and Water. The permanent staff facilitated this opportunity by reflecting, building principles and exploring practice in this context. The photograph in figure 4.26 is from a motor mechanics session where pupils and tutor were adjusting and testing an engine.

Figure 4.26: 2009-11-20:06 Working on 'their' car with a mechanics tutor

This vehicle 'belonged' to the pupils from Eastbank; they could practise on it and renovate the bodywork under professional guidance over the life of the course. The photograph shows the tutor working together with the pupils to test an engine adjustment. A pupil started and revved the engine, and the tutor signalled that it had worked. It shows the hands-on nature of the learning and a sense of teamwork.

4.4.4 Interpreting: where exploring practice meets reflecting – to conclude

By exploring practice, practitioners investigated the capacity of practical ideas generated from principles and reflecting. Three main areas of exploration were:
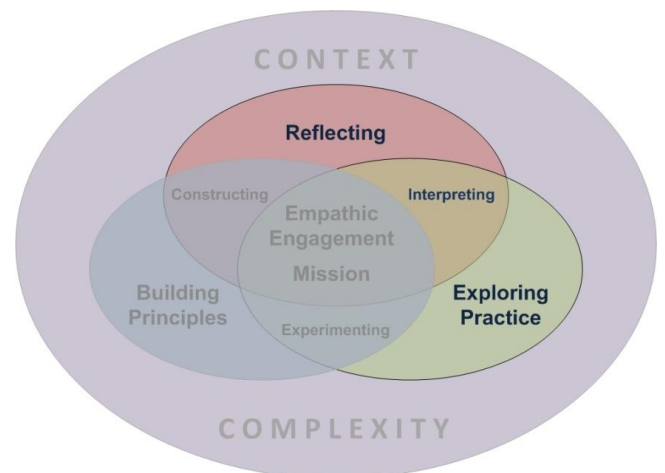
Figure 4.27: Interpreting

- offering space: practitioners standing back and giving space and pupils being able to observe without having to participate (pupils opting in and out);
- fostering learner agency: offering independence or idea generation; practitioners adapting creatively; pupils being offered a voice; allowing mistakes and judgements;
- working alongside: practitioners joining in activities and incorporating in the Learn 2 Work course.

Where reflection met with exploring practice, practitioners engaged in interpreting. This involved understanding various explorations of practice as having particular meaning and impact, or finding explanations for confusing or new outcomes. This could then feed back into honing and directing the exploration process. Interpreting drew on and engaged the practitioners' empathy, helping them to understand and share the pupils' feelings as they reflected and explored practice. So, for example, STAs became 'safety nets' whilst the pupils were on vocational courses due to empathic reflection on the benefits of their actions and on the signs that a situation was starting to spiral downwards. Just as constructing (4.2.5) and experimenting (4.3.5) were forms of translation of one form into another, so interpreting was also a translation: of outcomes and responses to practice, into more effective practice. Another example is that Geoff aimed to create a space that enabled pupils to play, through which pupils could begin to articulate their needs. He then needed engaged empathy to practice interpreting those needs. When celebrating the unusual, particularly through pupils' ideas (in order to monopolise on and give value to what the pupils had to offer), Wolf and Water then interpreted how far they could take these unusual ideas, why it mattered and into what area of comedy it could evolve.

4.5 What characterised the practitioners' approaches whilst at Eastbank: core findings

The practitioners at Eastbank reflected on practice, continued to build principles and explored practice, individually, collaboratively and communally. As one process stimulated another, the practitioners constructed a vision, experimented with its outworking and interpreted its impact, allowing context and complexity to speak into their decisions and actions. I will now look at the core characteristics of these combined approaches: empathic engagement and mission. Together, they sum up the practitioner approaches and vision for their role in education at Eastbank.

4.5.1 Definitions of empathic engagement and mission

At the core of the overlapping approaches was a marriage of empathic engagement and mission, reiterated now as figure 4.1, from earlier in the chapter:
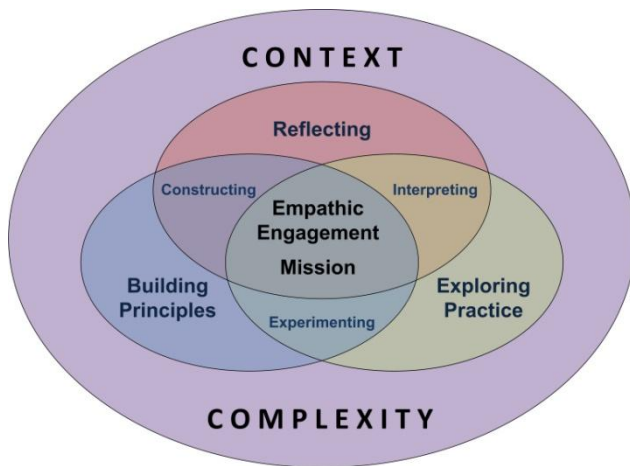
Figure 4.1: What characterised practitioner approaches at Eastbank? In diagrammatic form

Empathic Engagement

Common to each of the circled themes was a way in which Eastbank's practitioners engaged with the pupils that led to respect and understanding and a motivation to act ethically. My analysis was showing that practitioners had an understanding of the pupils' state of mind and the features of the situation they were in, whilst considering the context of what led pupils to be in that situation in the first place. Practitioners' pedagogical and pastoral approaches seemed to be based, in part, on grasping how the conditions surrounding the pupils would be contributing to their sense of themselves and life.

It is worth noting that empathy is difficult to define and so I am briefly outlining what I do and do not mean when I refer to the term. At its most basic it is emotional contagion - a spontaneous response to the feelings of another. It involves the direct perception of the emotions of others and automatically triggers or activates the same emotion in the perceiver. Slightly less basic is the 'me too' stage, where one empathizes with the actual situation of another but does not distinguish one's own perspective from the perspective of the other. These are mere affected responses and are not what I am referring to in this thesis. I refer instead to the level beyond this, sometimes referred to as 'cognitive empathy': 'The primary difference between earlier forms of empathy and cognitive empathy is that in the latter the empathizer is not merely mimicking or projecting onto the emotions of the object of empathy, but is engaged in a reflective act of imagination that puts her into the object's situation and/or frame of mind' (Gruen, L., 2009, pp.28-29).

I have based my understanding of empathic engagement from two main sources, neither one in the field of education as it is not a term much used in the field of education: Lori Gruen, 2009, and Hall, L. et al, 2005. Gruen, an ecologist, writes:

> Engaged empathy is a process whereby individuals who are empathizing with the well-being of others first respond to the other's condition (most likely, but not exclusively, by way of a pre-

cognitive empathetic reaction), and then reflectively imagine themselves in the position of the other, and then make a judgment about how the conditions that the other finds herself in may contribute to her state of mind or impact upon her interests. These judgments will involve assessing the salient features of the situation and require that the empathizer seek to determine what information is pertinent to effectively empathize with the being in question. Engaged empathy thus involves both affect and cognition and will necessitate action... Engaged empathy requires that we develop skills that will ultimately make us more sensitive and attuned perceivers and more informed and effective moral actors (Gruen, L., 2009, p.29; p.34).

My analysis of the data has been such that I saw this process as characteristic of practitioners' approaches at Eastbank. Hall et al. states that 'empathic engagement is the fostering of emotional involvement intending to create a coherent cognitive and emotional experience which results in empathic relations' (Hall, L. et al, 2005, p.731). I will outline in 4.5.3 the areas of the data from which these findings emerged.

Mission

Alongside empathic engagement, mission emerged as an overarching theme. In this context, by mission I mean (The Free Dictionary, 2012):

- an inner calling to pursue an activity or perform a service - a vocation;
- a body of persons sent to conduct negotiations or establish relations with a foreign country;
- a welfare or educational organization established for the needy people of a district

There was evidence of practitioners engaging with their vocation. This was merged with openness to uncertainty and complexity and to the kind of listening that comes with negotiating and establishing relationships in unknown territory, whilst reaching out to pupils who had difficult out of school situations.

However, it is worth acknowledging that the term may be linked to connotations of hierarchical relationships due to its more traditional usage. It has been most commonly recognised as Christian missions, but is also used for other creeds or ideology. It has been used to describe propagation of the faith, expansion of the reign of God, conversion of unbelievers and the founding of new churches. Historically, it was reminiscent of Colonial expansion of the Western world in what has more recently been known as the third world. More recently, the word has been reclaimed within the world of video games and business, relating to purpose, strategy, behaviour standards and values. These interpretations could affect how the term is viewed by readers when coming to my research.

Although both these overarching themes stand alone, it was the relationship between the two that accurately characterised the practitioners' approaches at Eastbank.

4.5.2 The relationship between mission and empathic engagement

Based on my analysis of the data, I have considered the relationship between the two ways of being that emerged as overarching themes. I needed to do this in order to better understand what I was seeing and coding. It was not enough to code these themes separately, as one seemed to mutually transform the other. Therefore, I wrote a memo to better grasp what I felt was emerging from the data:

> Empathic engagement produces a motivation to act ethically from a sensitive and attuned space. It necessitates action, for which mission provides an outlet. The inner calling to pursue an activity or perform a service – which in education is a vocation – needs this sensitive and attuned space in order to thrive in its action. Historically, many a mission has performed its service without locating such an attuned space and as a result failed. Worse, it has triggered war. It is vital when conducting negotiations and establishing relations with 'unknown territory' to be engaged in a reflective act of imagination that gains entry into the other's situation and way of thinking. When considering another element of mission, helping the needy, empathic engagement can offer a holistic approach by grasping how the conditions surrounding pupils would be contributing to their sense of themselves and life. The respect and understanding it brings offers depth and efficacy to the practical. A weakness of mission can be the desire to sweep in and rescue before listening. Empathic engagement heightens the consideration of the context of what led pupils to be in that situation in the first place, which can calm and direct the force with which mission can present. Mission fulfils the need to become an informed and effective moral actor that empathic engagement requires. Together they can bring lasting well-being, in and beyond education. It seems that empathic engagement and mission have a dialogic relationship with each other. One is fully engaged, present and influential even as the other acts. As Merleau-Ponty states, in true dialogue it is no longer possible to say who is thinking (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.29) (memo: October 2011).

Section 4.5.3 will give examples of how the practitioners at Eastbank combined both empathic engagement and mission in their approach with pupils and each other.

In order to explore and understand the dialogic nature of empathic engagement and mission, I engaged in creative writing and diagram drawing:

Mission arrives, active and strong, reaching outward.
Ever bright, it radiates energy and rolls with logic.

With a passive moon-like element, Empathic Engagement moves with the light.
Such intuition, soft and still within; at ease in the depths.

Complementary forces, co-arising and interdependent,
They reach out and respond, one to the other to mutually transform.

Thus, a vibrant kaleidoscope, each contraction and expansion
a kind of breathing; humanising the other as they live.

Figure 4.28: Coming to understand the data through creative means

4.5.3 How these two overarching themes emerged

This section draws together the analysis of the Reflecting, Building Principles and Exploring Practice data. As practitioners reflected on the social context of the AP site and the pupils within it, they became sensitive to the need to raise aspiration without turning pupils against the culture in which they lived. They sensed an important role of the unit in the pupils' lives as a stable base and were motivated to act ethically to respect this. Practitioners made judgments about how the conditions that pupils found themselves in may contribute to their state of mind or impact upon their learning. These judgements then informed expectations of and reactions to the pupils at the unit. Sometimes these were small comments, like one that Dave made to help me better understand what was happening one day after some difficult news at the site: 'They're very unsettled today. I don't know if you've picked that up, they feel unsettled' (interview 4). Each of the permanent staff was negotiating very carefully through the structure and dynamics of that day. There was also an understanding that there was sometimes stress involved for pupils in making meaningful choices, partly from being in environments where meaningful

138

choice had been withheld. This empathic engagement led to a call to action: to raise aspiration sensitively, to act ethically to protect and build a safe space and to construct ways of teaching that were holistic in approach. This manifested as mission.

As the constructing continued, practitioners were attuned to their own past and how their biographies were being written. This became part of their awareness, which they could draw on easily to relate to and better understand similarity or difference in the present when in dialogue with pupils. This empathic engagement with self and other enabled robust, interrelating ways forward that manifested as mission when conducting negotiations with the unknown and in terms of vocation. As practitioners reflected on their own current practice, they identified and owned their own emotions, showing awareness of their potential impact on pupils. They also viewed session content, ethical considerations and current theory through the lens of context and complexity. Practitioners had a sense of mission when looking to enable conditions of possibility thinking. Geoff examined his current practice for evidence of possibility thinking, and all practitioners looked for pupils' opportunities for immersion, self-determination, risk taking, play, imagination and intentionality, often joining in the creative space out of commitment.

Empathic engagement and mission were also at the heart of practitioners building principles. Through placing importance on adapting to pupils' needs, in particular time being seen as flexible and focusing on being yourself, the practitioners assessed the features of a situation and sought to determine what information was pertinent to effectively empathize with a pupil and adapt. Geoff built a methodology that, through creative adaption, sought out pupil voice, relevance and ownership as part of his mission. One of his mission statements was, 'the road out of operating from unquestioned assumptions is the road to change' (Geoff, written interview 3). In terms of building trust and relationship, offering pupils time involved listening. This fostered emotional involvement with the intention to create a bonding experience that built trust and relationship. Dave was clear in prioritising this: 'In my opinion, the most important aspect of our work at Eastbank is to build relationships with the pupils so they can trust us' (Dave, written interview 2). The empathic engagement necessitated action, for which the mission of building trust provided an outlet. Part of this trust was built on a principle of being for the pupils and not holding grudges. Through practitioners reflectively being able to imagine themselves in a pupil's position, they were able to authentically pursue their well-being. This mission towards well-being was based in believing in the pupils where they were in the present, which could only happen through engaged empathy. Practitioners were able to believably express to pupils that they were at fault without expressing 'this is your fault', a more global statement. Such communication enabled a management of behaviour through relationship via a growing awareness of what each pupil needed in order to calm down when riled.

Empathic engagement and mission were woven into the theme of teamwork that emerged out of the data. The sense of 'Team Eastbank' between the permanent staff was based on respect for and understanding of each other, which empathic engagement can build. The evident teamwork felt

between them also gave a sense of group mission – going forth together with a shared vision. Permanent staff gave a sense that Eastbank was greater than the sum of its parts, which eluded to the AP site itself having and being a mission. The physical environment of the unit that the permanent staff built was a response to understanding the pupils' state of mind and the features of the situation they were in. They then acted on the principles that they had developed both individually and communally. The principle of nurture that was developed was the practitioners' response to empathic engagement, and contributed to their inner calling to 'choose to give young people the care they deserve' (Geoff, written interview 3). Both Geoff and Dave referred to themselves as pastoral carers:

> When the boys came back, Geoff voiced a concern that he was excluding them by doing the dub beats with Tom.
> Lee: Don't worry 'bout that.

Geoff: I'm a dad, I'm allowed to worry. Ok, just let me know when you want a go (field notes 4).

This was a subtle way for Geoff to express to the boys that it was in his nature to care for young people's well-being and that he was unapologetically, yet subtly, going to extend this to them. Dave extended the same care:

> Everybody's very worried about Dean and his self-esteem problem that comes over as 'I can't be bothered'; he's not getting appropriate support from home either. He really needs a good male role model that he doesn't seem to have at the moment. I'm the only one and I'm a bit old and grey for him really (interview 4).

Both male practitioners saw the principle of nurture as part of their mission at Eastbank.

Empathic engagement and mission permeated practitioners exploring practice. Geoff, for example, used an empathic approach to sense where to go when 'trying to create a space for them that enables them to work/play and through that begin to articulate their needs' (Geoff's blog 2). Standing back and giving space was an approach in his and other practitioners' mission to foster creativity. Opportunities for pupils to opt in and out of a session or observe without having to participate were a result of practitioners committing to becoming sensitive, informed and attuned perceivers. Geoff, in particular, clearly articulated his aim: 'to help these young people to grow into healthy, happy, responsible adults themselves rather than neurotic drones' (Geoff's blog 3). Wolf and Water had a 'calling' for pupils' idea generation. They wanted pupils to feel limitless, celebrated for their quirkiness and confident to express who they were imaginatively and with humour. As a result, both sets of artists in residence at Eastbank used empathic engagement in adapting creatively in terms of session content. It became natural, therefore, to embrace mistakes and judgements as part of the creative process. All practitioners joined in activities alongside pupils at Eastbank, including myself; it was a foundational part of the ethos there. As expressed previously in the chapter, Dave was committed to level the hierarchy: 'Something I am constantly trying to avoid is the them and us situation that is often apparent in the mainstream. My philosophy is to get alongside the pupils, gain their trust and work with them rather than be "in front of them" in a position of authority' (written interview 2). This physical giving of oneself to a situation

relationally, creatively and cognitively was representational of all aspects of mission: an inner calling to pursue an activity or perform a service - vocation; being sent to conduct negotiations or establish relationship in unknown territory; and an educational organization established for those in need.

4.6 Context and complexity: questioning realities

In answering 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' (and indeed following where these approaches led, as outlined in Findings Part 2), it is not possible to separate the practitioners' ways of dealing with the situation they were in from the wider context of that situation, hence the coding of 'context'. Nor is it possible to disconnect my findings from a quality of intricacy and complication that is complexity, the reason for my coding of 'complexity'. The practitioner approaches outlined in this chapter are therefore framed within both context and complexity, as depicted in figure 4.1, section 4.1.1. The outer area of context and complexity refers to two mindsets: the practitioners' attempts to work with context and complexity, and my epistemology as a researcher, grounding my findings in context and complexity. My sense is that I was led to ground my findings in this way as a result of experiencing the practitioners' attempts to ground *their* work in this way. It is possible that I have chosen to see the practitioners' mindset in this way out of my own epistemology, but this is not my perception.

This section discusses external perception from outside of the AP site and pupils self-protecting as influencing factors on the practitioners' approaches. The end of this section and the chapter shows examples of life writing that I wrote whilst at Eastbank, that highlight context and complexity and honour the data in an alternative way.

I take context to mean 'the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood' (Oxford English, 2012). However, I would replace the word 'fully' with 'far better' and will give reason shortly. The circumstances surrounding pupils, practitioners and myself at that time in that community, permeated all reflection, principles and practice and the constructing, experimenting and interpreting of these. My findings can be far better understood through the lens of their context.

Complexity is less straight forward to define. 'Complexity thinking' bridges a gap between a belief in a fixed and knowable world and a fear that meaning and reality are too dynamic to authentically explain. It commits to neither and listens to both. It is not looking for common ground, but acknowledges insights without falling back on absolutes. Eastbank could be classed as complex in that it was self-organised, it was perceived as being greater than the sum of its parts, was interdependent, was composed of an original/new outworking of principles and had an unpredictable relationship with the community around it.

As Eastbank seemed familiar with uncertainty and that which does not seem possible, this environment facilitated the practitioners, with their engaged empathy and a sense of mission, to approach what they and the pupils had come to know as if it would 'part the red sea' to use a biblical analogy – that although they could not see a way ahead, what they had come through and learnt together would make something possible.

Through experiencing the practitioners' translation of what they knew from experience as being a creative force, I began to view my own study through this lens. I questioned and began to blur the 'hard edges' of my findings to show openness to uncertainty. My findings cannot be complete, neatly reduced and easily simplified, hence the rejection of the phrase 'fully understood'; there are parts missing in principle. A well-known phrase by Albert Einstein sums up my emerging intention: 'Everything should be as simple as possible, but not simpler'. In this way I am not presenting my model as a fully accurate map of reality. However, it is impossible to critique without an existing reality, therefore I see a place for modelling in the way that I have, and frame it to promote 'thinking the complex' and to ask, 'can we think differently?'

4.6.1 External perception and self-protection within the context of the site

There were two ongoing realities that stood out as being particularly woven into the practitioner approaches: external perception from outside of the AP site and pupils self-protecting.

External perception

Practitioners within Eastbank were motivated by empathic engagement and mission, which led to understanding and respecting the pupils. However, those outside of the AP site interpreted the behaviour of the pupils very differently and there were several complaints from the immediately local residents and trustees of the building used by Eastbank. Therefore, a restorative justice meeting was arranged at the site, inviting trustees, local residents, the secondary school deputy head, pupils and permanent staff at Eastbank. It was chaired by the local sergeant of the town. Everyone was given an opportunity to express their fears and grievances and to explain and apologise. The permanent staff spent time with pupils in advance to help prepare them to communicate effectively and have time to think about what they might want to say. I was part of a few role plays where pupils got to practise having a voice. My sense was that the expectations were positive and pupils were keen to restore broken relationships, as they knew it would help to keep the AP site open. However, the meeting was not a success and the AP closure was announced two weeks later. Pupils barely spoke during the hour and a half and there was no restoring of key relationships.

As an observer I was distressed by the content of the meeting and saw a great opportunity wasted. A key reason for my distress was the attitude of the police sergeant. Figure 4.29 is part of his introduction to the meeting, which is indicative of the ethos of the rest of the meeting.

Extract of Police sergeant's opening to a community restorative justice meeting at Eastbank.

Some more ground rules. I want some respect in this room, all right, not for me personally, for the people sitting around here, okay. This is everyone's chance to say how they feel, right, and I want you all to respect that. And if I see anyone making symbols or making gestures with their middle finger on the side of their face, I'll consider arresting them here and now...If I personally certainly don't feel that you students aren't taking this seriously, okay, I will do everything in my power as a sergeant of (name of town removed) to close this place down, all right? End of, okay. Ultimately the decision will be the trustees and the staff, okay, but let's be very clear about this, I'm the Police Sergeant of (name removed), I exert an awful lot of pressure on the community, all right? Yeah, and if you want this to stay, yeah, and I saw the bit about Eastbank is back in the paper yeah. Fantastic, really good, all right – that will stop. All right? That will stop, and I will make this happen very, very quickly, all right? Now I'm sure that a few of you here know me, yeah, and you know I can do that.

Let's just say if any of you don't want to be here, okay, fine, pardon my French, you bugger off and I'll close the place down, all right yeah? It's up to you, yeah, because I'm not doing this for my own benefit trust me, I have got 101 other things to do, yeah? So let's start in the right frame of mind and be serious about this, because I tell you if I think any of you aren't taking this seriously I'm off out, yeah, because if you can't be bothered nor can I.

The reason we're here, there's been a few issues around behaviour, not only just the unit but affecting the wider community. As I said that has an effect on how long the unit operates, yeah, because the community are important, yeah, and if the behaviour from the unit is affecting it, the community, just like I can, can exert pressure on the trustees and the staff to call it a day, yeah, because the community don't deserve to put up with this, all right.

But with my business side of my head on, if this shut down tomorrow, pardon me but ...[unclear as baby cries], yeah. Because the complaints have come from the trustees ...[unclear as baby cries]. And if I get complaints it causes me hassle, I have other things to do, there's tens of thousands of other people that live in (name of town) believe it or not that need my attention, my colleagues attention, and actually I accept, cards on the table, if this shut tomorrow I'd be thinking that's one of the things I don't have to deal with.

So on the other side of it this is a good opportunity for you, I hope that you come out of it all the better. But the other side of the coin is if it does shut down tomorrow don't forget you'll be seeing an awful lot more of me, yeah, because you'll be out on the streets potentially where I'll be, and if nothing else at least if you're in here you don't have to suffer me do you?

Figure 4.29: Transcription excerpt of recorded restorative justice meeting – Sergeant's introduction

As a result of the sergeant's opening words, pupils took a 'screw you' stance, and, although were not poorly behaved during the meeting, disengaged from giving it their energy. They were not able to step over his approach and resolve issues with neighbours and trustees who were open to being in community with them and wanted to try to understand them better. Pupils perceived threat and self-protected at a vital time for the future of the AP site. I think that they were right to perceive threat; the sergeant's words were aggressive and full of mistrust. He had received multiple complaints about the pupils and had only experienced them whilst pushing legal and social boundaries. However, this prohibited him from facilitating a rebuilding of trust and relationship for the welfare of everyone.

There were two complaints from the residents living next to the unit that were based around fear, one from a young mother and one from a retired man:

It's like I said, I know they like to have their fun, but I have an eight week old baby boy and I have a 22 month old daughter who picks up words quite quickly. And sometimes they do actually frighten them, so my main concern is my children.

Everything seemed to be fine up to about six weeks ago. The students that were here made us a lovely Christmas card which we've still got. Then everything just started off. Balls were being kicked up against our wall and there were students sitting on top of the wall outside our property, leaning against our car. Sometimes I go up to town just to get out. I've come back recently and found that my wife's locked herself in the house and she's frightened to come outside, and I find this very upsetting, and I find it very unacceptable, antisocial behaviour basically. Really, really upsetting. That's it really (Restorative Justice 1).

Both these situations were approached superficially at the meeting, without any longer term plans for building trust and breaking down fear. The pupils were baffled after the meeting, as they felt that they had tried hard to be respectful to the neighbours. They could not see that their attire, volume and walking in gangs could appear threatening. The permanent staff was being asked to discuss where pupils stood, kicked a ball and how they left the building. Staff members also seemed to be shocked that the meeting was not going well and were preoccupied by ideas of getting the pupils to join in. I interviewed staff and pupils after the meeting and include two quotations from pupils. Jolie mainly spoke about the sergeant:

144

How did it make you feel when he said that?

Jolie: Pissed off. I thought he was being rude.

...Was there anything good about the meeting for you?

Jolie: When the baby started crying and we couldn't hear the copper (laughter).

(Jodie and Sian feedback from meet)

Jolie had dismissed the sergeant as being relevant and had shut down to the rest of the meeting. She quickly shrugged off the afternoon and took the stance of not being bothered with any of it. Lee, on the other hand, felt a great sense of injustice and ranted for several minutes about what he had been subjected to:

It's a load of crap, just a waste of time, quite seriously...We smoke out by the gate, and flippin' what's wrong with that? If they've got a problem with that it's their own fault not ours. Where else might you go for it, over the other side of the flippin' park? What's the point in that? Whenever we see anyone go past or anything we always say hello, they always say hi back. And there's this one woman that comes through with her dog and flippin', we always speak to her, always, always have. I always speak to people because I know a lot of people around here, so what's the point, what's your problem? There is none (interview 21).

Lee felt misunderstood and misrepresented, despite permanent staff's best efforts. I have dwelt on the restorative justice meeting as an example of the wider context and complexity that enveloped Eastbank and the practitioners' approaches there. In this case, the trustees and neighbours physically surrounded the AP site, which raised many issues.

Pupils self-protecting

Practitioners were regularly dealing with pupils putting up their guard and protecting, potentially in anticipation of rejection or animosity. Geoff wrote about his first encounter meeting the pupils:

Walking into Eastbank for the first time the damage is pretty obvious and if I wasn't such a bastard it would make me cry. I receive an Über cool response: super quick glances and back to breakfast, reading the paper or the computer; polite acknowledgement (a nod of the head, a wave of the hand, I manage one or two handshakes) as I'm introduced because they know I'm a mate of Margo's. No smiles. Hyper vigilance is the order of the day. I respond in kind; relaxed, chilled, neither threat nor target (Geoff's blog 1).

Despite knowing that Geoff had come to explore music with them and had brought a room full of instruments, and despite many not having had such an opportunity since primary school, there was no display of excitement. Pupils also showed signs of self-protecting against the world in general. On being asked why he felt negatively about his future, Damon replied:

Damon: Because it's shit.

What's shit about it?

Just everything.

Is there anything good you're looking forward to?

No.
Nothing?

Probably not (interview 6).

Damon had been granted a recent protection order (the family courts have the power to make orders to protect children from harm caused by abuse or neglect). I interviewed Damon a week before Eastbank closed, which had been a place of safety for him. I interviewed Les on the same day, just before the closure. Les had been the only pupil not to have been notified of the closure or have plans made for him:

Do you think you might do construction then in a year or so?

Les: No.
Why not?

Because they're a bunch of gays.

Fair enough. So what might you do?

Nothing.

Nothing at all?

Nothing. (Les last week, interview 18)

I perceived that both these pupils were afraid of what might happen to them and so rejected the future in advance of any rejection or pain. Charmaine was more explicit about her fear, earlier in the year:

Is there anything you're feeling a bit worried about?

Being unemployed, just like a waste of space (interview 31).

Practitioners were faced with pupils self-protecting instinctively, and so this issue was woven into the practitioners' reflections, building of principles and exploration of practice. It also played its part in fostering empathic engagement and mission.

A further discussion of context and complexity is explored next, through life writing.

4.7 My lived experiences at Eastbank as embodied through life writing

4.7.1 Introduction

As discussed in my methodology (section 3.9), in understanding life writing as 'ontology', one way that I embodied the context and complexity permeating Eastbank was through life writing. In starting to explore the discourses around representation, I believe that researchers should provide multiple forms of data representation because 'multiple texts, directed toward research...may better represent both the complexity of the lives we study, and the lives we lead as academics and private persons' (Tierney and Lincoln,1997, p.xi).

The issues arising from the pieces of writing spread out beyond my findings chapters. In places, I discuss methodological findings. However, I see these life writing pieces as most relevantly placed here as they are a source of insight into my own lived experiences at Eastbank out of which my findings were constructed, and an offering of my perception of the lived experiences of the pupils with whom I spent time.

4.7.2 Life writing and reflections on them

Each piece of life writing has been given its own page to highlight the change in genre and emotional presence, starting on the next page.

Dreams
January 2010

He painted pictures with my camera. Discovered overlooked delights and framed them in surprising ways. My photographs were practical, his were art. The first time I handed over my camera to him, we exchanged no words. I knew he would understand how to use it; he had studied my every camera move.

And he was off. Moving fast, nothing carefully lined up, everything snatched greedily. A sudden tilting of hands, then ducking to the grimy floor of the motor mechanics class. Every morsel of flaking paint or shiny hub captured him and he them. A grimy workshop became a glorious canvas.

And so it was. Every session he would stand silently and wait for me to place the camera in his hands. I brought a second one to leave him uninterrupted. 'Can I go outside?' he asked. 'Sure,' I said. Just keep it around your neck. Don't let it get wet.' The staff winced. I knew he'd be careful. He came back an hour later with bits of leaves in his hair and muddy knees. Camera intact. Eyes shining.

'Do you have one at home?' I asked. He barely shook his head. *He could borrow one of mine*, I thought and mentioned it to staff. One touched my arm. 'His family would sell it,' she said quietly. 'Think no more about it.' A rage set in as I realised she might be right. The stories came flooding in from staff of poverty and previous selling of school property on loan to the boy. I could not help him in that way.

He heard of my intentions. 'I'll take care of it,' he pleaded. I explained that I could not let him take it home. He did not fight. He assumed the familiar distant look and nodded. In the following weeks he still picked up the camera from time to time. Occasionally, I would see him holding it on his lap. I hope he still dreams dreams.

This was the first snippet of life writing that I wrote in relation to Eastbank, and it seemed to emerge out of a need of an outlet for my emotions towards this young person's situation. What I gleaned from my writing, alongside observing the practitioners' communal epistemology, launched a journey of understanding the complexities and context permeating Eastbank, in particular, pupils self-protecting and my role.

Upon re-reading the writing when seeking to make sense of my data, I was struck by the beauty that this boy saw in his cultural environment. I was also struggling to hold the tension between the capacity to exercise choice that he had both at Eastbank and in his leisure time, and the limitations of his opportunities due to his personal circumstances. His subtle communication of 'What's the point?' stirred up a kind of grieving in me for the betrayal in his life and the undermining he experienced. I found myself wanting more for him and wanting him to want more for himself.

The 'familiar distant look' led me to continue to be aware of the pupils self-protecting and the context surrounding the AP site as I collected data. I was beginning to grasp that my own presence and research there was part of the complexity – that my interaction with this young man gave him a glimpse of possibility. The practitioner approaches were being shaped by this backdrop, as were my own approaches. Through the life writing I became more mindful of my relationship with the young man and the journey of trust between us. I struggled with feelings of injustice, helplessness and letting him down, which needed an expression. My own acknowledgement of my emotions also gave me greater awareness of the scope of emotions that the practitioners demonstrated as they worked with the pupils over time and developed their approaches.

Engaging in life writing opened up a potential understanding of my contribution towards licensed chaos and well-being at Eastbank (considered in the discussion chapter). My relationship with my camera and my other role as a research photographer made a difference to the pupils, especially this young man. With the photographs going up on Facebook each week, including the photos taken by them, there appeared to be an increase in ownership of the activities the photographs portrayed. The taking and the display of the photographs indicated a significance and relevance of their content. I was also capturing and so highlighting moments of belonging. The pupils copied the photos off the Facebook group page and displayed them on their own online walls. Several of the pupils tagged themselves and made the photographs their profile pictures on Facebook. This piece of life writing was key, not only in opening up my awareness of the influences around the AP site, of practitioners and young people, but also in helping me to realise that I was already neck-deep in the life of this community.

Fallout
22nd February 2010

I am sat in my car in the car park with tears falling in my mouth. I'll be alright in a minute: shake off the grief and wander back in. But right now, I am crying for a boy. Not an excluded pupil who brings on trouble, but a fifteen year old boy who is drowning.

This place was his last shot at school. But it was a shot at belonging to something too. He blew it, of course; made it impossible to be allowed to stay. Sabotaged his chances by simply being who he is. I know all this.

Today he came to ask forgiveness and to come back. He knows now what it meant to lose his main source of routine and comfort: the chaos came with such force. When he put blade to his skin the chaos eased but he was running out of skin.

When he showed me his arm it took me a few moments to grasp what I was looking at. Here was chaos personified. The doctors had done their best to stitch the many wounds, but there was more wound than skin. 'I tried to stop', he said, looking away.

I held both his arms. Even this act was a risk; here was a boy who made up stories. How careful I had been to never find myself alone with him. What a tangled web when love, mercy and comfort are too great a risk yet never needed more. In that moment I gave him my trust.

I offered him my sympathy and asked him if he felt safe. 'Feel nothing', he said. The drugs were strong and we both gave thanks for the glazed look in his eyes. All the professional help was in place but I sit here feeling no relief. Only grief and fear.

He told me a story. *Run*, he thought. *If I run, I will stop inflicting the pain.* The police tag on his leg kept him in and it was already dark. He attacked it with a bloodied knife and as it broke apart he sought escape. Out there somewhere must be an answer.

Out there was a terrifying nightmare. When a tag is broken there is protocol. A bleeding boy running to find hope was engulfed by armed men and panicked. The terror covered him and he could not see reality for black suits and shouting.

The charges were resisting arrest and violence towards a police officer. Perhaps today, he said, there would be good news and he could come back to the site. I know he cannot. He has crossed too many lines and the decision has been made elsewhere.

He has wandered away now. Writing has calmed my nerves but my eyes reveal my humanity. I wonder when I shall see him again. Is it true that he is his own worst enemy? May there be no future gaps of support for this boy to fall through. The drop is very long.

Writing and re-reading this life writing helped me to perceive something of the theme of humanising that was emerging in my data. At the time of writing I do not think I was consciously aware of how experiencing and capturing this event could influence my data collection and analysis; I was simply trying to connect with my humanity. Yet, in grappling with moving beyond offering pupils a 'role', I considered further how the practitioners were present to the pupils, which brought depth to my data collection and analysis.

There are themes here that are also in the last piece: grief, helplessness, sabotage, trust, fear and Eastbank as a place of safety. In terms of sabotage, I began to consider the idea of adults taking young people's sabotaging behaviour at face value, as a justification of giving in and up on them and their future. I also became more aware of a sense of belonging and well-being that was perceived as priceless by this pupil. Witnessing how lost this pupil felt once that source was removed helped to identify belonging as an authentic outcome of practitioner approaches.

In stripping back the role of researcher and pupil to adult and boy, I was finding my way back to my way of being in the world that was committed to finding a way through to show care, despite the risk. At a difficult time I was guided by my ontological anchors, and this is one way of observing them. Through this life writing, I am transparent in my subjective stance towards this pupil and similar pupils in serious trouble. My closing comments are in line with this being a critical theory enquiry, and my analysis is coming out of this subjective place.

This piece also places my analysis firmly in a context. Although I am researching the characteristics of Eastbank's practitioner approaches and following where they led, it is equally important that I give my sense of the spirit and lived experiences of the young people with whom these approaches were built. This scenario was a significant moment for me; at a later date whilst commenting that we would stay in touch, the young man semi-joked by saying 'Of course, you've seen my scars now', which indicated that it had been a significant moment for him too. To my knowledge, he made up no stories about the interaction.

Watch me grow
January 2010

It was the kind of graffiti you would see on a kitchen wall: a scrawled height chart, spanning the growing years. First names creeping up and up, the date alongside as a proud snapshot. It spoke its own language, held its own stories, understood by those within.

In the New Year, it was decided that a few people needed re-measuring. Toast was whipped out of hands and placed back on the plate in the ushering to the wall. A crowd gathered around, mocking the staff member now needing to stand on a chair to measure. She was quickly usurped by Jay, with his never ending skin and bone legs, who, with a flick of the pen, had it covered. Then followed the playful taunts, upon discovering that *she* was taller than *him* and *he* had overtaken his rival. Fingers traced invisible lines between names in a hubbub of noise.

This was a family affair and, though caught up in the mirth, I found a place on the fringe. As the group began to disperse to cries of *Who took my pigging toast?* Two of the girls approached me. *Come on*, one said as the other picked up a pen. I didn't understand the subtext. She pulled my arm. The realisation spread within me like ink on chromatography paper racing for the edges, and in the daze of it, I let them manipulate me into place. A smaller crowd re-gathered. A moment later I was handed the pen. *Another bloody shortarse!* was announced and with swelling pride I printed my name next to the line.

It was their way of ending the probation. After three months of joining in their days and being eyed sideways - what an initiation. It was time to start the interviews. For months after that day, I would wander over to the chart and inwardly salute my name. Of course, now they stole my toast.

This was a special moment for me that I re-visited months after the event, during a time when I was writing memos and wanted to step beyond that structure. I had been dwelling on the emerging theme of family and found myself writing this piece of life writing. I had grown accustomed to the banter and the familiarity between permanent staff and pupils and so this writing was a reminder to look with fresh eyes whilst collecting data. When analysing my data, this writing conjured a tangible memory that reassured me that a sense of family was an authentic theme emerging out of the data, which was part of the greater theme of belonging. The writing 'bottled' something of the atmosphere at the AP site that I can now experience again, and it might be that others can gain a sense of my perceptions in a way that the rest of the thesis does not convey. Considering the hardship that some faced, there was a lot of banter and on-going jokes. Stolen toast became extremely funny, as long as it was replaced. The physical nature of the interactions was also woven into the writing without me noticing. Staff and pupils touched each other a lot; I was 'dragged' to be shown achievements or be measured, in an affectionate way.

The initiation itself was important to me. As the 'swelling pride' indicates, it mattered to me that I was accepted into this community. In the new year of 2010, I was negotiating my place at Eastbank, biding my time before starting the pupil interviews and hoping that pupils and staff alike would come to understand that I could be trusted. The initiation further highlighted the probation and the self-protection that the pupils wore on a daily basis. Dwelling on the initiation through life writing added to the growing understanding that self-protection was a key influencing factor upon the practitioner approaches and their outcomes.

The next three pieces of life writing are from the end of my data collection period.

Building for a purpose
20th May 2010

I have grown quite partial to my steel-toe boots and overalls; it is more of a wrench to give them back than I expected. After trying to observe the group from outside the yellow boundary lines at the far end of the purpose-built hangar, the college appeared with them one day. So, when they got changed, I did too. It seemed right, somehow, and, when not taking photos and observing, I was mixing cement and filling up the hungry palettes.

Early on in the college course, a few showed enormous frustration. During one session, Les struggled to get his bricks level and eventually threw his trowel to the floor. Lime mortar flew off the trowel and hit me in the eye. The pain was intense. As much as I wanted to cry out and call the supervisor, I knew it would land Les in serious trouble, so I signalled to an Eastbank teaching assistant, who helped me to the toilet. As we left, I caught a glimpse of Les looking horrified.

With much bathing, the pain eased and, after cleaning up the camera and the spatters on my skin, I headed back to the hangar with a red eye. Until that moment, Les had tended to ignore me, giving polite nods or grunts when I asked him something direct. Something had shifted between us now, and we seemed closer. 'I'm really sorry,' he said, looking straight at me. It was the first time I had seen his eyes.

As the weeks rolled on, the structures became more sturdy. Then came crunch point. After each session, the group had to tear down what they had built, ready for the next group arriving. Once they began to have pride in what they had created, they did not want to dismantle it. 'What's the point in making something good if it's for nothing?' they argued. 'What kind of a stupid idea is that?' Many groups came and went for the workshops, but no one complained about the arrangements. These young men and lady were different. 'We want to practise on something proper!' they insisted, and when they could not, they ceased working.

So a plan was put in place. The group were to build a barbeque for the further education college yard, and cook on it at the end of term. Instantly, they were back on board. Lessons were spent designing and costing the barbeque, each pupil claiming a role in the project. They built it with focus and care.

It rained today, but nobody cared. We feasted like kings. We were each to bring a contribution, so I brought extra, as I had assumed that some of them would forget. Yet everyone had gone to great effort, some bringing salad and homemade dishes. My quick dash to the shop to grab a pack of burgers looked a little meagre in comparison. There was pride in this structure and their collective voice to make sure it was here to stay. I wonder if they will miss their overalls too.

Without consciously meaning to, I wrote this piece, which actually happened, as an analogy for my time spent at Eastbank as a whole. My steel-toe boots and overalls: the capacity and willingness to be part of the community. The wrench of returning them signifies the end of my data collection and constant contact with the young people and practitioners, which also signalled the closure of Eastbank. Just like them, I had come to belong. The surprise gift of the overalls and boots without asking is reminiscent of an AP site that modelled belonging and practitioners joining in activities alongside pupils. The act of mixing cement and filling up the palettes represents my own research and general participation being an influencing force on the young people's lives and on the practitioners doing the same alongside me.

The analogy of Les getting lime mortar in my eye speaks of a transition that occurred with all the pupils at Eastbank. Amidst all the uncertainty, they would lash out in frustration – the mortar in my eye a physical manifestation of this frustration. It was not necessarily deliberately aimed at anyone at Eastbank, but invariably someone would get in the way and get hurt. It was the observation of the consequences of their actions and the experience of still being accepted at the end of those consequences that contributed to closeness and fed the sense of belonging. In my case, every pupil self-protected and pushed me away for a time. As I allowed myself to belong to the community, the pupils' self-protection eased. When one pupil asked me across the crowded room, 'Margo, do you love me?' as a joke, I knew my joking response of 'With all my heart' counted. If I did not buy in completely, they would not let me in. In the story just re-told, I wanted to cry out in pain and call the supervisor who would know what to do. In many ways, I (and the practitioners) held on to an issue for a short while without alerting the official channels, to give that young person a chance to soften and make changes.

In terms of their own learning, school lessons made little sense to the young people. Their cry of 'we want to practise on something proper!' resounded throughout their time at Eastbank and it was the cry of 'what kind of a stupid idea is that?' that got them to Eastbank in the first place. It was also a resounding cry upon hearing that the AP site was to be closed. Many groups passed through the FE college where the pupils went for their bricklaying course, but this was the first group not to settle for the current arrangements. The pupils could not participate in something they did not buy into, which was always apparent at Eastbank.

The barbeque is an analogy for what was built at Eastbank in terms of community and a sense of family. Together the group built something that was transformative, that could provide warmth and nourishment. Barbeques are found in your own back yard. Although Eastbank was closed and ironically dismantled like their bricklaying before the barbeque project, what was experienced could not be removed. In the story, I brought along a few quickly grabbed bought supplies in case some had forgotten. I was humbled by what they brought to the table and quickened to look at my own offerings. Unexpectedly, I have been transformed by my experienced with the Eastbank community.

I began coding my data in Nvivo after this piece of writing, but was analysing instinctively through my life writing during the data collection and initial tentative analysis. This kind of analysis, as an existing backdrop, seems to have made an impact on my coding procedures.

Our Day Out
June 2010

As I walked towards the pulled-over minibus, the lads sat by the windows simultaneously gave me the middle finger, failing to hide their delighted grins as they searched for my response. My belly laugh met the sky. The over-excited atmosphere hit me as I climbed in. Everyone was irritating the person in front with knees in the back, punching the headrest or flicking the bits of skin that were reachable. Every minute or so, there would be an explosion of annoyance from various parts of the bus. Adults would pretend to be driven mad with the banality and childishness, threatening the roof rack or side of the road. Everyone was shouting above the sound of the diesel engine. I was happy. I was inexplicably at home here.

Dave drove at sixty along the motorway, about which the group were mortified. We were overtaken by a cumbersome lorry and emotive sounds erupted as though he had just missed a vital goal. There were dramatic cries of 'We'll never fookin' get there!' and one pupil demanded to drive. Packed lunches were handed out as we drove along and devoured immediately, at half past nine. Most had missed breakfast. Even so, there was just enough left over for most of them to 'lob' at oncoming windscreens once we turned off onto country lanes. The roars of success were deafening - the scoldings high-pitched.

For most of the forty five minute journey, I had sat quietly, grinning until my cheeks ached. In a rare lull of noise, I turned to Jay.
'Anyone would think they've never been on a school trip!' I laughed.
'We haven't' he replied, 'Banned list, innit.'
All mirth suddenly drained from me.
'But at primary school!' I started.
'Never wanted me going' he shrugged. I turned to the rest of the animated faces and asked who had been on a school trip before. No one had. For the remaining minutes before we tumbled out of the minibus, I watched them, dazed. Not as a researcher, but as someone who was fiercely *for* them. No, as a researcher who was fiercely for them.

This piece is relevant to the research question looking at practitioner approaches, but is primarily about my role as a researcher amidst the developing relationship with pupils. The simultaneous middle finger salute was a delightful surprise because I had come to recognise moments and language of endearment. Here I was being saluted as one of the gang and the playful energy being offered to me was touching. The fact that a few of them had organised it moments before created a heightened sense of 'posse'. This snapshot of time was one where I was aware in the moment of feeling a sense of belonging and could acknowledge my happiness on the cusp of a day out. The theme of family is strong here; the scene is reminiscent of unbearably bored and naughty children in the back of the car on a summer holiday journey, with parents throwing out the threats and pacifying them with snacks. The embarrassment of Dave's slow driving shows the pupils' ownership of the situation and has similar qualities to teenagers cringing as dad enters the dance floor at a wedding.

The revelation that these young people had not been on a school trip highlighted my compassion for them. The phrase 'fiercely *for* them' goes beyond compassion and shows part of my motivation for using a critical theory approach. This approach, as expressed in my methodology, accepts the assumption that certain groups in society are privileged over others, 'constituting an oppression that is most forceful when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary or inevitable' (Crotty, 1998, p.158). In analysing my life writing, I found the lack of school trip experiences an example of a restrictive condition of many schools' status quo. In the story, my self-correction of 'not as a researcher' to 'as a researcher' shows my grappling with my perception of a researcher's role. It also hints at me coming to terms with and finding peace from not only deconstructing and humanising that perception, but my theoretical perspective being driven by an emerging post-critical theory approach to my research.

Last Day of Term
June 2010

I walked in to find the staff in school uniform shirts. Students were already starting to gather around and write goodbye messages on them, nodding their heads to loud music. 'Hang on,' I said, looking clearly confused. 'They don't have uniform to write on, so we thought we would' shouted 'Eggsy', as she was scolded for not standing still. Spirits seemed high. For eight of the twelve pupils it was time to move on and either go to college or hopefully find work. Beth had worked hard to apply for college courses with them, so several had something to look forward to.

For the other four, the day would prove to be testing. With another year left of compulsory education, and the AP site closing, they had an uncertain year ahead. Dean had been told he was going to the same PRU as a good friend, so was feeling positive, although admitted that the two of them together were trouble. Les, in particular, seemed troubled amid the celebrations. The others had received letters of the closure and details of the next step for their year eleven, but he had received nothing. It was the last day of term and he had been overlooked. The staff at the site felt they had to tell him and the others about the closure, as it was his last week. I decided to interview him and at first he seemed to cope. He had decided that, rather than commuting long distances by taxi to a PRU, that he would do nothing instead. But when I asked him what he was going to do further ahead, he repeated, 'nothing' several times. Then he cried silently.

I had seen a real range of emotions from this group of young people, but I had never seen one of them cry. I just listened back to the interview and his words and silences filled my room. I listened to me going into rescue mode, the researcher nowhere to be heard. I listened to my voice offering to help his mum to communicate with the county to help get him something that could work for him. I wanted to fix this, for him not disappear into nothing. Yet, I have not seen or heard from him again.

The day was led with resilience, with balloons, trophies and gifts being handed out with gusto. There were loving messages and hugs given. Everyone was going ahead into uncertainty with a well-practised survivor's laugh.
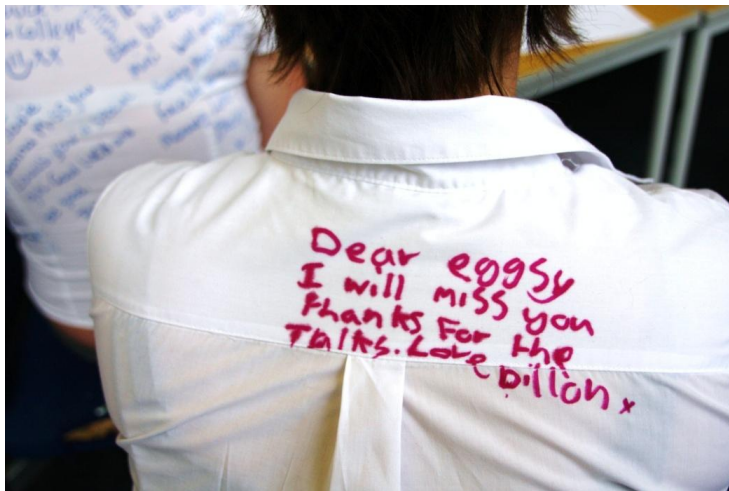
There are themes of levelling hierarchy, neglect, self-protection and my role as researcher in the writing, which ties in with the previous pieces. The staff wearing school shirts for defacing was a very natural and fun example of turning tradition on its head and challenging the status quo of role, as was the teaching assistant being scolded for not standing still. The Local Authority not sending Les a letter by the day his current education establishment was closing was a clear case of neglect. This had heightened his stress levels and as a pre-emption to a decision about where he would travel to attend, he grasped an element of control by deciding that he would do 'nothing' instead. Unfortunately, it also heightened his sense that he was not worth bothering with. As with previous pieces, I turned to life writing as a means of unloading my emotions. It was very difficult to sit with a boy who felt hopeless and have nothing to offer him. The boy who had self-harmed never stopped crying out for help, but here was a fourteen year old boy who seemed depressed and wanted nothing from no one. He was disappearing before me, this boy who had been horrified to have hurt me with lime mortar and who had run to show me his animation figures. I still find myself wondering where and how he is. The stress of the uncertainty had built up to the point of overriding his well-developed self-protection and left him very vulnerable. To an extent, it was like taking a child away from one family but not lining them up with another. As with the previous pieces, I grappled with my role as researcher. The 'researcher nowhere to be heard' comment shows me that I was still uncomfortable with defending or seeking to rescue a pupil whilst there as a researcher. Subconsciously I felt that I was being unprofessional and risking my research to show initiative and love. It was only upon analysing my data that I came to a point of peace over my approach. I have gathered rich data from self-protecting young people in what has been described as an impenetrable space, by being myself.

In drawing together these pieces, I am aware of how my engagement with them has caused an awareness and respect for the complexities at Eastbank and pupils' reactions to those complexities. This has enabled me to contextualise the data I have analysed when asking what the practitioners' approaches were and where they led. Those approaches were shaped by the complexities beyond the AP site and the pupils' reaction to them. They cannot be isolated from that backdrop and my immersion in it through life writing has enriched my theory generation. Key themes were first sensed in the process of writing as well as later confirmed through analysis. The creative process was a beneficial and transparent means of engaging with my role as a researcher and human being. My very self as researcher needs to be situated in context and complexity.

5 Findings Part 2: Where did the practitioner approaches lead?

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter addressed the question 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' This chapter addresses the second question of the study: 'Where did these approaches lead?' The findings related to this question are represented in figure 1:
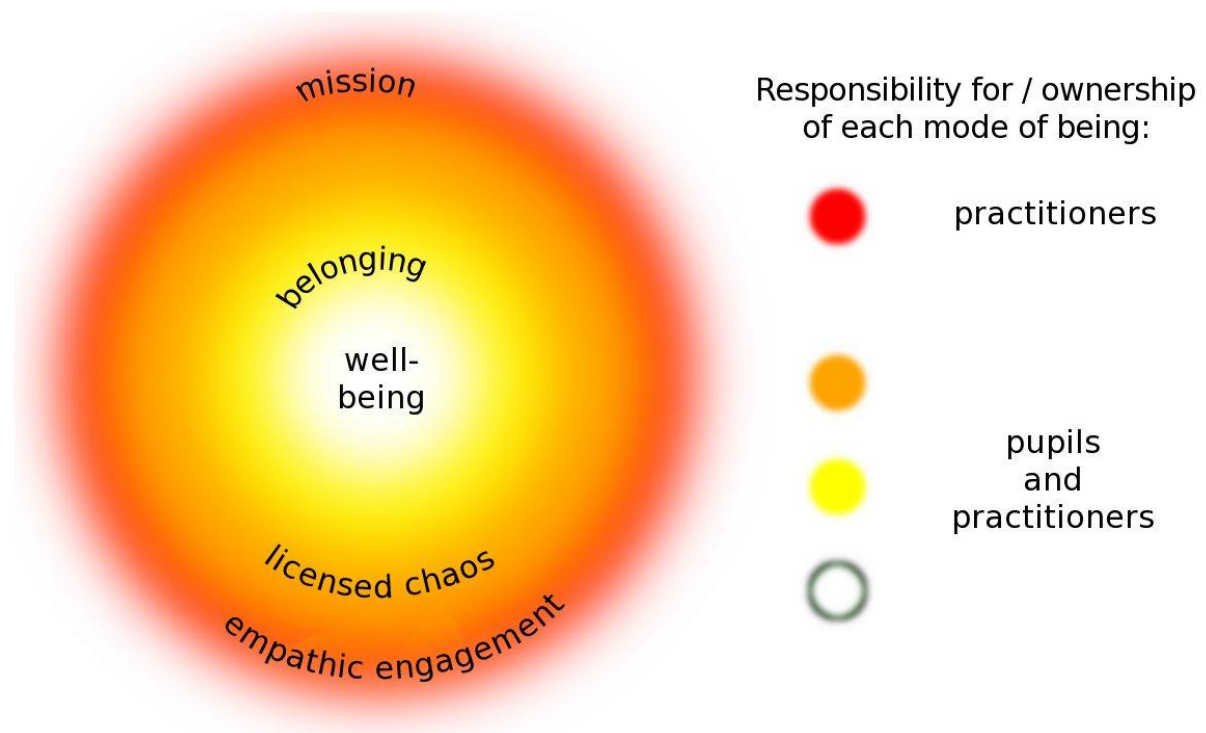
Figure 5.1: Visual representation of findings for the research question, 'Where did these approaches lead?' Source: author

Each of these modes of being will be discussed in detail in this chapter. As a brief overview: the practitioner approaches of unified mission and empathic engagement (see figure 4.28) fostered a sense of belonging and well-being. The process involved – licensed chaos – was Eastbank's way of embodying this move towards well-being and is presented in this chapter as a model of process on which other sites could build their own. The process of licensed chaos authorised a release of pupils and practitioners into play, immersion, risk taking and ownership.

The diagram does not flow in one direction, although worked from the outside in more often than radiating out from a sense of well-being. There are no clear lines in the diagram so as to represent the borderless nature of the emerging outcomes. After being immersed in the research site for an academic year, it was still difficult to see where licensed chaos ended and belonging began, for example. As I expressed in the previous chapter, my findings cannot be complete, neatly reduced and easily simplified. This model is not presented as a fully accurate map of reality and by blurring the 'hard edges' of my 'outcome' findings I aim to show openness to uncertainty. However, as it is impossible to critique without an existing reality, I value modelling in the way that I have, and frame it to promote 'thinking the complex' as discussed in section 4.6 regarding complexity. It could be argued that the findings of the two research questions are not neatly defined into two sets of answers. To an extent, the question 'Where did these approaches lead?' begins to be answered in the heart of the diagram which represents the analytic findings for research question 1. In the same way, question 1 could still be seen as being answered in figure 5.1 above. However, I have continued to keep them separate with the acknowledgement of continuation.

Also, it is worth noting that the sudden closure of the AP site half way through my planned two year ethnography at Eastbank meant that I could not explore the question, 'Where did the practitioner approaches lead?' longer-term. Therefore, I am answering the question from the data collected in one academic year. However, as I have remained in contact with several of the pupils on Facebook, I have drawn on interactions with them in the following months, when I discuss well-being in section 5.4. The over-arching themes of licensed chaos, belonging and well-being were saturated themes with large quantities of codes found for each. However, these themes may consist of more elements than I have presented below. The AP site was closed suddenly and, whereas I could seek specific new data based on coding for the first question of what characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank, I could not for the second question of 'Where did these approaches lead?'. So, for example, licensed chaos may offer an authorised release into more than play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership. These were the saturated codes emerging from the data that I had collected before the closure. Therefore, my analysis of this part of the research question is not presented as complete and I suggest is worthy of further research in new settings were a similar approach to be taken.

5.1.1 Key points in the analytic journey

To highlight the trail back to how licensed chaos and belonging emerged as themes stemming from practitioner approaches, figure 5.2 shows my early diagramming of the emerging codes. At this stage, well-being had not been identified as an over-arching theme in the data, and I had begun to consider changing the research question as being about aspiration.
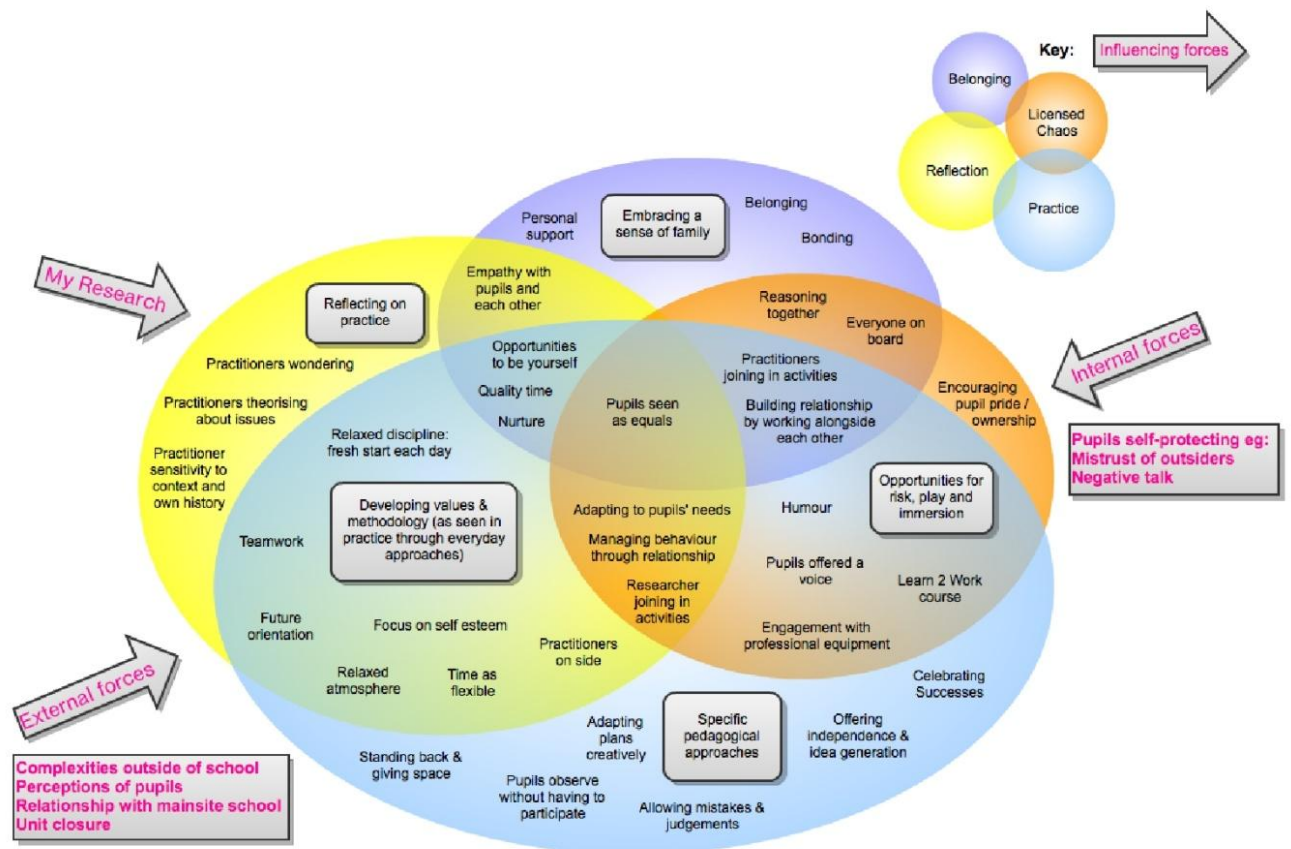
Figure 5.2: early analysis that began to show licensed chaos and belonging as process and outcomes. Source: author

This was a key point in my analysis for three reasons. Firstly, this process highlighted inconsistencies. The larger themes of belonging and licensed chaos (top right corner of diagram) only had one sub-theme within them and so did not fit within a hierarchy in the same way as reflection and practice, which had two. This led me back to my data and previous diagrams, and I began to see belonging and licensed chaos as evolving out of practitioner approaches rather being practitioner approaches. Another inconsistency that

emerged was that my five sub-themes (rectangles) were not all different enough from each other, leading me to merge two categories, based on this exploration.

Secondly, the process also helped me to take a large step towards finding a core category. At the heart of the categories seemed to be a sense of pupils being seen as equals. 'Adapting to pupils' needs' was also central to most categories. It was this emergence that caused me to look again at my coding of these categories, where I saw that I had blanket coded data as 'pupils seen as equals', when equality was not, in fact, what my some of data was revealing. By asking what equality means and then asking if that is what I was seeing in my data, I moved very quickly to a point of deeper understanding and finding a core category. At this stage I was using my memos like diary entries, mulling over what I had discovered that day:

> I began looking at equality. What did I mean by it and what was the data saying? My understanding of equality is: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities. When I looked back at the coded data, I began to realise that it wasn't really equality that I was trying to sum up. Yes, there was evidence of a more equal status between staff and pupils, but there was also evidence elsewhere of staff coming down hard on pupils when violence and vandalism broke out. The pupils did not have the same rights and opportunities as staff – I was trying to describe something else that also encompassed an essence of equality.

> What was it? Back to the data...It was about the way the practitioners engaged with the pupils that led not only to respect and understanding, but also a motivation to act ethically. On the surface this looked like equality, but that description didn't adequately sum it up. The data was showing an understanding of the pupils' state of mind and the features of the situation they were in within the context of what led them to be in that situation in the first place. Practitioners' responses seemed to be based on grasping how the conditions surrounding the pupils would be contributing to their sense of themselves and life.

> I started to use the term compassionate engagement. Quickly, that felt too negative, as compassion is defined as: a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering. Much of what I saw at the unit was incredibly positive and several of the young people were on the up after a difficult few years. I started to explore empathetic engagement as a phrase to sum up what was happening at the core of my data and

this sits very well. In searching 'empathic engagement' in an online library to see what was already out there, I only found it in the context of ecology: Lori Gruen's (2009) description resonated, and helped to confirm that the phrase is the right one for my data (Memo, August 2011).

The diagrammatic exploration and wrangling through memo writing led me to my core category of empathic engagement. Further comparing of data and memo writing, helped me to understand that mission needed to stand alongside empathic engagement:

> I've gone back to my hierarchy, initially placing empathic engagement at the top. I hit another problem. Jumping straight down to reflecting on practice, developing values and methodology and exploring pedagogical approaches (longstanding themes in my data) seemed to miss out the driving sense of commitment and responsibility for pupils and change that was coming out of the data within these themes. Once back into the data, it seemed clear quite that I'd missed a sense of mission coming out of what was done and said by the practitioners....But which came first: Mission or empathic engagement? One seemed to lead to the other and it felt like a chicken or egg situation.

By standing back and looking at the data as a whole through this diagram, I found my way towards a twinned, mutually transforming core category.

Thirdly, by creating the diagram, I needed to explore the relationship between the themes and the 'influencing forces' upon them (arrows in the diagram). I was not happy with the arrows pointing inwards, as it did not best represent those forces influencing the practitioner approaches as a whole; this led me to explore representing the context and complexity as surrounding the emerging themes.

Another key point in the analysis and previous to the diagram just shown, I began to explore the relationships between the emerging categories using memos and NVivo codes as a guide. I drew lines – firstly on paper and then using card for a 3d model – to represent one category relating to another. I transferred this to a diagram relating categories together, shown in figure 5.3:

165

Thoughts so far: 27 April 2011
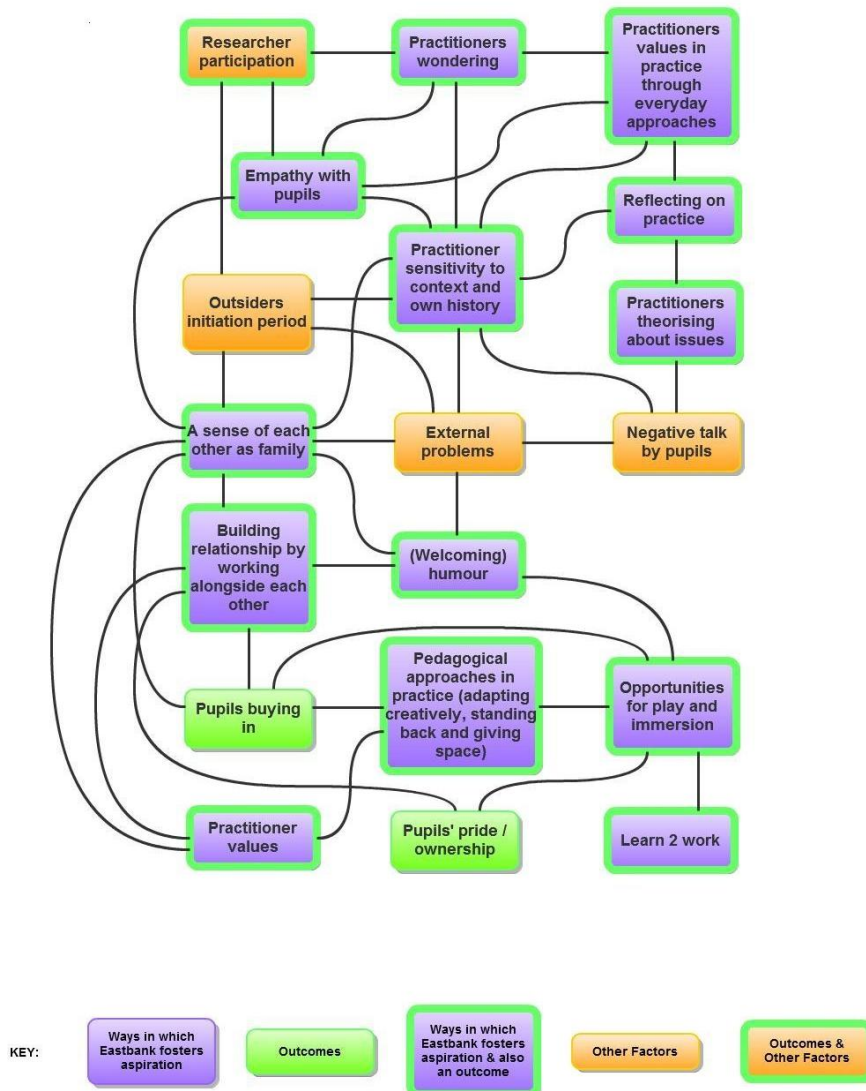
Figure 5.3: early analysis to explore the nature of the connection between categories

At this stage there was no hierarchy of themes; instead the focus was on the nature of the connection between the categories. For example, whilst looking at the twinned category 'play and immersion', I considered its relationship to pupils' pride and ownership within a memo:

> Opportunities for play and immersion is linked to pupils' pride/ownership. This space of opportunity has became like a wooing time for the pupils to be brave enough to believe what they are doing is good. K replied when asked if he had expected to create such a good piece of music: 'It was a shock.' These sorts of revelations seem to need play and immersion time to be birthed.

This period of taking stock of all the categories so far was key in cementing a foundation on which main themes could be built. Importantly, it helped me to start to identify outcomes of the practitioner approaches and acknowledge that these outcomes were feeding back into the approaches. This process also enabled me to see that there were 'other factors' within the data that were not practitioner approaches or outcomes. This was the beginning of coming to understand the 'influencing forces' that surrounded the practitioner approaches and their outcomes.

Once I had finished the process of open coding my data, I started to look towards making explicit connections between categories and sub-categories. I used memos to explain and understand the relationships between categories in an attempt to find a core category.

I now return to my findings that emerged from this process, in relation to the question, 'where did these approaches lead?'

5.2 Licensed chaos

At the heart of the practitioners' approaches I perceived empathic engagement and mission. The process of them coming together at Eastbank is what I call 'licensed cha os'. I am using the word chaos to mean a disorderly mass; a jumble. By licensed I mean authorised release. The sense of order that accompanied mission and the sense of chaos that was accepted by empathic engagement both had the other embedded in them. Therefore, the outworking of 'licensed chaos' was complex. Although not explicit, there was an understanding that there was no predetermined world for pupils to learn about that would bring peace to their lives. Pupils at Eastbank were unlikely to believe this anyway, particularly those that were survivors of difficult and painful circumstances. Therefore, new ways of seeing needed to be found, the process of which was messy. New ideas and innovations gnawed at the status quo, which inevitably caused tension. Within the space of licensed chaos there was an acknowledgement by practitioners and pupils that the trustees of the building, the neighbours and some key partners at the mainsite school needed Eastbank to function in a certain way for it to make sense to them and be validated. Dave was aware that questions would be asked if he did not follow a familiar path. As the AP site forged its own path there was evidence from practitioners of respect, especially during meetings, for others' fears and beliefs about such a path. At the same time, no one affiliated to Eastbank had any idea where a situation or creative venture might lead. I perceived that the depth of the forged relationships seemed to steer practitioners and pupils away from fear that letting go would

lead to utter and meaningless chaos or anarchy. Complexity has been described as 'a chaos of behaviours in which the components of the system never quite lock into place, yet never quite dissolve into turbulence either' (Waldrop, 1992, p.293). This description is apt for Eastbank, particularly in reference to licensed chaos. As a complex system, Eastbank was often spontaneous, adaptive and lively.

5.2.1 Authorised releases of licensed chaos: play and immersion

Through licensed chaos pupils were released into play and immersion in what pupils and practitioners were doing. I have placed them together here because play - activity engaged in for enjoyment and recreation (Oxford English, 2012) – often led to deep mental involvement in an activity. This immersion also broke out into play. When pupils at Eastbank engaged in play, it was mainly high-spirited play that was unpredictable. Although there were moments of play that were not framed by licensed chaos, most commonly it was and I have chosen to focus on play in this context. The photograph below represents one moment of a typical example of play:

Figure 5.4: 2010-03-03:182 Playful

Here, Kate is wearing her overalls that are covered in other pupils' handprints. The group were learning decorating skills for the day with a professional decorator. Pupils were not prohibited from getting their hands in the paint, from smearing it on each other and themselves or from writing on the wall with the rollers. However, when this initial high-spirited play had ebbed, pupils spent hours learning challenging techniques, sometimes in complete self-initiated silence. At times, when the concentration overwhelmed them, there were further outbreaks of paint exploration and connecting through humour with each other. Walking in on these outbreaks might cause an observer to think that utter chaos had broken out. Yet, no cans of paint were thrown, nothing splashed with paint that wasn't in the designated area and nobody's hard work ruined. On the day I remembered an article about several couples ending their relationships during the process of renovating a property and I wondered if they had allowed themselves to play. Pupils were careful around my camera and the photographs I took that day were full of group shots of pupils hugging each other. On this particular day pupils did not overstep the mark and take their play to damaging levels. However, this was a risk and at other times happened. One example, cited earlier, was of the spontaneous moving of the settee, where cushions were thrown, sunburn hit and a punch thrown. Pupils learnt the hard way from moments of madness, but in a safe environment that did not reject them.

The sessions with the artists in residence created opportunities for play and immersion. Tim described Geoff's session: 'He just lets us get on with it, don't matter how loud we are or anything' (Tim, interview 35). Tim greatly enjoyed this freedom as recorded in my field notes: 'I should be a funeral director says Tim, creating some classic sounds from a funeral with a crazy range of dynamics. It made me belly laugh' (field notes 5). It was common for Tim to become immersed in an activity once he had played with various ideas: 'Tim and Geoff became very involved in the creation of a new beat' (field notes 4). At times, Geoff's principle of standing back and giving space gave rise to intense play:

> There's a lot of high energy, with drum stick fighting and racing around. I noticed that Geoff had slipped out to have a fag and that it coincided with more horseplay. They seem to stay more focused as a group when he's in' (field notes 5).

Running around drumstick fighting is the antithesis of being seen to be 'on task' and it did seem chaotic to me. I did notice that, upon Geoff's return, gradually pupils turned their accepted energy into new musical ideas, trying combinations that, as a trained musician, I had not thought to try. Periods of wild horseplay were also followed by deep mental involvement in the form of mastery:

169

Lee spent a lot of the day practising *Smoke On The Water* and *Seven Nation Army*. Although this was beginning to irritate the girls next door he was working on mastery, especially with *Seven Nation Army* where he played around transposing it. I played along with him on bass for a bit (Geoff's blog 2).

Practitioners expressed surprise at the several hours of practice the pupils gave to the music, showing focus in immersion, when they had not found it easy to concentrate in the past. As pupils and practitioners recorded their comedy show, an office was turned into a recording room for the radio sessions. As it was all improvised around an agreed theme, there was an excitement in the space whilst recording, along with great concentration, and nobody left the space until they had all got a take that they were pleased with. The sign on the office door read:

Figure 5.5: 2010-01-25:56 Recording session

This was also a space where pupils and practitioners took risks, which was also a vital element of licensed chaos, discussed next, with specific examples. I was roped in to play a lady at the opera who arrived at her seat to find one of the posh gangsters in it. The moment of improvising and recording was thrilling and terrifying, but I felt reassured by everyone else in the same situation. I would speak in role and have no idea what I was about to say, sparking ideas off the gangsters. It was a playful environment, but also incredibly intense. Nothing seemed to exist outside of that moment in that room. Every one of us was fully immersed in the crazy improvisations where anything and everything was accepted and built on. The Wolf and Water team gave lots of encouragement and high energy praise to everyone, which seemed a bit over the top when I was observing. As soon as I was in front of the mikes with a small audience, I drank their encouragement in and felt supported by their whoops and high five physical gestures.

The lack of a tight rein gave rise to spontaneous team efforts in both the comedy show construction and the music sessions. At times the team efforts built up one person at a time:

> Lee starts playing Smoke on the water by Deep Purple on the guitar, so Geoff jumps onto the keyboard to accompany. Kirk begins to create a rock beat on Reason software to go behind it. There is a real sense of fun (field notes 17).

'Jamming' on instruments had, by default, a sense of chaos inherent in it. There was no beginning or end, no defined route or structure, no set amount of people. It relied on cooperation, listening and a willingness to see what happens next. It thrived in an environment that gave space to idea generation, building trust and allowing for mistakes and judgements. Jamming was also about taking creative risks, bringing further depth to play and immersion.

Pupils tended to play with language during more intense periods of licensed chaos. The comedy show was all about language, as much of it was a radio show. Pupils created characters such as 'The Posh Gangsters', using typical gangster and urban talk, such as 'innit', but in an incredibly posh voice. They created a show called 'University Challenged', making humorous comment on their social background and opportunities. After feeling confident to use the microphones in Geoff's session, the boys came out buzzing:

> *So if you were to use an adjective to describe today, what would you describe it as?*
> Lee: Awesome.
> Kirk: What's an adjective?
> *A describing word.*
> Kirk: Awesome. "Chill out dude!"
> Lee: Yeah, chill out.
> Kirk: Microphonolicious.
> Lee: Miketastic (interview 20).

The pupils had spent long periods of time creating raps and songs into the microphones and saw language as easy to manipulate and play with. The session was playful, but also hit on some very creative moments of which the pupils were proud.

5.2.2 Risk taking as a characteristic of licensed chaos

Risk taking mainly occurred as a development of play and immersion. In this way it was an extension of the pupils' and practitioners' playful processes. It was not always constructive;

171

at times the risk was in deconstructing a process. The photograph below shows a pupil moving on from creating a cushion cover to sewing his skin.

Figure 5.6: 2010-12-10:131 Risk taking explorations

He was not showing signs of boredom in the sewing task, nor did he appear to be motivated to cause a scene. When I approached him he quietly showed me with wide eyes and genuine interest what he was discovering. 'At what point will it hurt?' 'How much weight can it hold before the skin breaks?' 'Is this art?' are questions he voiced to me. He was conducting what I saw as a risky experiment through playful exploration whilst immersed in the sewing activity. I found it risky because he was a pupil prone to excess, that he had created a direction without consent and because he was exploring potential pain. The teaching assistant noticed his risk-filled play, did not draw other pupils' attention to it and quietly asked him to be careful, which he acknowledged and gave her eye contact to reassure. He was then left to continue to sew his skin.

As mentioned earlier in this section, 'jamming' and drama improvising could also develop into risk taking with creative ideas. The collaborative direction meant letting go of control and accepting rather than blocking whatever emerged. One particular example of improvising that was risky was when Tim improvised a love song to me, as described in 4.4.2 (exploring practice/learner agency/pupils being offered a voice). Tim knew that it might be misinterpreted, but continued to express his sense of ease with me and my presence in the

group by mourning through humour that I was too costly to date. Geoff wrote about a different moment in the same improvisation session, where Tim began to rap about a potentially explosive topic. Geoff's reaction was to stand back and listen rather than close down the activity:

> It has helped me a lot that Tim, who is a class leader, has taken me at face value. So the impression I get is that this is something Tim wants to say. Yes it's amusing, yes he's aware of the audience but he's not attempting to shock and he and they seem to trust me to understand that (Geoff's blog 2).

Offering pupils a voice contributed to the emergence of play, immersion and taking risks. Geoff made the space for pupil voice, listened to it and then recorded it for others to hear. This process, which was evidenced with Wolf and Water, Learn 2 Work and with permanent staff at Eastbank, led to pupil ownership of activities and a sense of belonging. Both of these outcomes will be discussed shortly in this section.

Pupils were also taking risks to overcome their self-protection. The pupils protecting themselves in anticipation of rejection or failure was a part of the complexity and context discussed in 4.6 that influenced the practitioners' approaches whilst at Eastbank. As those pupils engaged in the play, immersion and risk taking characteristic of licensed chaos – itself emerging out of empathic engagement and mission – they dared to be themselves. Les, who took on the role of audience in the music sessions for fear of failure, started to risk having a go: 'Just before the end, Les leaned over and pressed a few sound effect keys from the sofa, whilst Tim was playing' (field notes 6). The pupils also gradually felt more confident to self-express on the microphones:

> I mentioned to Geoff that the mikes are a real hit and he commented that it's taken three weeks to get to that point. He set a mike up the first week, offered the option last session, but today is the first time the young people are feeling relaxed enough to be creative verbally (field notes 3).

Pupils knew that practitioners allowed them to be themselves and participate when they were ready, opting in and out. They were confident that they could choose their own role for whichever stage they were at. For example, Geoff observed pupils being back-up for each other, such as Sharon: 'Sharon was producing the beat and seemed confident to be working creatively. Jolie was there as her friend, providing emotional back-up in a new situation (Geoff's blog 1). This set-up occurred for about half an hour until the girls were ready for different roles. The risk-taking to move beyond oneself was modelled by the practitioners in

173

their own exploration of practice and building relationships. Each of them was taking a risk with their career by following their ontology and epistemology.

Jules from Wolf and Water gave a sense of the reality of constantly taking risks:

> And you never know what to expect... But you kind of arrive with all the kit and all the bags of tricks and all the different things in your head that you can do, so at the drop of a, not even a hat but the blink of an eye, you can rush in and go 'we can do that!' whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, and then suddenly we're making a film or an animation or a website or something (interview 36/7).

The practitioners' empathic and mission-filled approaches led to risk taking by everyone at Eastbank. Pupils risked deconstructing ideas, improvising, 'jamming', and risking rejection and failure. Practitioners continued to pursue their reflections, build principles and explore practice in the face of potential chaos. I threw aside my traditional perception of research and became part of a community to the extent that I had no idea how it would affect my data and its analysis. Out of this melting pot of licensed chaos flowed belonging, which nurtured well-being. To belong, one must buy in. Ownership was also a vital element of licensed chaos.

5.2.3 Ownership as a characteristic of licensed chaos

Pupils and practitioners 'bought into' being at Eastbank. There was an investment and so an ownership over the community they created. Practitioners offered learner agency, specifically in terms of independence, idea generation, pupil voice and the opportunity to make mistakes and judgements, whilst adapting to pupils' needs. This, along with practitioners reflecting, building principles and exploring practice in other ways presented in my findings, led to pupils and practitioners owning processes and their outcomes. Ownership – the act, state, or right of possessing something (Oxford English, 2012) – brought with it risk and a sense of the unknown. When pupils took ownership of their work, there was less control remaining with the practitioner. With less steerage, the practitioner remained in uncertainty. As practitioners took ownership of their principles and put them into practice, they were heading into unknown territory.

There was evidence of ownership in pupils' actions and words. For example, Kirk took control of his learning whilst with Geoff:

He used existing loops that the programme offered, but added to them, changing tempo and sounds, then added a bass line. He played with making space in the loop, cutting the beat or the bass out at certain points for effect. He wanted to 'give the piece more feeling' so layered on more bass and drums in certain places. He took ownership of the creation, with Geoff taking an increasing back seat. He seemed very engaged, but showed no expression (field notes 6).

I listed Kirk's use of language during this session, in my field notes:

'I want to add something to the end. Got any techno stuff? Something fast.'

'I want to finish it all off with lowering it all down a bit.'

'It's really annoying – that sounds carries on for too long after it's finished.'

Geoff: Well, let's look at solving that then.

'It's starting to feel a bit empty. Bit pathetic. I want to thicken it up. I'll try this.'

'These ones are quite good. I'd rather copy these than try to change the other ones.'

'I'm just going to see what happens if I speed it up a bit.'

'I'll add a drop out.'

'I think it really works cos of the little high note in it.' (field notes 6)

Such language denotes ownership; there was no doubt that this project was Kirk's and he wanted Geoff's input in specific places within his own framework. Tim wanted the same. As he expressed, 'I don't like at all being bossed about, getting told what to do, that's all. I'm independent and I do what I like. That's how it's always worked with me' (interview 34). Geoff described Tim's ownership:

Musically he was improvising a verse and song structure. He then asked me to put some guitar over it so I recorded some rhythm first. Tim then told me where he wanted a guitar solo. We agreed that I would play a lot, and that he would then edit that down which he then did, going into some detail, looping drum beats so that he could put the solo into its own space. We break for lunch with Tim telling me what he still needs to edit when we come back (Geoff's blog 2).

As a result of owning the process, such as 'Liam dashed home to get a lead to connect the phone to the computer' (Field notes 3), pupils then felt ownership over the outcome: 'I even signed my name to it I'm so proud' (Dean, upon writing out his guitar tab, field notes 4).

As expressed in my life writing in 4.6 (context and complexity), pupils took ownership of designing and building their own barbeque during the Learn 2 Work course. Practising brick laying only to tear it down again felt pointless without a goal and so the FE college where the

175

pupils attended for the course agreed for a barbeque to be built on site. The photograph in figure 5.7 below shows one pupil's design.
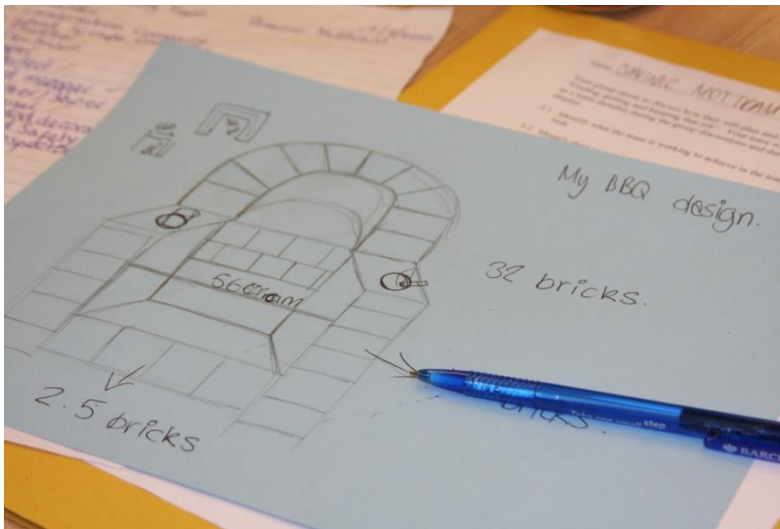
Figure 5.7: 2010-03-23:72 Design for barbecue

This pupil had reason to be motivated to design the barbeque as she knew it was to be a permanent fixture with a purpose, it was putting her new skills to practice and as a small group of pupils they had full control over the design and build. On cooking day, pupils felt ownership of the barbeque.

To have ownership is to emotionally engage. Geoff made this link in his blog: 'If I had to put money on it I'd say he's the one who will try and do some during the week when I'm not there. I'm pretty sure it meant something to him' (Geoff's blog 1). This pupil had emotionally connected with the musical composition through Geoff's enabling environment and so returned to it from his own motivation. Alongside returning to an activity, pupils remained in it, linking back to play and immersion – play and immersion fostered ownership and ownership fostered play and immersion. Risk taking, too, fosters ownership through the deep satisfaction when a risk has paid off.

There is one example of ownership in particular that remains with me, as retold in one of my memos:

The key moment for me, was seeing Les striding into the classroom that I was in, from his own classroom. Although it looked as though he was coming to see me, I assumed he wasn't, as that isn't something any of these young people have specifically done yet. But he marched right over to show me the character that he had created for the stop-motion animation. He just said: 'It's finished' and put it down in front of me on the desk. I replied with: 'Wow Les, that's brilliant!' and tried out moving the limbs. 'He looks so cool. I love the face.' He stood there for a moment and I noticed he was looking at the camera. 'I must take a photo!' I said. 'Yeah, you could put it on Facebook, than I can tag it,' he answered. I took a few, with flash on and off and showed him the results. He picked up his character and walked back into the other room. I don't know why I felt so elated, but I did. Earlier in the morning I had wandered over and expressed how much I liked his design for the character, and took a photo of Les cutting out the shapes (memo, February 2010)

I was impacted for various reasons, as my memo gradually expresses. Firstly, Les in particular had struggled to buy into activities through a fear of failure. Yet, somehow, the Wolf and Water team had persevered and this day he had risked investing in the stop-motion animation and been rewarded. Secondly, the first person he had thought to come and find was me. Partly because he knew I was genuinely interested, but mainly because I gave his work a voice online; I helped him to have a deeper level of ownership. Also, because the pupils had given me this role whilst at Eastbank (to upload specific photographs that either they or I had taken, on our Facebook group page for them to share with friends), I myself felt an increasing ownership over being at Eastbank. For the first time, many of them were able to show off with pride 'what they had been doing at school'. I enjoyed being asked to be part of that. This, then, meant that I was influencing the second part of the research question, 'Where did these approaches lead?', meaning that my data was describing outcomes that would be different had I not been at the unit. This dilemma and discussion is further explored in my discussion chapter shortly.

Pupils took initiative as part of their ownership. Tim thought that Geoff's practical set up could be better and so stepped in, 'Tim wants a neater set-up so I leave him to organise that while he asks lots of questions about how to connect everything up' (Geoff's blog 2). Lee dashed home, which was a few doors away, to get his spare speakers when pupils wanted to incorporate their mobile phones. Break and lunch times were sacrificed to work on an idea: 'Rosa offered to have her lunch in the room so that they could continue to play instead of us locking it to protect the music gear. We could hear strains of noise, so they spent the

lunch hour playing' (field notes 4). Such opportunities were particularly important to Tim, who expressed, 'I want to run my own IT business. It should be fun' (interview 34). He needed ownership of the technical space, which Geoff handed over to him. This meant that Tim was waiting for Geoff in the morning to help unload the car in order to manage the gear set-up. It also meant that Geoff became confident in asking Tim to help pack down at the end of the day.

The term 'licensed chaos' has been my expression of the process and evolution of the practitioners at Eastbank constructing, experimenting and interpreting whilst allowing context and complexity to speak into their decisions and actions. There was saturated evidence for authorised release into play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership within that evolution, but due to the sudden closure of the AP site, it is possible that there are other elements that would have emerged over time that have not thus far. I have discussed ways in which the elements of play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership relate to each other, which can also be explored through analogy. Figure 5.8, a picture of a small boat on choppy waves, is one way to consider some connected relationships within licensed chaos at Eastbank:
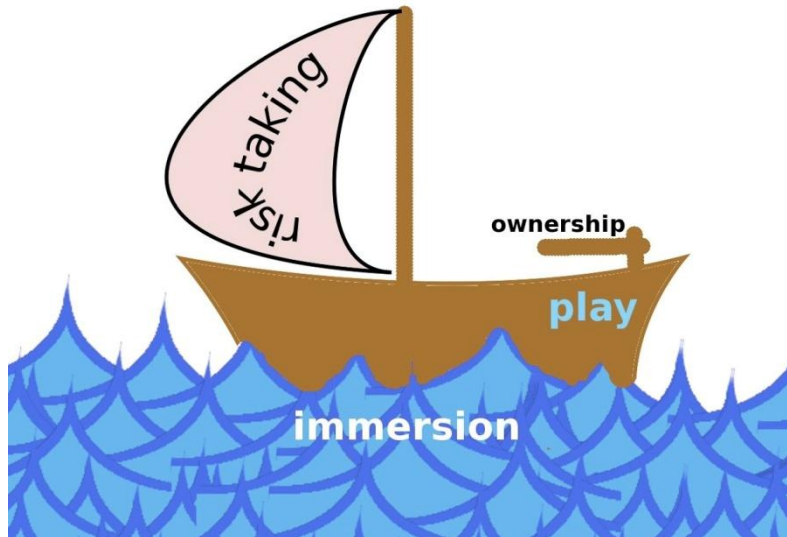
Figure 5.8: connected relationships within licensed chaos

By stepping into the boat and untying the rope, a pupil or practitioner has engaged in play. Increasingly, the ocean is all around and they are engaged wholly and deeply with being on the water. If the sail isn't open already, it is hoisted and there is risk taken in harnessing the strong wind and reacting to its power and unpredictability. The pupil or practitioner takes ownership of direction as they steer a course, always responding to the effects of the wind and waves. Each action is connected to the other and together they navigate and determine

a constantly shifting course. There is a release, a letting go and a sense of disorder and mess from the chaotic nature of the wind and waves. Yet the release is not total; it is authorised and, rather than controlled, is instead supported by knowledge and skill. There is a sense of mission to get somewhere partnered by constant empathic engagement with the ever present reality of an unpredictable force.

5.3 Belonging

Licensed chaos was often a practical development of the practitioners' reflecting, building principles and exploring practice through empathic engagement and mission. On an emotional level, pupils and permanent staff felt a sense of belonging at Eastbank as a result of practitioner approaches. In terms of my analysis, this code emerged intuitively over time, rather than due to clearly saturated evidence. Pupils found it very difficult to articulate a sense of belonging, so I have mainly relied upon permanent staff's sense of pupil belonging and my own observations.

Practitioners were confident that pupils felt a sense of belonging. Rosa expressed without hesitation that 'they feel that they belong' (interview 28). Being specific, she explained:

> Their attendance was rubbish before coming here, and you get them turn up every day, you get them coming early, you get them wanting to stay when it's time to leave (Rosa, interview 28).

Helen expressed the same observation:

> We have them all day, every day. Time to go home – sometimes they don't want to go home. They come in early and we have to say 'you're not allowed into the building yet'. You know, and they do come *every day* (interview 28).

Practitioners felt that there were enough signs from pupils to indicate that they had emotionally invested in being part of Eastbank.

There was a subtle sense of belonging in some pupils' words, which I did not pick up when first coding. Les, for example, rarely showed a sense of commitment, yet in the following exchange, based on previous experience of his dialogue, I can interpret a sense of belonging:

> *How do you feel about Eastbank closing?*
> I don't really want it to close, but I don't know...
> *...What has been good about it?*

179

Everything. It felt like school but a school I liked (interview 18).

Les managed to give a sense that Eastbank was special to him and a place of which he could be a part.

One way in which the over-arching theme of belonging emerged was through my coding of there being a sense of family at the AP site. Everyone arrived and ate breakfast together, drank out of mugs hand-painted with their names whilst reading and discussing the papers. At times, permanent staff helped the girls with their hair and everyone took turns washing up. The photograph below is of a pupil washing up after breakfast. He, along with others, enjoyed the activity, as the sink was in the classroom and it was a sociable activity.

Figure 5.9: 2010-02-11:66 At the kitchen sink

The ethos of the scene shown was more reminiscent of a family kitchen than a school classroom, and this pupil appeared keen to play his part in the daily ritual. The ritual of the Friday morning quiz and occasional bingo had the atmosphere of extended family together at Christmas; it was familiar, relaxed and punctuated with shrieks of success and bickering. One pupil likened the permanent staff members to those in a family, referring to Beth as being a 'bit like a strict stepmum', and Dave 'just like a quiet cousin who doesn't like getting involved' (Interview 14). This was said in good humour, but was a genuine attempt to sum up his relationships at the AP site.

The imminent closure of the AP site caused the permanent staff to become more aware of how they felt about their jobs and each other. As discussed previously, Helen expressed:

> I don't actually want one [a job] somewhere else, I *like* working here, and I like working with all you ...to sit in a room with you day after day, and spend time with you: you are all good kids, and I *like* it. (interview 26).

Helen was grieving the loss of an experience and not just a job. She had been offered another job at the main school, which left her with facing the loss of a community that she belonged to.

The research question of 'Where did the practitioner approaches lead?' requires more than presented evidence of an outcome of belonging; it asks for a trail between approaches and outcome. Various practitioner approaches contributed to building a community of belonging. Practitioners reflected on the social context of the pupils at Eastbank. They were aware that Eastbank could be seen as a place of safety because the pupils' out of school realities could present a lack of safety. As a result, they took pride in being a consistent force that would not react in fear or anger at the pupils' feelings and circumstances. As discussed in chapter four whilst looking at adapting to pupils' needs, Becky expressed, 'They know every day they have to come here and that...whatever frame of mind they're in or whatever's happening we will be okay' (interview 1). Through practitioners not separating pupils' out of school realities from what they expected pupils to achieve and do whilst at Eastbank, pupils bought in to being at the unit. Practitioners wanted the pupils' learning to make sense to them within the context of their social situation and pupils responded by making themselves at home. At the same time, practitioners did not keep a record of wrongs, as outlined in 4.3.1, which allowed for pupils to turn up exactly as they were. As trust and relationship built, sometimes through practitioners joining in activities, practitioners offered learner agency, accepting mistakes and judgements, as outlined 4.4.2. Practitioners' commitment to nurture fed the pupils' desire to keep coming back and be part of the community.

5.4 Well-being

5.4.1 Introduction

The mutual transformation of empathic engagement and mission that was at the heart of practitioners' approaches evolved into licensed chaos, channelled through play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership. It also led to an emotional connection between everyone at Eastbank which manifest as belonging. Initially, this is where my data and analysis ended. However, my consistent contact with the pupils and Geoff since the closure of Eastbank, particularly on Facebook, my frequent revisiting of the data, and reflection on my own

experience there has led me to well-being as an indeterminate and borderless outcome of practitioner approaches. There may have been reasons for well-being to emerge over time that have not emerged from my analysis; the sudden closure of the unit limits the data to analyse. However, I found saturated evidence that together, the consistent practitioner approaches, the practical outworking of licensed chaos and the emotional connections led towards well-being.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines well-being as 'the state of being or doing well in life' (Oxford English, 2012). It is also sometimes described as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. Well-being is synonymous with the concept of flourishing in areas such as physical, psychological, relationships, lifestyle, direction and feelings. It is driven by our thoughts, in terms of our satisfaction with life – where we are compared to where we want to be; our feelings – the postive relative to the negative; and our actions – what we do and do not. White (2005) states that personal well-being, 'is pivotal to sound thinking about education' (White, 2005, p.3, as quoted in Fielding & Moss 2011, p.32).

5.4.2 Evidence of well-being

Just as Eastbank was closing, pupils gave me reflections on how they felt about their time there. Dean expressed, 'Happy, makes you feel good. Before I was just bored the whole time' (interview 3). Dean had disengaged from school when he arrived at Eastbank. He exhibited no anti-social behaviour but appeared to be consistently disengaged. Gradually, and in particular through his connection with Geoff's music sessions, he began to play and take ownership of his learning, becoming proud of his work.

Kirk explained, 'It has made me feel better really. It's the best school that I have probably been to, it's the only one that I haven't really disliked...People there are alright. Teachers are alright and I just get on well there' (interview 15). Kirk arrived at Eastbank six weeks after I did, so I had the opportunity to observe his responses to the practitioner approaches and sense of community there. He had been excluded from various schools and a PRU before he settled at Eastbank. I watched him become comfortable and happy over time. In my perception, he experienced increased well-being.

Sharon had expressed that the best part of Eastbank had been the permanent staff and upon further questioning as to why, replied, 'I don't know, supported me when I was down there [points downwards]' (interview 32). This expression of appreciation showed that Sharon had experienced a very low point in her life, in which she was supported by the

permanent staff at Eastbank and now felt that she was no longer in that place. As she struggled with being interviewed, I asked her to give me a number between one and ten to express how she now felt about her life after being at Eastbank for two years. She answered with a 'ten'. She now felt much more satisfied with the direction her life was taking and with the thoughts, feelings and actions that were guiding her there.

Similarly to Sharon, Jay replied to further questioning with, 'I don't know – helped me, supported me' (Jay, interview 11). When being asked 'what do you think Eastbank offers young people?', he answered, 'One on one work with each other, time to talk about what work you want to do, what you want to do when you leave school. They're really understanding about that sometimes' (interview 11). Jay had been heard, supported and given quality time and ultimately saw himself as having been 'helped' in making sense of his life. This was the pupil who had been seriously self-harming and was slowly emerging into a healthier space, now in the care system.

Since the closure of the AP site, I have inhabited the same online space as several of the pupils, often seeing their comments and photos appear on my newsfeed on Facebook. They also see mine. I have tended to interact with the girls mostly, as it feels like a safer boundary than building individual friendships with the boys now we are outside of the unit. I have often been encouraged by the well-being that they convey. Below, one girl reflects on recent years:

Figure 5.10: Facebook status update

183

Beth had an important role in getting Jolie's college application in. Jolie was partly accepted as she had attended the college whilst at Eastbank, despite achieving no GCSEs. The college staff had built relationship with her and seen that she was committed and reliable. In this status update, Jolie was proud of herself and able to express this. She recognised that she had risen above the negative expectations that surrounded her and was happy with her direction. I appreciated the opportunity to congratulate her on her status update and express that I could see her potential. Another status update showed Jolie celebrating getting some hours in a salon and evening work at a cinema:

Figure 5.11: Facebook status update

At this time Jolie seemed to be flourishing. She was satisfied with her situation and her actions resulted in a positive outcome. Again, being friends on Facebook has allowed me to share in her successes and add my congratulations.

Shortly after leaving Eastbank, Charmaine wrote some reflections as her Facebook status updates. They showed signs of psychological and emotional well-being and a sense of peace about her direction, despite not having anything finalised and whilst recently being placed in the care system. Figure 5.12 shows an interaction between Charmaine and myself on her Facebook wall. Charmaine's insight was helpful to me at that time and representative of the licensed chaos that pervaded Eastbank:

Figure 5.12: Facebook status update

Charmaine was finding her direction, using what she had learnt so far. In the process, she reminded me that it was safe to let go and dwell in uncertainty at times. Eastbank fostered this confidence and peace in navigating an uncertain future through practitioner approaches and their practical outworkings of play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership. Another of Charmaine's status updates said: 'Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending'. Again this was focused on direction and gave a sense of being well in life. This is reminiscent of the kind of comments made by practitioners in my findings in 4.3.4: 'We say if you don't pass this exam now you're not a failure. Just because you've failed you're not a failure, you just haven't succeeded yet. And you will' (Rosa, interview 28).

Kate posted in the Eastbank community Facebook group a few months after Eastbank closed, to let us know how she was progressing:

Figure 5.13: Facebook group page update

185

Kate had joined the motor mechanics group as part of the Learn 2 Work programme at Eastbank in her final year. She worked hard, gained work experience locally, and despite not having the required GCSEs to get on the college course, was accepted, with the help of Beth (specialist teaching assistant at Eastbank) negotiating. She appears to be in her element and is progressing well. Kate had spent two and a half years at Eastbank, spending time finding a direction to channel her high energy.

I acknowledge that there may be counter instances to the above examples, for other Eastbank pupils, and that these counter instances are invisible. I am not in contact with those whose situations may have worsened, as they have not ventured onto Facebook to disclose or might have changed their name. Although I am in contact with each of the four girls, only six of the nine boys are on Facebook. I also acknowledge that other factors besides attending Eastbank could be behind the sense of well-being expressed online.

There was also evidence of practitioners' well-being. At different points, each of the practitioners expressed job satisfaction. For example, Helen said:

> I like working, I love working with the people that I'm working with, but I also like working as a team. I think the four of us down here do make a good team, and it's obviously worked (interview 7).

Helen felt that her work-life was flourishing; she was where she wanted to be, feeling positive and pleased with her actions and their outcomes. There was evidence of practitioners engaging with their vocation, as described in detail in 4.2: practitioners reflecting. Although this involved a sometimes painful process, Geoff, in particular, felt that the process led to well-being:

> We do as we were done to and unfortunately the road out of that requires each of us to look at ourselves and then do something about it; and that can be a long and painful process...The road out of operating from unquestioned assumptions is the road to change' (Geoff, written interview 3).

Geoff was challenging his own status quo as a teacher whilst at Eastbank, and although the change felt difficult, ultimately it was leading him to being well and content with his direction.

5.4.3 Contributing factors to well-being

As expressed at the beginning of this chapter, well-being emerged from my data as an indeterminate and borderless outcome of practitioner approaches, ensuing licensed chaos and the emotional connections made at Eastbank. I cannot draw clean lines between approaches and outcomes. However, I can draw on practitioners' reflections of contributing factors to the increased well-being, as well as my own, based on the analysis of my data.

At the heart of the practitioner approaches was a marriage of empathic engagement and mission. Looking back at the definition used of empathic engagement in chapter four, Gruen (2009) states that:

> Engaged empathy is a process whereby individuals who are empathizing with the well-being of others first respond to the other's condition...and then reflectively imagine themselves in the position of the other, and then make a judgment about how the conditions that the other finds herself in may contribute to her state of mind or impact upon her interests (Gruen, L., 2009, p.29).

The foundations of the approaches were focussed on well-being, with the commitment and drive of mission to keep this consistent. Through seeking to understand the conditions in which a pupil found him or herself and make a judgement about their impact, practitioners were identifying a stage from which to grow. For pupils that arrived at Eastbank feeling lost or unable to locate themselves on the social or educational 'map', practitioners metaphorically came to look for them. This allowed for pupils to then self-accept and move in a direction that they were happy with. Geoff sums up his observations of the permanent staff:

> By caring for young people as though they deserve to be loved the staff at Eastbank fostered the aspiration to be treated as a decent human being. Eastbank operated as a community. By and large I would say the students wanted to be there (Written interview 4).

As practitioners built principles such as adapting to pupils' needs, building trust and relationship and offering nurture, pupils felt valued. As they belonged to the community, their thoughts, feelings and actions gradually became more positive: they aspired to be themselves in their world. This shift is not easily charted, but despite being indeterminate, does emerge from the data. The play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership that was evident within licensed chaos was a space for pupils to explore this aspiration to be themselves in

187

their world. They had an opportunity to channel emotions and ideas that might have previously caused them shame, and instead find creativity within the exploration process. Through the practitioners not holding grudges towards the pupils' many mistakes, the pupils themselves learnt to not to hold grudges. This was a powerful lesson to take on through life for young people who, for some, had grown bitter and disconnected as a result of difficult circumstances. This kind of embodied revelation increased their well-being.

Pupils and practitioners engaged authentically with each other. The quality of relationships built a community of belonging that fostered a sense of value. Geoff expressed his understanding of this:

> I saw a lot of students choosing to engage with what I'd set up. But more than that a lot of the students chose to engage with me and they wouldn't have done that unless there was something there that they valued. And it's the stuff that we intrinsically value that we keep with us through our lives. So yes, I was cool about the job I'd done (written interview 4).

Geoff knew he made a difference to the pupils that might last, as did the other practitioners at Eastbank. This in turn nourished the practitioners' sense of value. As a researcher, I too experienced increased well-being from being at Eastbank, which I will discuss below.

5.4.4 My own well-being

I have mainly focussed on the pupils' and practitioners' well-being as a borderless outcome of the practitioner approaches at Eastbank. However, as an ethnographic case study, I became part of the community and found myself belonging to that community. Therefore, I find it relevant to discuss that I emerged from my academic year at Eastbank with a greater sense of well-being. During my analysis, I wrote a piece of creative writing as a way of unlocking my potential understanding of this process and acknowledging that my research is, to an extent, an expression of myself.

Mess is more

If you get an opportunity, let a child paint your face.

'A clown!' she might announce, as her brush dives towards the red face paint. Lurching towards you is a splayed brush, too wet and overloaded. At this point, it may feel like a sacrifice – that you are allowing her the excitement of her own adventure at the expense of your face. But as she leans close and you watch the focused eyes and feel the careful brush strokes on your skin, as the room falls quiet and your body rests, what then?

When she leans back to admire the transformation in process, stirring within you might be an understanding that you are, for that time, her work of art. To make sure you stay extra still for the detail, her other hand holds your chin. Black paint wavers in front of your nose. 'Close your eyes' you are told.
Maybe, whilst feeling those detailed strokes in the dark, maybe the lists and the worries and the heartaches will vanish. Just maybe you will know in your knower that being in the present is safe, as you feel the confident dabs and your wet skin dares to be still. 'Oops', you hear. There is a pause. 'Finished!'
You are ushered to the mirror. You have never looked like this before – alien and yet familiar (if your face itches, don't scratch it, just wiggle your mouth and nose in a big circle). It could be that you stare at that painted face and know that you are not the same as before, without needing to know why.

'Thank you', you might say, 'this is how I always wanted to look'.

I came to Eastbank sensing that I would need to give of myself, knowing that it would need energy and I was ready for the sacrifice. I was surprised by the ethos of joining in all the activities, but did so dutifully, to do my job properly. Somewhere between building brick walls together and daily contact on Facebook with young people who have fought to get by, I let go of some of my fear of the future. Eastbank, although future-oriented, was about being in the present: 'this is where we are, right here, right now, and it's good.' I went expecting to do a job and somewhere along the line they worked their magic on me and I emerged graffitied. And I am grateful, because – it turns out – this is how I always wanted to be.

This was not a crafted piece; I wrote creatively to see what was just outside of my current understanding and I found the concept of me being 'graffitied' very revealing. I arrived at Eastbank as the organised scholarship student. I had been an excellent teacher, working tirelessly to make my lessons stimulating and relevant, all within the careful boundaries of the curriculum. I had also been an educational projects manager, meticulously organising and executing. I had been focused on mission; at Eastbank I was reconnected with a deeper level of my empathic engagement, which led me to enter into the licensed chaos instead of observe it from a distance. The Eastbank community was messy and chaotic and adaptive of ever present complex realities. I was initiated in and 'graffitied' by the practitioner approaches, the resulting ethos and by the pupils' 21ˢᵗ century outlook. I felt richer for the experience.

To unpack this further, the photograph below shows myself and three pupils part-way through dressing up for a video shoot of a scene for the comedy show with Wolf and Water. It demonstrates my own engagement in the licensed chaos described earlier in this chapter. The photo represents 'posse' – I felt a sense of belonging to the community, as I had been encouraged to be part of the play, immersion and risk-taking throughout the year. Practitioners worked alongside pupils and through engaging in the same process, as demonstrated in the photograph, I learnt valuable lessons from the young people with whom I built relationship. This contributed to feeling satisfied that where I was in life was where I wanted to be, feeling gratitude that I had so many positive circumstances in my life and that I was making a positive contribution through my research. The photograph was taken on my camera by one of the pupils.

Figure 5.14: A sense of posse

Practitioners encouraged everyone to be themselves, making space for 'down time'. Small opportunities such as a daily game of cards with a cup of tea and biscuits with people who wanted to be there contributed to my feelings of contentment. The photograph below captures one of these moments and was taken on my camera by one of the pupils:

Figure 5.15: researcher playing cards with pupil

As discussed in 4.3.2, Dave stated, 'In my opinion, the most important aspect of our work at Eastbank is to build relationships with the pupils so they can trust us' (written interview 2). He believed that by journeying alongside them, levelling the hierarchy as much possible considering their behavioural histories, they would feel safe enough to learn and grow. What I had not anticipated was the level of well-being I would feel being part of that. Practitioners, too, expressed that they enjoyed working at the unit due to the equal relationships forged. Dave's philosophy to get alongside the pupils, gain their trust and work with them rather than be in front of them in a position of authority (as expressed in written interview 2), triggered flourishing in the area of relationships, which is key element of well-being.

My own well-being as an outcome to practitioner approaches at Eastbank is important to my research in that I have needed to reflect on how that could influence my choice of data collection and my analysis of that data.

6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis tells a story of where practitioner approaches led in one AP site in South West England through asking the questions, 'What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?' and 'Where did these approaches lead?' It also maps a methodological journey towards seeking ways to engage with the problem that, 'the times exceed the categories' (Gallagher, 2011, p.54). In my findings chapters I have conceptualised the practitioner approaches and their directions in Eastbank through seeking voices that escape easy classification and do not make easy sense (concepts expressed in Mazzei and Jackson, 2009). Through analysing the holistic outworking of the central practitioner approaches of empathic engagement and mission, and their pathway to belonging and well-being, I have drawn attention to practitioner-inspired catalysts for belonging and well-being within AP. In this chapter, I argue that both states and the path walked by empathic engagement and mission to reach them are central to sound thinking about AP and mainstream education, and refer to theory, practice and policy to do so. I also argue that reciprocal virtual ethnography and life writing as ontology are ways forward as methodological approaches in the field of AP and beyond.

As the story of practitioner approaches at Eastbank has unfolded, it has moved beyond the realms of my preliminary literature review; during this chapter I will consider new literature in the light of my findings and chart the shift into new literature territory. I discuss where my findings are supported by the literature, where they are not and make suggestions of new contribution to the field of AP by considering what my findings open up and how they might alter the current 'map' of understanding and practice. I then take a wider view of the current map, considering the governmental view on success within AP in relation my findings at Eastbank. Whilst discussing my methodological contribution, I highlight strengths and weaknesses and my ethical dilemmas in their application. In conclusion, I reflect on what I have learnt and consider where there is fertile ground for further research.

6.2 Why the oneness of empathic engagement and mission matters

The practitioners at Eastbank reflected, continued to build principles and explored practice, individually, collaboratively and communally. As one process stimulated another, the practitioners constructed vision, experimented with its outworking and interpreted its impact, allowing context and complexity to speak into their decisions and actions. At the core of

these overlapping approaches was a marriage of empathic engagement and mission. This is re-illustrated below for visual clarification:
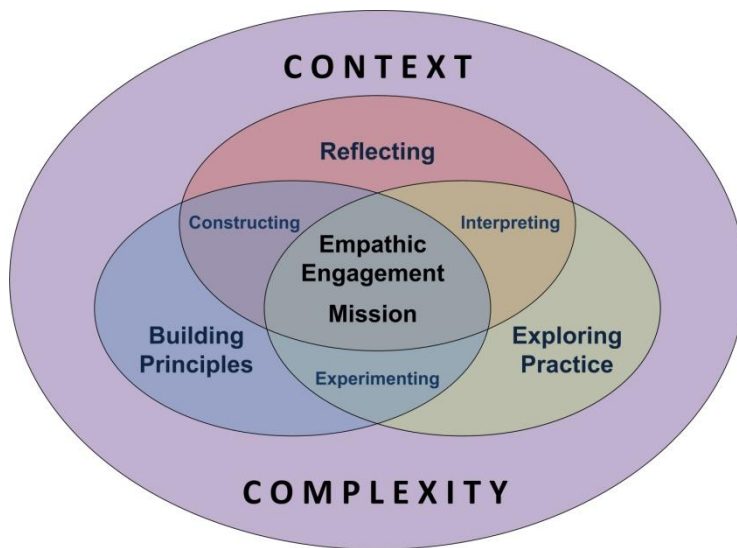
Figure 6.1: What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank? (diagrammatic form)

To further re-cap briefly, empathic engagement is a process whereby individuals who are empathizing with the well-being of others first respond to the other's condition, then reflectively imagine themselves in the position of the other, leading to making a judgment about how the conditions that the other finds him or herself in may contribute to their state of mind or impact upon their interests. Assessing salient features of the situation and determining what information is pertinent to effectively empathize is a key part of the process. It is a fostering of emotional involvement that leads to empathic relations.

When I refer to practitioners' approaches being characterised by mission I mean that they are in touch with an inner calling to pursue an activity or perform a service – in effect, their vocation. Also part of the definition of mission is collaboratively stepping out into new territory to conduct negotiations or establish relations with that which feels foreign. Finally, there is a sense of an organisation that is, in part, established for those in need.

The relationship between empathic engagement and mission was particularly significant in my findings, and is illustrated in figure 6.2:

Figure 6.2: The relationship between empathic engagement and mission

There was a mutual transformation between the approaches of empathic engagement and mission that created a shared context for mutual understanding. These central practitioner approaches could be interpreted as being of a dialogic nature. When using the term 'dialogic', I am meaning a way of understanding how humans make meaning in general (Linell, 2009) rather than the everyday meaning of 'pertaining to dialogue', as the first is a more specialist meaning that has emerged out of the dialogic field (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). Using dialogue to educate does not equate to a dialogic approach; 'to be dialogic implies that dialogue is not only the means of education but is also an end' (Wegerif, 2012, p.14). In my study, the principles that the practitioners built and that fed into empathic engagement and mission, such as building trust and relationship and nurture, were seen by them as an end goal as well as a means of education. The principles were constructed from practitioners reflecting on what mattered to them within Eastbank's context and with their own stories in mind; practitioners wanted to build trust and relationship and to offer nurture because it was an act of and commitment to being fully human. It was also a means of education that they valued. Their approach stemmed from commitment to being as well as doing, just as 'referring to an ontological interpretation of dialogic is another way of saying that dialogic education is education *for* dialogue as well as *through* dialogue' (Wegerif, 2012 p.19). Practitioners were committed both to dialogue and transmission of information from practitioner to pupil.

In my literature review, I anticipated that dialogic education may be relevant to issues within disaffection, in particular, authoring a higher self and Bakhtin's surplus of seeing. It took me some time see its resonance with empathic engagement and mission, and I made that connection through exploring the yin yang diagram in figure 6.2 and through creative memo writing as shown in section 4.5.2. I interpreted a dialogic relationship between practitioners

and pupils and also specifically between empathic engagement and mission as a conceptualisation of practitioner approaches.

To view my findings through a lens of dialogic education offers one explanation as to why the practitioner approaches led to well-being: whilst pupils navigated the shifting nature of self and the practitioners offered integrity of ideas and empathic engagement, the classroom experience became a shared context allowing all parties to 'author a higher self' (McGonigal, 2004, p.123). Wegerif (2012) explains that, 'Information, knowledge and skills only have meaning for us in the context of our participation in relationships and dialogues that are larger than us and can take us beyond ourselves' (Wegerif, 2012, p.1). Bakhtin's 'surplus of seeing' (Bakhtin, 1981) describes seeing beyond each other: the things which one person can see that the other cannot which leads to an expanding of one's own perspective and spontaneous insight. The practitioners saw the pupils as 'good kids', were proud of them as they were and praised them for being as well as doing. I am suggesting that this helped to suspend the pupils' disbelief in their own inadequacy. It is fitting to consider the suggestion that, 'perhaps what is needed most of all by teachers is a larger faith in the natural fineness of the child and his inner potential (Bloom, 1949, as quoted in Fielding and Moss, 2011, p.11). However, whilst pupils are kicking against a system to which they do not see a point and a community to which they do not belong, it is understandable that teachers find it challenging to have such faith in them, as they are making the teacher's role impossible. This problem can become a perpetual 'groundhog day' – the vicious cycle.

Dewey offered an alternative to this cycle and I draw on his work as his vision strengthens my findings and argument. He advocated for an educational structure that offers balance between delivering knowledge or transmission whilst taking into account the interests and experiences of the student. He believed that 'the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. Just as two points define a straight line, so the present standpoint of the child and the facts and truths of studies define instruction' (Dewey, 1902, p.16). In a similar way, a 'mission' approach is concerned with offering out and negotiating at the same time as empathic engagement is empathising and making a judgment about how the conditions that a pupil finds herself in may contribute to her state of mind or impact upon her interests. Both approaches are part of an holistic process; to link this to dialogic would be to say that it is hard to tell which one is speaking. The Learn 2 Work course adopted by Eastbank delivered knowledge in a practical context that was of interest to pupils. The artists in residence sought to draw on pupils' interests and experiences in order to enter into a creative dialogue with them.

195

Yet the impact of empathic engagement and mission reach beyond the courses and activities offered. Dewey uses an analogy that can be applied to the empathic engagement and mission approaches at Eastbank. The farmer uses the various conditions of climate and resources to 'allow their energies to work together...His purpose is simply a foresight of the consequences of his energies connected with the things about him' (Dewey, 1902, p.107). Practitioners at Eastbank engaged empathically whilst in committed action, creating a dialogue of mutual understanding. This could be analogous with using conditions of climate and resources in that, through conditions of climate (empathic engagement) and resources (mission), the practitioners developed a foresight of the consequences of their energies connected with the context and complexities at Eastbank. The outcome was community growth rather than transmission. An obvious continuation to the analogy, then, is that a teacher purely setting up his or her own aims could be likened to a farmer setting up an ideal of farming irrespective of conditions (Dewey, 1902, p.107). By not taking existing action and direction into account, one risks mis-educating or violence, 'throwing the subsequent action of the person out of balance' (Dewey, 1902, p.26). Dewey underlines that physical prevention does not necessarily change disposition towards an action (1902, p.27). Most of the pupils at Eastbank had been removed from mainstream education due to disruptive or highly disengaged behaviour. They had not bought into the school system and refused to participate. In the context of Eastbank, however, those pupils were participating, sometimes as audience, as the practitioners were 'allowing their energies to work together', sensitive to existing action and direction.

Tracking, managing and regulating AP needs to take into account individual and community growth as well as transmission. To judge an AP site on successful transmission of information without valuing and measuring its contribution to a sense of belonging and well-being is to miss the potential of AP. Policy that is seeking a change in pupil perception towards their own growth and contribution needs to make space for the approaches by which to make this happen. I shall come to current policy recommendations shortly. The oneness of engagement and mission as embodied at Eastbank matters because it subscribed to education for dialogue as well as through dialogue, inspiring belonging and well-being.

Extant literatures have much to say about empathy and a lack of it. Certainly, there is an understanding that 'approaches that attempt to 'fix' the student in isolation from contextual influences will continue to falter because they look at only one half of the problem' (McGregor and Mills, 2011, p.6), and that power struggles between pupils and teachers may lead to increasing levels of coercion and punishments (Gable, Bullock, and Evans, 2006)

that erode positive elements of teaching and learning (McGregor and Mills, 2011, p.5). Empathy can be seen as innate, an ability on a basic level that we are born with (see the neuroscience of mirror neurons in Gerhardt, 2011); not an emotion 'but the ability to feel what another feels or might feel' (Oatley, 2004, p. 96). It is often taken as either cognitive or affective.

> "Perspective taking," as cognitive empathy is usually called in this research tradition, is an enabling mental capacity that serves reflection on social conflicts from a point of view other than the child's own' (Maxwell and DesRoches, 2010, p.36).

Maxwell and DesRoches (2010, p.37) go on to make the point that perspective taking alone is not what we would normally consider as empathy as a bully will take another child's perspective in order to find the most hurtful name to call them. They see that the ability to respond 'pro-socially to others' distress belongs in the definition of empathy'. This is linked to what Kakavelakis et al (2008) describe as instrumental empathy as employed by a sales advisor when attempting to manipulate a customer in order to close a deal. It's also linked to what Cooper (2010, p. 90) describes as feigned empathy where it 'represents deceptive behaviour when people exhibit superficial signs of empathy but eventually reveal quite the opposite'.

There is literature that resonates with empathic engagement, such as Rieffe et al (2010, p. 362), describing affective empathy as referring to the ability to 'respond affectively to emotions in others, aiming at reacting adaptively to another's needs, e.g. to console, support or spare the other person'. Gibbons (2011, p. 243) proposes a complex construct of empathy: 'Influenced by factors such as attitudes, contexts, and values, the quality of empathic engagement is shown to emerge from their unique mix, within and between therapist and patient, and is always grounded in shared, embodied humanity'. Empathy is seen as not only as 'a deep virtue in its own right, but as a vital lubricant of social learning' (Claxton, 2008, p. 105). Best (2000, p. 16) states that 'empathy is thus not just putting yourself in the place of another, but a powerful force between the helper and the helped. As Egan (1990, p. 124) underlines: '. . . empathy is in itself a healing agent. It is one of the most potent aspects of therapy because it realises, it confirms, it brings even the most frightened client into the human race. If a person is understood, he or she belongs'. Perhaps Cooper comes closest to the definition of empathic engagement and its relationship to a sense of mission as put forward in this thesis in what she describes as profound empathy. In her extensive and detailed model of empathy in an educational setting she states that profound empathy 'appears to create the will to act on behalf of all pupils. This desire to value all

children as unique individuals with developmental potential reveals the moral nature of such empathy' (Cooper, 2013, p. 88).

Beyond responding to the other's condition and reflectively imagining oneself in the position of the other, empathic engagement moves into making a judgment about how the conditions that the other finds him or herself in may contribute to their state of mind or impact upon their interests. It brings a holistic contextualisation to a situation that embraces complexity. Salient features of the situation can be brought into awareness that are pertinent to effective empathy. Through fostering emotional involvement, genuine empathic relations can emerge that bring about transformation. This type of engagement through empathy is different from what is on offer in the extant literature, and offers a contribution to the field.

6.2 The significance of belonging

Pupils and practitioners at Eastbank expressed a sense of belonging, where they personally related to one other and experienced care and support. As an unanticipated outcome it does not feature greatly in my literature review, and so I embed it within literature here. Common to the definition of the term community is a sense of belonging: community is not present until members experience feelings of belonging, trust in others, and safety (Solomon et al., 1996; Furman, 1998). Together, the permanent staff, the pupils, the artists in residence and myself as researcher were the Eastbank community for that period of time. The significance of school community is reflected in the work of Vygotsky (1978), and Dewey argued that the quality of education 'is realized in the degree in which individuals form a group' (1958, p.65). A lack of this sense of belonging is a primary cause of psychological and behavioural problems (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p.511), and

> …the desire for interpersonal attachment may well be one of the most far-reaching and integrative constructs currently available to understand human nature. If psychology has erred with regard to the need to belong, in our view, the error has not been to deny the existence of such a motive so much as to under-appreciate it (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p.522).

In terms of this need to belong, including its effects in school, Osterman (2000) undertook a detailed examination on international current research in the field and concluded that,

> students who experience acceptance are more highly motivated and engaged in learning and more committed to school. These concepts of commitment and

engagement are closely linked to student performance, and more importantly, to the quality of student learning (Osterman, 2000, p.359).

Relating this to pupils at Eastbank: despite previously having, in some cases, no attendance in school (no statistical evidence for this), had attendance figures of 62.7% (for the pupil who attended least) to 92.2% (highest attendee) at the AP site. Pupils expressed that they felt that they could be themselves and most demonstrated commitment to attend. My findings found evidence of pupil and practitioner engagement, though motivation amongst pupils was less obvious or consistent. Osterman's conclusions help me to understand the significance of belonging in its role as an outcome of the practitioners' approaches at Eastbank. Though there is little evidence demonstrating that a sense of belonging is directly related to achievement, there is 'substantial evidence showing or suggesting that the sense of belonging influences achievement through its effects on engagement' (Osterman, 2000, p.341). Due to the AP site's sudden closure, I was not able to chart the effects of belonging on engagement and influence on achievement over time. However, this would be a valuable area of research within AP. A significant relationship has already been found between sense of community and positive indicators such as: social competence, democratic values, empathy, enjoyment of helping others learn, intrinsic prosocial motivation, and perspective-taking (Solomon et al.,1996). The foundation laid at Eastbank as a space of belonging is therefore significant as regards pupils moving on beyond compulsory education. When pupils experience belonging or acceptance, their perceptions change (Osterman, 2000). Through positive involvement with others,

> they are more likely to demonstrate intrinsic motivation, to accept the authority of others while at the same time establishing a stronger sense of identity, experiencing their own sense of autonomy, and accepting responsibility to regulate their own behaviour in the classroom consistent with social norms. (Osterman, 2000, p.331).

This is highly relevant to AP in England and beyond in terms of behaviour management, and makes greater sense of my impression of the pupils at Eastbank as often behaving within the boundaries set of what was acceptable, despite a track record of not doing so. Osterman (2000) explains that to experience relatedness or a sense of belonging, pupils 'must feel that they are worthy of respect and that the others in their group or social context care for them' (p.351). This underlines the major role that teachers play in determining how cared for and welcome pupils are as part of the school community. In Eastbank, practitioners building trust, relationship, nurture and learner agency helped pupils to feel that they were worthy of respect and that they were cared for; this made way for a sense of belonging.

199

Through her in-depth analysis of research about belonging, Osterman (2000) states that current research tells us a number of things, which I have summed up below:

- The experience of belongingness is associated with important psychological processes.
- Children and young people who experience a sense of relatedness have a stronger supply of inner resources, perceiving themselves to be more competent, autonomous and have higher levels of intrinsic motivation.
- They have a stronger sense of identity but are also willing to conform to and adopt established norms and values. These inner resources in turn predict engagement and performance.
- Those students who experience a sense of relatedness behave differently from those who do not; they have more positive attitudes toward school, classwork, teachers, and their peers. They are more likely to like school, and they are also more engaged. They participate more in school activities, and they invest more of themselves in the learning process. They have a stronger sense of their own social competence, and they are more likely to interact with peers and adults in prosocial ways.
- Rejection, exclusion or estrangement from a group contributes towards behavioural problems in the classroom (either aggression or withdrawal), lower interest in school, lower achievement, and dropout.
- There are links between rejection and various forms of emotional distress including loneliness, violence, and suicide (Osterman, 2000, summarised).

Such an extensive list of influence underlines a powerful role for belonging within AP and mainstream education. Based on the findings just listed, schools that focus on belonging as a key goal are more likely to reduce behavioural problems and low interest in school, acting as a preventative measure for exclusion. Bauermeister and Leary (1995) suggest that non-adaptive school behaviours should be interpreted as 'desperate attempts to establish or maintain relationships with other people or sheer frustration and purposelessness when one's need to belong goes unmet' (Bauermeister & Leary, 1995, p.521). Unfortunately, such behaviour often serves to exasperate and further risk the quality of interaction with teachers and peers, fuelling the downward cycle. If it is the case that,

> unless students identify with the school to at least a minimal extent; feel that they belong as part of the school; and believe themselves to be welcomed, respected, and valued by others there, they may begin the gradual disengagement process of which officially dropping out is only the final step (Goodenow and Grady, 1993, p.61),

then the focus needs to be as much on belonging from the start as 'dropping out' at the end.

The findings from this study show pathways to fostering a sense of belonging within AP, the principles of which are applicable in mainstream education.

6.2.1 Belonging through the lens of dialogic education, humanising creativity and aspiration

I found it helpful to consider the sense of belonging at Eastbank in the light of Bakhtin's acknowledgement of two types of discourse: authoritative and internally persuasive (Bakhtin, 1981 p.343). Although I discussed Bakhtin in my literature review, I had not considered at the time that these two particular discourses would resonate with my findings. It was only in trying to understand my findings in a wider research context that I drew such links. Bakhtin (1981) describes authoritative discourse as being fused with its authority and demanding unconditional allegiance. The authoritative voice remains external to the person being ordered to do something and forces them to accept or reject an order without engaging with it. In contrast, the internally persuasive discourse is a dialogic one, enabling a person to infuse the message into their own understanding and as a result collaborate in constructing communication. Instead of being of fixed meaning, the internally persuasive word 'is half ours and half-someone else's....It is not finite, it is open' (Bakhtin, 1981, p.345). The words of the persuasive voice enter the space where a person's own words are formulating and so affect them from the inside out.

The practitioner approaches at Eastbank could be interpreted as having the persuasive voice discourse incorporated into them. Reflection kept practitioners' own biographies and current practice conscious, fuelling humility, whilst considering pupils' and the unit's context and complexity. By adapting to pupils needs, building relationship and offering nurture, the discourse could not remain external, allowing a practitioner's message to diffuse into a pupil's understanding and vice versa. The exploration of practice such as offering space, agency and to work alongside might be seen an embodiment of the persuasive voice. Looking at my findings through the lens of this discourse helps me to trace one of the ways in which practitioner approaches led to a sense of belonging. Viewing it this way, the persuasive voice discourse fuelled relatedness, a bonding and building of trust through collaborating in constructing communication. This growing sense of belonging, of relatedness at Eastbank, in turn enabled a greater amount of persuasive voice. Of course, practitioners used an authoritative tone with pupils at times, especially when there was potential danger. However, this was delivered from a foundational message that figuratively said, 'I know you and I'm saying this because I care.' There was no wider authoritative voice

forcing pupils to accept or reject an order without engaging with it, unless the secondary school stepped in.

I have also found it helpful to understand belonging at Eastbank in the light of a communal dimension to creativity (developed by Chappell, 2008), outlined in section 2.6.2 of my literature review, as Eastbank could be seen as embodying its humane framework. Specific resonances with the framework were that it encourages a strong focus on considering the needs of practitioners and pupils with care, negotiating between them through empathic engagement. It is characterised by flattened hierarchies and whole group shared ownership and values. An embodied group identity emerges, which is developed through dialogic engagement that guides communal decision-making. It goes beyond collective into the realms of showing elements of family, which has woven through it belonging and identity. Communal creativity involves interaction with wider communities beyond class groups, such as professional artists, leading pupils and practitioners to consider other values and responsibility systems to those that are familiar. It is a humane framework that is guided by compassion, empathy, alleviation of difficulty, and with reference to a shared value system (Chappell 2008).

This humane framework helps to describe what I saw happening at Eastbank. My findings show a careful focus on adapting to needs, employing empathic engagement and a sense of mission throughout. Through building trust and relationship, with a focus on nurture, there emerged a family atmosphere. This impacted on hierarchy, as the discourse was persuasive rather than authoritative. Within the artist in residence sessions, there was often communal decision-making, which also served as an opportunity to learn about that artist's values and expectations. My study contributes to Chappell's work on humanising creativity in that it extends examples from key stage three to key stage four and extends from mainstream locations into AP.

Dewey's (1897) view that 'the discipline of the school should proceed from the life of the school as a whole and not directly from the teacher' (Dewey, 1897, article two, para 21) resonates with communal creativity in the context of my findings. The AP site was seen to be greater than the sum of its parts, with pupils buying in and behaving appropriately because they wanted to remain part of the community, rather than improving behaviour based on the external discipline of a particular permanent member of staff. This is reminiscent of Bakhtin's (1981) 'persuasive voice' described above, in this instance coming from the life of the Eastbank.

Pupils who belong, via humanising creativity or other means, have more positive attitudes, are more engaged and invest more of themselves in the learning process (Osterman, 2000). This leads to considering belonging through the lens of aspiration literature, which also draws links between pupil voice, belonging and increased engagement (Bundick, 2012), as discussed in my literature review. As in Bundick's research, pupils at Eastbank felt their opinions were valued and took up a role in the AP site, cultivating a sense of broader belonging. They became engaged in ways that they could, which was accepted as enough. Also outlined in my literature review, QISA (2012) lists a sense of belonging as one of the eight 'Conditions' that need to be in place if pupils are to strive for and fulfil their academic, personal and social promise. Returning back to the literature post analysis, my findings do not extend to showing that belonging is a necessary condition for well-being as suggested by QISA; they do show that belonging did contribute to general well-being, that general well-being fed back into a sense of belonging and that there is no clear line where one stops and the other begins. Although extremely partial, my impressions from interactions on Facebook since the closure of Eastbank did indicate that a few pupils felt as though they had grown in competence and in their social interactions. They did not specifically attribute that to Eastbank. QISA's direct claim that belonging, alongside other factors, leads to aspiration has been an interesting lens through which to consider the role of the two outcomes in this study of belonging and well-being. Both are grounded in the present: being and doing well in life is immediate and current, as is the relatedness and commitment of belonging. QISA's definition of having high aspiration is to have ability to dream about the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams (QISA, 2012). Looking at my findings through this lens suggests that the practitioner approaches at Eastbank grounded and inspired pupils and practitioners in the present, creating foundations of belonging and well-being from which they could build and grow towards their aspirations.

The Eastbank practitioners, through the oneness of engagement and mission, subscribed to education for dialogue as well as through dialogue, which inspired belonging and well-being in their educational community. Sometimes, this focus meant less academic teaching, the perceived resulting lack of tangible outcomes perhaps one reason for Eastbank's closure. Yet, if education is 'fundamentally a matter of relationships' (Bloom, 1952, p.136, as quoted in Fielding and Moss, 2011, p10), where one 'is educated who is able to recognise relationships between things and to experience just relations between persons' (Bloom, 1949, p.136, as quoted in Fielding and Moss, 2011), a key aim needs to be that children learn to live creatively, not for themselves alone, but for their community (Bloom, 1949, p.170, as quoted in Fielding and Moss, 2011). Where pupils' out of school realities have

been particularly difficult, this focus is especially important. Policy designed to monitor and assess AP needs to consider this vital role that AP can play in inspiring a sense of belonging. As mentioned in my literature review, 36% of 10-17 year olds appearing before court for the August disorder in 2011 had been excluded from school during 2009/10, the academic year leading up to the event (Ministry of Justice, 2012, table 4.13). Over half of all those appearing in court were aged 20 or under (Ministry of Justice, 2012, p.5). It is encouraging that Taylor's (2012) review informing policy is mindful of the discontent, as AP is ideally placed to engage in dialogue with the kind of discontent expressed by the offending youth after the disorder.

It is difficult to know the exact nature of the young people's discontent that was expressed through the 2011 disorder. Here I draw on interviews with looters shown on Sky News; I am aware that these may have been edited and were made in a very specific media setting. However, they are nonetheless worth considering, as they show interviews with four cloaked 16 year old looters, who risked being prosecuted to express their frustrations. The boys were recent school leavers, the same age as eight of the Eastbank pupils. One boy explained:

> They're not giving us the opportunity to work hard and show them: 'Yeah, we can do this. We can be as wealthy as you. We can do exactly what you can do!' They don't want to give us that chance. They don't want to give us that chance (Sky News, 2011).

It seemed this boy did not feel cared for and had lost trust that anyone believed in him. Instead of feeling a sense of belonging to his community and society, he felt alienated and conspired against. Another boy expressed a similar feeling:

> Right now, there looks like no future for young people. That's how I see it. 'Cos the government – they're not helping no-one out except the rich people. They don't care about us. They just leave us to do whatever we do (Sky News, 2011).

The boys had left school and not found a job, with this particular boy walking the streets handing out his CV and following all the advice given by the job centre. One looted a shop that had refused to interview him; such was his anger and frustration. Another boy wanted to make it clear that, 'We're not doing this for the fun of it. We're doing this for money to survive in this world' (Sky News, 2011). The boys showed low levels of material well-being – 42% of young people brought before the courts were in receipt of free school meals – and felt that society had let them down: 'They're not thinking about us. They're thinking about their own pockets' (Sky News. 2011). There were signs of feelings of rejection, exclusion or estrangement within the interviews, and no signs of a sense of belonging. This led to what Labour MP Diane Abbott expressed as 'a rejection of the future that was laid down for them'

(BBC News UK, 2012). A warning comes to mind by Brofenbrenner (1979, p.53): 'No society can long sustain itself unless its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations, and skills involved in assisting and caring for other human beings'. The Sky News interviews reflected the voices captured by Riot From Wrong (2012), a group of young people who made a film to capture their peers' perceptions of why the riots and overall disorder happened.

The Eastbank boys and the interviewed London looters were the same age, gender, were from areas with evidence of disadvantage and low aspirations in the community, and appeared to show clear signs of disaffection. Yet there were clear differences. At Eastbank, practitioners had listened and given pupils ways of having a 'voice'. Pupils had been given an opportunity to work hard and show what they can do. In belonging to their school community, they no longer felt alienated and conspired against. Pupils were not exuding the message, 'They don't care about us: they just leave us to do whatever we do' because they had experienced being cared for, celebrated for who they were and helped to find college courses and work experience despite the downward spiral they had been in. At the time of the riots/disorder, many of the pupils were showing signs of well-being through their Facebook interactions, which may, in part, be due to having work or training to start in the new term. As far as I am aware, none of the pupils at Eastbank decided to get lifts to nearby Bristol (city in UK to which the disorder spread) to join in with the looting there. There may be lessons learnt at Eastbank that could contribute to answering the question, 'How can we prevent this happening again?'

6.3 The significance of well-being in AP and beyond

Together, the practitioner approaches at Eastbank fostered an indeterminate and borderless outcome of practitioner and pupil well-being (see section 5.4). This section considers well-being within the context of the wider literature before comparing this to my findings.

6.3.1 Well-being in the wider literature

I have taken well-being to mean the state of being or doing well in life and also the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy (Oxford English, 2012). It is synonymous with the concept of flourishing in areas such as physical, psychological, relationships, lifestyle, direction and feelings, and is driven by our thoughts, in terms of our satisfaction with life – where we are compared to where we want to be; our feelings – the postive relative to the negative; and our actions – what we do and do not.
205

Well-being is looked at from different perspectives in the literature, such as psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), objective well-being – 'that well-being consists in the achievement of certain objective values such as the perfection of one's nature or the realization of human capabilities' (Tiberius 2006, p. 494), and subjective well-being (referred to as SWB) which,

> 'represents people's evaluations of their lives, both in terms of cognitions (eg. 'My life is satisfying') and feelings (eg. 'My experiences are pleasant and rewarding'). SWB represents people's beliefs and feelings about whether they are leading a desirable and rewarding life' (Ed Diener, 2012, p.590).

Notions of well-being are also developing from a deficit model developed in the area of mental health, towards a strengths model. (See Kinderman et al, 2011, p.1035).

Well-being is seen as being made up of different domains. Sometimes attempts are made to create a global scale, for example the UNICEF study of childhood well-being (UNICEF, 2007) and the development of the BBC well-being scale (Kinderman et al, 2011). Other research looks at a selection of domains to measure the impact of a specific educational intervention (see Graham and Fitzgerald, 2011).

Measuring well-being

The majority of work on measuring well-being is quantitive, often looking at large populations up to national (for example NEF, 2009) and international level (UNICEF, 2007). Some research mixes quantitative and qualitative measures (for example, McLellan et al, 2012). Qualitative measures are often used to inform quantitative measures, though Moser argues for development of quantifiable qualitative research (Moser, 2003, p.82, as quoted in Jones and Sumner, 2009). Jones and Sumner make the case for mixed method research, including looking at the different areas that each can cover. They use the example of quantitative research into poverty being good for identifying the amount and where it is, with qualitative research identifying causes and dynamics (Jones and Sumner, 2009, p.36). Quantitative measures are popular with policy-makers, though stories show authenticity, a point they also make (pp.47-48):

> Numbers are commonly perceived as objective, due to their tangibility, quantifiability, and assumed universality. However, policy makers also listen to narratives, opening up space for qualitative approaches to also influence policy (Kanbur 2002, p.2). This is partly due to the legitimacy or 'authenticity' brought by PPAs (participatory poverty

assessments) and other qualitative methods. One might hypothesise that methods matter for research impact and influence because, although quantitative approaches are currently popular with policy makers, qualitative approaches can create stories to 'sell'.

There is little work available in an educational setting that uses purely qualitative measures, as this study does. Searching for a way to give children a voice, Fattore et al (2009), in work on well-being that perhaps closely parallels the view taken in this thesis, point out that 'developmental paradigms have silenced children in research, situating them as objects, rather than subjects' (p.58). They challenge 'preconceptions and preoccupations concerning the adult understanding of that world of meaning' (p.75). They go on to develop a model based on children's views which highlight emotional and relational well-being based around security, agency and a positive sense of self, stating that,

> 'children understood well-being not in terms of isolated domains but in terms of how, for example, health or economic well-being manifested in certain types of relationships or aspects of relationships (well-being as the need for care when ill) or as certain types of emotions (e.g., feelings of shame when not having socially perceived cultural items)' (p.62).

Potential issues regarding well-being

Not only has the majority of well-being research been on adult well-being, which is not necessarily the same as childhood and adolescent notions of well-being, research on childhood well-being has often been undertaken from an adult perspective. This raises the question of what is being measured: well-being or well-becoming – where children and adolescents *are* or where society think they should be going.

Quantitative measures, though starting with the individual, are usually designed to measure a population. Whether they are being used to identify a problem or used to measure the effectiveness of an intervention they are usually goal orientated. There is always the possibility of measuring what is convenient to measure and discounting the unmeasurable, without reflexivity. It has been unusual to use only qualitative measures in relation to well-being, but where this has been done the projects have a different feel, more holistic, more open to unknown outcomes and more to do with the individual or rather a dialogue between 'you and I' (Macmurray, 1961, p.61, as quoted in Fielding and Moss, *Radical Education and the Common School,*2011, p.49).

207

There is also evidence of a conflict in schools between the view that working towards children's well-being should be delivered as a discrete subject (in PSHE lessons) or that it should be an integral part of teaching:

> You could argue we're not social workers and just shut the door to it and push it out. And every now and again you do sort of pull yourself up a bit and think gosh why am I willing to do this, is this really what my job is, but…unless you do deal with it and confront it there's the danger of you know becoming robots or whatever, you know we have to acknowledge it, it's part of growing up, part of education isn't it, learning about yourself and discovering yourself. (Head of year 8, school 2)

(Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell and Donovan, 2010, p.925)

Further conflict arises when considering if well-being is an educational aim that is intrinsically valuable. In articulating an aim for the work of Creative Partnerships in schools, McLellan et al (2012, p.15) argue that well-being is concerned with,

> 'notions of individual choice, risk taking, a sense of belonging to a community and feelings of mutual respect between pupils and their teachers, such that the former's views are taken seriously while the latter's classroom organisation is based on encouraging self-regulation rather than the exercise of firm control'.

In comparing this to work in non-Creative Partnerships schools, McLellan et al say that it 'appeared to be based upon the belief that if the children *felt* better they would *perform* better' (McLellan et al, 2012, p.169), that is, an instrumental view of working towards well-being as being useful only in as far as it boosted performance. Even that view has not been enough to keep well-being in the revised Ofsted framework. Its removal will, according to the current Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, 'allow the inspectors to concentrate on what matters and forget the peripherals' (as quoted in McLellan et al, 2012, p.171), a view echoed by the Minister of State for Schools, Nick Gibb, who has 'dismissed social and emotional learning as 'ghastly' and likely to distract from the core subjects of academic education' (McLellan et al, 2012 .p 171).

6.3.2 My findings in relation to well-being literature

Since my initial review of literature and completing my data analysis, I have revisited the UNICEF report: *An overview of child well-being in rich countries* (UNICEF, 2007), which is a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in 21 nations of the industrialized world. I have found its measure and comparison of child well-being under six different dimensions to be a clear way of breaking down the areas of well-being. These are: material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family

relationships, behaviours and risks, and young people's own subjective sense of well-being. Practitioner approaches at Eastbank were not examined in relation to making a difference in relation to material well-being or family relationships as it was outside the scope of this study. However, I did consider health and safety, education, peer relationships, behaviour and risks and the pupils' subjective sense of their own well-being.

The fact that in an average ranking of all six dimensions, the UK's children and young people exhibited the lowest levels of well-being in all 21 nations (UNICEF 2007) needs to be addressed within education. Peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks and subjective well-being were shown to be the worst scores for the UK and overall. Children and young people's perceptions of their well-being, health and how they feel about school are in need of help. Children are clearly struggling with peer relationships, are putting themselves at risk, perceive themselves as lacking in well-being and are not enjoying school. Many such children arrive in AP.

Research has already highlighted well-being as being 'pivotal to sound thinking about education' (White, 2005, p.3 as quoted in Fielding & Moss, 2011, p.32). Cohen (2006, p.209) found that, 'interventions designed to create a safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school represent a systemic process that creates the optimal foundation for learning and development'. This is achieved through promoting children's school success, healthy development, social-emotional competencies and ethical dispositions throughout their school experience (Cohen, 2006). Cohen (2006) also suggests that social-emotional skills and dispositions, alongside knowledge, provide the foundation for improved quality of life and being able to participate in a democracy.

Dewey championed well-being as being pivotal to sound thinking about education. My findings echo the strong case he makes for the importance of education not only as a place to gain content knowledge, but also as a place to learn how to live. He saw education as a process of living and not a preparation for future living (Dewey, 1897). The practitioners at Eastbank, through reflecting, developing principles and exploring practice, found ways to embody a similar belief, which contributed to a sense of well-being. They seemed to believe, like Dewey, that 'the progress is not in the succession of studies but in the development of new attitudes towards, and new interests in, experience' (Dewey, 1897, article 3, para 39). This was a key feature of Eastbank's ethos – practitioners focused on fostering, nurturing and cultivating for the sake of growth. They understood, like Dewey, that 'beliefs and aspirations cannot be physically transported and inserted' (Dewey, 1916, p.11). Instead, the

209

practitioners helped to form them by calling out new responses through enriching the present. Dewey claimed that, 'only by focusing on enriching present experience do we adequately prepare young people with the skills to face the future' (Dewey, 1916, p.56). This is also echoed in Facer's (2012) work (see conclusion). Adopting this approach at Eastbank inspired belonging and well-being; the focus was on the present yet the formed community embodied the future as it continually reconstructed experience. As a result, pupils engaged with being present to situations, knowing that they could opt-out when they deemed necessary. Several pupils continued in the field of their work experience after leaving Eastbank, suggesting that they found meaning in the activity whilst at the AP site.

Also echoing some of Dewey's beliefs on nurture, democracy and community are Fielding and Moss (2011), who, regarding well-being, state that:

> Human flourishing is relational and dynamic, and best nurtured through the daily realisation of the mutually conditioning twin principles of freedom and equality, which together constitute the living reality of a just, inclusive, caring community (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p.11).

Practitioners at Eastbank, both the permanent staff and artists in residence, built trust and relationship with pupils, working alongside them whilst offering them space and learner agency. Together they built a community of belonging that fostered a sense of 'human flourishing.' I have avoided the use of equality in my findings, as, at times, practitioners very clearly 'pulled rank' in the presence of dangerous behaviour. However, this was still carried out in relationship and a clear message of being 'for' the pupils. Bussey, Inayatullah and Milojevic (2008, p.287) echoed the belief that education is a place to learn how to live, in quoting Rogers (1998):

> Perhaps we ought to consider the notion that the purpose of education be reconceptualised as the facilitation of people's search for meaning, wholeness, transcendence and an understanding of our individual roles in the human evolutionary journey.

The example of Eastbank, both its existence and its sudden closure, serves to highlight that the facilitation of pupils' journeys towards wholeness, reconstructing experience and understanding where they fit is to be highly valued as an educational approach. Within AP, it cannot be squeezed around gaining GCSEs within AP, as without the former, the latter becomes meaningless and, at times, impossible. Pupil well-being has an impact on society. Reports regarding existing practices in AP (Taylor 2012; Thomson and Russell, 2007) acknowledge 'remarkable examples' of 'truly outstanding practice' from 'committed staff in outstanding institutions' (Taylor 2012, p.4). There are examples of 'flexibility and

responsiveness, and strong caring relationships' in 'safe and secure' climates (Thomson and Russell, 2007 pp.49-51). It is clear that some practitioners in AP are pursuing a sense of belonging and well-being for the pupils in their care. The importance of doing so must be reflected at policy level, as a balance to transmission of knowledge.

Ultimately, we cannot teach children to be happy, but Seligman (2002) describes three routes to happiness: positive emotion and pleasure, engagement, and meaning. Along with Peterson and Park he showed that the most satisfied people align their goals with all three (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005). Cohen explains that this is important to aim for in schools for several reasons. Firstly, longitudinal research has revealed that:

> social and emotional competencies are predictive of children's ability to learn and solve problems non-violently (Elias et al., 1997; Zins et al., 2004). These same competencies are predictive of healthy marriages and the ability to work in adulthood (Bar-On, 2003, 2005; Goleman, 1998; Gottman, 1994; Heath, 1991; Valliant, 1977, 1993)
> (Cohen, 2006, p.208).

Aiming for well-being in schools, according to this research, can increase pupils' ability to learn and problem-solve. Secondly, recent research shows that, 'social and emotional capacities are just as brain-based as linguistic and mathematical competencies (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg, & Bechara, 2003; Bar-On & Cohen, 1995; LeDoux, 1998 as quoted in Cohen, 2006, p.209). As research has made clear that the vast majority of children can learn to become more socially and emotionally competent (Cohen, 1999; Elias et al., 1997), AP and mainstream education would benefit from promoting and measuring it, considering its impact on learning.

> Evaluation provides the foundation for learning. In public education it is commonly suggested that if we do not "measure" it, it does not count. Given that a positive school climate and social-emotional competencies are associated with and predictive of success, educators have a responsibility to monitor them (Cohen, 2006, p.218).

Had Eastbank been measured on school climate and the value-added social-emotional competencies alongside GCSE attainment, the interpretation of outcomes may well have been very different. Research has underscored that 'social-emotional competencies and ethical dispositions provide an essential foundation for life-long learners who are able to love and work' (Beland, 2003; Cohen, 2001; Elias et al., 1997; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg, 2004, as quoted in Cohen, 2006 p.202). Based on the evidence of a powerful connection between safe, caring, responsive, participatory schools and academic achievement and healthy pupil development, there is reason to develop sound measures of

social, emotional and ethical learning, particularly in AP sites, some of which may be deemed as producing poor outcomes based on examination results. As governments are obligated to ensure that every child has equal access to a quality education adapted to meet the child's needs (Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, 1948) schools must 'respect the inherent dignity of the child, create an environment of tolerance in the classroom, and bar practices or disciplinary policies that harm or humiliate' (Cohen, 2006, p.227).

6.4 Mess is more: Licensed chaos

This chapter has so far highlighted the significance of an empathic and mission-filled practitioner approach at Eastbank. The significance of the outcomes that practitioner approaches initiated – belonging and well-being – has also been considered in light of theory, policy and current affairs. Moving from approach to outcome involved a process, of which the term 'licensed chaos' has been my expression. The space it afforded itself was much like a test tube in which the outcomes began to develop from practitioners constructing, experimenting and interpreting whilst allowing context and complexity to speak into their decisions and actions. In this space or process, there was little downplay of social conflict, and no straightforward way for pupils to act effectively to alter the options currently open to them. Pupils required and took moments to refuse to engage in dialogue. Diversity collided with unity which brought its own conflict. As 'shape-shifters', pupils presented different and sometimes contradictory selves; there were times when participants could not understand each other. The licensed chaos made visible did not involve predefined or educationally fixed situations. Instead, it relied on communication, which, as Holt (1970) highlights, is elusive and difficult, and therefore worthy of practitioners being wary of the feeling that they know what they are doing in class. The potential chaos of this process was held together by an authorised release into play, immersion, risk taking and ownership.

The view that 'the only possible adjustment which we can give to the child under existing conditions is that which arises through putting him in complete possession of all his powers' (Dewey, 1897, article one, para 6) has been an interesting Dewey-esque lens through which to consider my findings. This enabling process, understandably, would be 'messy' and could account for some of the licensed chaos process. However, I am not fully convinced by Dewey's approach, as research has pointed out that, in his commitment to a particular vision of democracy in education, Dewey never really understood tragedy (Greene, 1997; Schutz, A., 2001). From time spent at Eastbank, I have come to acknowledge that certain pupil realities are such that participating through shared efforts in even a small community is painful. Schutz (2001) points out that Dewey's criteria of individual distinctiveness through participation in shared efforts and the elimination of boundaries between groups could grow further oppression for those already marginalised in society. The licensed chaos emerging from my findings seemed to be a process that understood and tried to make space for tragedy.

In this way, the licensed chaos at Eastbank had a different quality to a traditional child-centred learning approach. Similarities are clear in that practitioners focused on the needs, abilities, interests and learning styles of pupils whilst acknowledging pupil voice as central. Yet child-centred learning requires pupils to be active, responsible participants in their own learning. None of the pupils at Eastbank could access being active, responsible participants without a great deal of support and looked to the practitioners as more than facilitators: they were looking for care. Licensed chaos grew from practitioner approaches that were informed by complexity.

Eastbank might be classed as complex in that it was self-organised, it was seen as greater than the sum of its parts, was interdependent, was composed of a new outworking of principles and had an unpredictable relationship with the community around it. I would tentatively suggest that practitioners and pupils together were informed by a complexity inspired epistemology that brings into view the idea that,

> knowledge does not bring us closer to what is *already* present but, rather, moves us into a *new* reality, which is incalculable from what came before. Because knowledge enables us to transcend what came before, this means it allows us to penetrate deeper *into that which does not seem possible from the perspective of the present*. Knowledge, in other words, is not conservative, but radically inventionalistic. (Biesta and Osberg, 2007, p.47-47; original emphasis; as quoted in Moss and Fielding, 2011, p.25).

As expressed in my findings chapters, Eastbank as an AP site seemed familiar with uncertainty and that which does not seem possible, and did not primarily offer pupils a predetermined world to learn about. Interestingly, a complexity inspired epistemology challenges a dialogic perspective and its belief that meaning resides in our collective exchanges of dialogue. Bakhtin's 'surplus of seeing' involved the 'other' being able to see beyond your view and vice versa to create meaning and a new reality. However, a complexity inspired epistemology seems to be expressing that meaning resides with no-one. As previously highlighted, the 'rational' debate within a dialogic expectation is seen from a postmodern perspective as skirting the complexity of, for example, power, fear, desire and identity (Ellsworth and Miller, 1996).

Eastbank practitioner approaches also did not cross over with Dewey's in regards to close involvement with parents and serving the community. Dewey advocated both (1897, 1902), whereas practitioners at Eastbank, during my research, did not focus on either of these. Parents were involved in meetings, annual reviews and when specific problems arose. However, due to past experience of parents not being particularly keen to be involved and

strained pupil-parent relationships, the permanent staff did not focus on close involvement, but communicated where necessary. In my school year at Eastbank, I did not witness any community projects where pupils were specifically serving in an area of others' need. Both of these approaches could have been an interesting dimension of Eastbank, adding to its characteristics. They might have also contributed to the belonging and well-being experienced at the AP site. However, Eastbank was constantly evolving, and this might have been an area of growth had the AP site stayed open. It is possible that the AP site only achieved what it did by not having close involvement with some parents.

Other literature has demonstrated the importance of young people with chaotic lives having a clear routine within AP. This differs from the licensed chaos evidenced at Eastbank. Certainly, Eastbank offered breakfast each day at the same time, began English and Mathematics sessions at a similar time each day for an hour, break and lunch times were in place and the end of the school day remained the same. The Learn 2 Work course took place on the same mornings each week and, as such, the pupils knew where they needed to be and at what time. However, as expressed throughout this section, by engaging together in play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership, within the arts and beyond into the general functioning of the site, the details could not be scripted. Yet Maxwell (2006, p.26) indicates that individualized intervention plans, which can be flexible, facilitate a structured curriculum, which he sees as essential to academic success in the alternative school. D'Angelo and Zemanick (2009, p.216), in their study of an alternative education programme, put forward a thorough curriculum with many different activities planned on a daily basis and the elimination of unstructured time to minimise the opportunity for misbehaviour. Marshall (2011, p.25) in his conclusions of what it means to achieve successful outcomes through AP promotes flexible 'can do' programmes that can be customised to individual needs, but are purposeful, with a firm and transparent emphasis on goals and outcomes.

As highlighted by such literature, there is a difference in approach and outcome that this study brings to the field, whilst still respecting that routine can bring safety to young people who are disengaged from education. As Larsson and Dahlin (2012, p.10) highlight, 'If we want to navigate a complex course between "unguided learning and planned enculturation" (Osberg & Biesta, 2008)...we need to work creatively with chaos as well as order'.

6.5 The relationship between licensed chaos and creativity

'The person who never made a mistake never made anything' (Pope, 2005, p.131)

The mode of licensed chaos that pervaded Eastbank is relevant to discourses on creativity. Although I discussed creativity in education in my literature review, I will now consider it in the light of licensed chaos. As the quote above indicates, there is a truth to the phrase 'mess is more'. Pope (2005) observes that when discussing chaos in scientific literature, 'the tendency is to talk of *complexity* and *emergence*' (Pope, 2005, p.130), with the emphasis on complexity that emerges from apparent chaos. Emergence is about moving out of or away from something and becoming visible; becoming apparent; or recovering from a difficult situation (Oxford English, 2012). Pope lays out the path between such emergence and creativity, showing them to be two ends of the same line, as outlined briefly below. I use Pope's definition of creativity, as discussed in my literature review, which is the capacity to make, do or become something fresh and valuable with respect to others as well as ourselves. The bullet points sum up each of the ways that Pope lays out the path between emergence and creativity, and below each one I make links with licensed chaos:

- a sensitivity to initial conditions, which are always multi-determined (emergence) sits along the same line as creating with full awareness that this is a continuation of other things and will bring yet other things into being (creativity);

As discussed in detail in section 4.2 of my findings chapter, practitioners were sensitive to context and to their own biography, reflected on their own current practice and voiced ideas. This fed into building principles and exploring practice that made space for individual, collaborative and communal play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership.

- emergence without imposition of order and with generation of evolving structures (emergence) sits along the same line as feeling for and thinking about an appropriate form that is fitting for now but capable of fulfilling a broader or initially obscure purpose (creativity);

Section 4.3 describes adapting to pupils' needs and time being seen as flexible. Section 4.4 shows pupils being able to opt in and out and undertake idea generation. These particular principles and the explored practice allowed for authentic play that belonged to pupils and immersion that could be followed through.

- kinds of mis-copying resulting in productive but rarely deliberate or predictable mistakes (emergence) sits along the same line as being open to the chance or accidental event that could be crucial to avoiding repetition and help to usher in the freshly different, singular and arresting (creativity);

Allowing for mistakes and judgements as part of learner agency is discussed in section 4.4.2 and contributed to playfulness and spontaneous risk-taking.

- self-organisation as an internal response (though to a measure to others' organisation) sits along the same line as becoming able to articulate and sustain a viable and valuable sense of self through ongoing openness to the 'other' within that self, between that self and others, and beyond conventional self-other constructions

As practitioners offered pupils independence and celebrated pupils as they were, pupils were released to be immersed in activities that captured them, such as self-mastery on an instrument and group drama improvisation.

- operating far from equilibrium, at the edge of chaos, with the possibility of moving, even suddenly, to another order sits along the same line as being prepared to tolerate ambiguities, suspend disbelief, sport with negative and positive capabilities and look for closure without foreclosure;

The risk-taking involved in activities with the artists in residence challenged pupils individually but also to work collaboratively in music and in sketches. These extended to become communal events at times, which stretched all parties out of their comfort zone, challenging those involved to work with people as they were.

- non-linearity resulting in cyclic but never absolutely circular motion sits along the same line as going with the flow as far as it brings you back transformed and enriched; holding to a line whilst appreciating how it bends and flexes;

Through a practitioner focus on building trust and relationship, pupils took a risk in choosing not to self-protect, understanding that it was enough to be themselves and have a go at being present and engaged, no matter what shape that took.

- irreversible processes leading to determinate products sits along the same line as making something of yourself for and with others, going for provisional completion rather than absolute conclusion, and making a difference by expressing preference;

Pupil and practitioners took risks together, helping pupils to work through fear of failure or rejection. This was able to happen in part due to the practitioner approaches of nurture and building self-esteem.

- an ongoing awareness of apparent chaos as potential order or apparent order on the point of chaos, and either way a fresh recognition of context and complexity informing the whole (emergence) sits along the same line as gaining a fresh sense of awareness, purpose and value, even if not precisely sure where they came from or to which new ends they tend, or whether it matters in the same way anymore (creativity).

The ongoing awareness described above is inherent within the analogy of licensed chaos of

217

the boat on choppy water. Within the apparent chaos of the waves is the potential order of the movement of the boat in a direction; woven into the apparent order of riding the waves is that at any second it could all change.

My comparison of licensed chaos to emergence, and Pope's marking out the path between emergence and creativity in relation to chaos indicates that the mode of licensed chaos at Eastbank has implications in fostering the capacity to make, do or become something fresh and valuable with respect to others as well as ourselves. Creativity was at work at the AP site, yet without easily graded outcomes and government recognised attainment.

A complexity inspired epistemology sees schooling as not primarily offering pupils a predetermined world about which to learn. Practitioners at Eastbank were consistently attuned to context when reflecting, building principles and exploring practice; they thought in context. Practitioners were also 'thinking the complex' (Morin, 1999); they celebrated the diversity of everyone within the AP site and looked for and fostered a community interdependence. I perceived that, through connecting together in relationship, pupils and practitioners experienced new ways of seeing, which in turned fuelled practitioners' sense of mission to create an environment for flourishing.

6.5.1 Licensed chaos in relation to humanising creativity

In seeking to better understand the kind of creativity that was manifest at Eastbank, in particular within licensed chaos, I considered its resonance to humanising creativity (Chappell 2006, 2008). I became aware of humanising creativity through the Dance Partners For Creativity research (Chappell et al, 2011) that I outline in my literature review. I sensed that there would be cross-over between that research and my own, as both involved the use of professional artists. However, I did not know which parts of the research would touch most closely. Humanising creativity emphasises that creativity happens individually, collaboratively and communally, the latter being of particular interest to my findings, as its role in the humanising process encourages a strong focus on empathy, shared ownership and group identity. The empathic engagement offered by practitioners at Eastbank led to individual and shared ownership as a characteristic of licensed chaos. Belonging (which incorporates group identity) and well-being as outcomes of practitioner approaches, indicate that Eastbank as a site took part in a form of humanising creativity. The journey from empathic engagement and mission, through licensed chaos and towards belonging and well-being can be better grasped through this concept:

> Humanising creativity involves conflict and difference... As valuable new ideas

emerge from joint embodied thinking and shared struggles, humanising is the
process of becoming more humane, an active process of change for the creative
group (Chappell & Craft, 2011, p.4).

The licensed chaos pervading Eastbank occurred in a creative space situated within
relationships that shared struggles and moved forward together. Play, immersion, risk-taking
and ownership were individual and collaborative, building towards community belonging,
which is discussed in the next section. Practitioners, in particular the artists in residence,
embraced controversy and difference, drawing upon these issues in music and the comedy
show as rich material for creative expression and humour. The pupils' humanity was valued,
enabling them to more fully grow into it and experience well-being whilst in and through
community. In one way, the communal creativity was a valuable constraining channel.
Sharples (1999) suggests that it is crucial to grasp creativity as constraint, as opposed to
opposition to constraint:

> Constraints allow us to control the multitude of possibilities that thought and language offer. There are so many ideas that we might have, and so many possible ways of expressing them, that we have to impose constraint to avoid thinking and writing gibberish. Constraint is not a barrier to creative thinking, but the context within which creativity can occur (Sharples, 1999, p41)

The licensed chaos was also bringing creative order.

The conception of humanising creativity, particularly its aspect of communal creativity, has helped me to better understand the interwoven relationship of licensed chaos and belonging, and something of how one impacts the other.

The individual and collaborative creativity explicit in licensed chaos at Eastbank impacted upon and was impacted by a more implicit communal creativity that fed the intangible sense of belonging. The layering of communal creativity with individual and collaborative endeavour helps to explain the lack of any definite boundary between licensed chaos and belonging.

6.5.2 Licensed chaos in relation to possibility thinking

Possibility thinking is discussed in detail in my literature review. I had anticipated that it would be highly relevant due to the inclusion of artists in residence in my research. In fact, its relevance has extended beyond this. The play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership inherent in licensed chaos has links to 'possibility thinking', which Craft (2002, 2011a) shows to be driving children's creativity. PT involves exploratory transitions from 'what is' to 'what might be' and involves children making the transition from 'what is this?' to 'what can I/we do with this?' at times imagining 'as if' they were in a different role (Craft, 2011b). Chappell & Craft (2011) relate practitioner strategies to possibility thinking research, building on Cremin *et al's* 2006 work, where adults were sometimes seen standing back and offering children space and time to develop their ideas, so valuing children's agency. Their recent study, introduced in my literature review – Dance Partners For Creativity (Chappell et al, 2011) – showed how at times practitioners stepped forward into the children's play balancing standing back with co-authoring. Craft expresses that this can be understood as a form of 'meddling in the middle' (Craft, 2011) which means co-constructing alongside and with children: 'Meddling in the middle' therefore involves humility, care, collaboration, giving and receiving, working alongside with intense sensitivity as to appropriate interventions' (Craft, McConnon and Matthews, 2012, p.58). Figure 6.3 below shows an extension of understanding of how pedagogy nurtures possibility thinking:
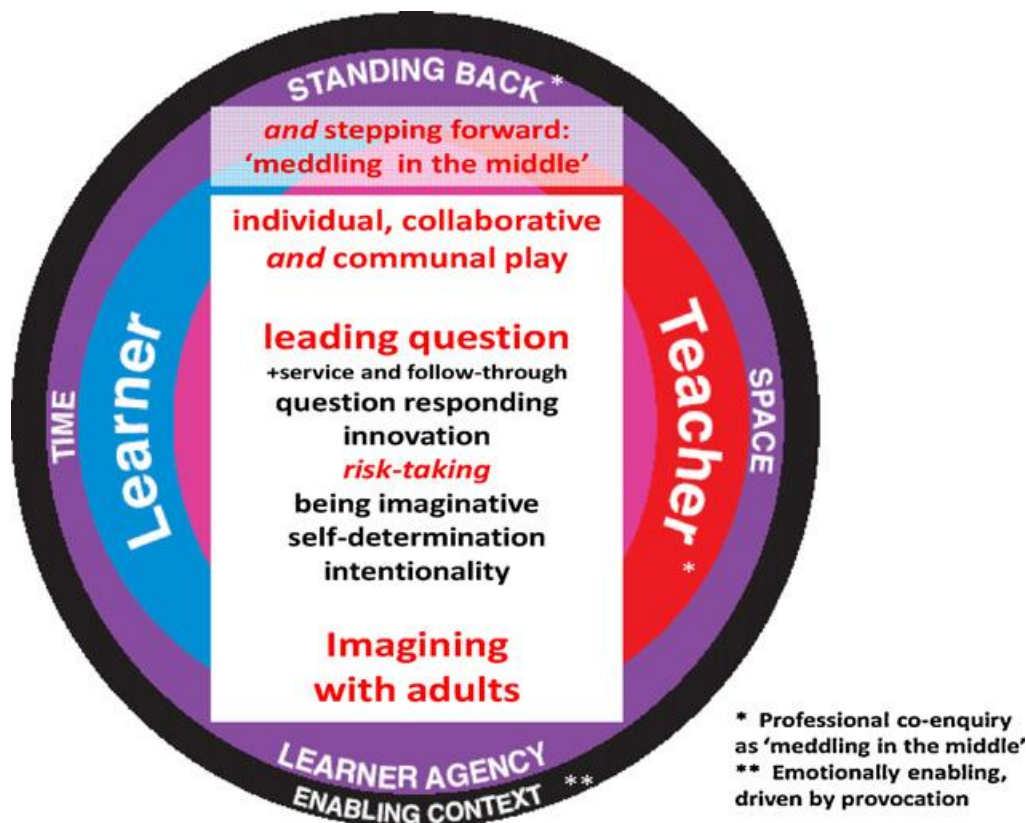
Figure 6.3: Pedagogy that nurtures possibility thinking (Craft et al., 2012, p.60)

In the DPC study, pedagogy nurtured possibility thinking by practitioners offering children emotionally enabling opportunities hand in hand with a provocation. Children's agency was valued highly with time and space offered, which was blended with stepping into the children's zone of play to co-imagine with them. Play (initiated by a leading narrative) was individual, collaborative and communal, and drew upon risk-taking, question posing and responding, innovation, being imaginative, self-determination and intentionality.

Possibility thinking is very relevant to licensed chaos. Licensed chaos is the evolution of the practitioners – through an empathic and mission-filled approach – constructing, experimenting and interpreting whilst allowing context and complexity to speak into their decisions and actions with pupils. Together with the artists in residence, pupils asked 'What materials do I or we have to use?' For example, for the comedy show, they looked at their social setting and the street language they used. Together they then asked, 'What can we do with this – how can we communicate it?' A hilarious self-deprecating rap of 'your mum is nuffink' then became the radio theme tune for the comedy show. On a broader level, practitioners and pupils asked, 'What is this situation we find ourselves in here, at Eastbank?' Practitioners were sensitive to context and complex systems, allowing sometimes implicit questions to emerge, such as 'Where do we want to go? Where can we

221

take this? Who do we want to become?' This led to an acknowledgement of the reality of the situation whilst considering what might be. As Rosa expressed, 'If you don't pass this exam now you're not a failure. Just because you've failed you're not a failure, you just haven't succeeded yet. And you will' (Rosa, interview 28).

Section 4.4 of my first findings chapter discusses practitioners exploring practice, including offering space, standing back, learner agency and working alongside adults, especially through the Learn 2 Work course. Within this course, pupils could imagine 'as if' they were in a different role. They were treated as post-16 pupils by trades people who did not have the etiquette of teachers in school – at times pupils learnt the tougher parts of being treated as an equal. Also, at a broader level, by being at Eastbank, pupils were at times imagining 'as if' they were in a different life role. Some pupils had extremely difficult out of school realities and the theme of family that was implicit at the unit enabled pupils to enact basic family activities in a new environment, such as eating breakfast and lunch, washing up, being monitored on the height chart, bickering, chatting over the table with a hot drink and being accepted 'warts and all'. Standing back, offering space as well as agency (as discussed in detail in section 4.4) were all practitioner explorations that are also enabling conditions for possibility thinking. Practitioners offered learner agency in terms of independence, idea generation, pupil voice, the opportunity to make mistakes and judgements, throughout adapting to pupils' needs. There were many examples of pupils being able to opt in and out, being valued as audience. There were also examples of practitioners stepping forward into the zone of play; Geoff 'jamming' on the instruments with pupils, Wolf and Water members improvised scenes with them and permanent staff expressed that they were all on the journey together and were committed to walking alongside. There was evidence of other elements of possibility thinking, such as risk-taking: pupils risked deconstructing ideas, improvising, 'jamming', and risking rejection and failure. Practitioners continued to pursue their reflections, build principles and explore practice in new territory.

Characteristics of possibility thinking that were explicit amongst practitioners yet not often amongst pupils were self-determination and intentionality. Although there were occasional glimpses, such as mastery of a guitar riff, pupils were mainly creating firm foundations from which determination and intentionality could spring further ahead. The girls that I remained in contact with on Facebook did exhibit self-determination and intentionality on their profile pages when post-16. My research at Eastbank contributes to research about possibility thinking by extending its evidence into alternative education and also into key stage four. It also offers examples of practitioners reflecting on their work through the lens of possibility thinking to further their growth.

mission

belonging

well-
being

licensed chaos

empathic engagement

● practitioners

●
● pupils
and
○ practitioners
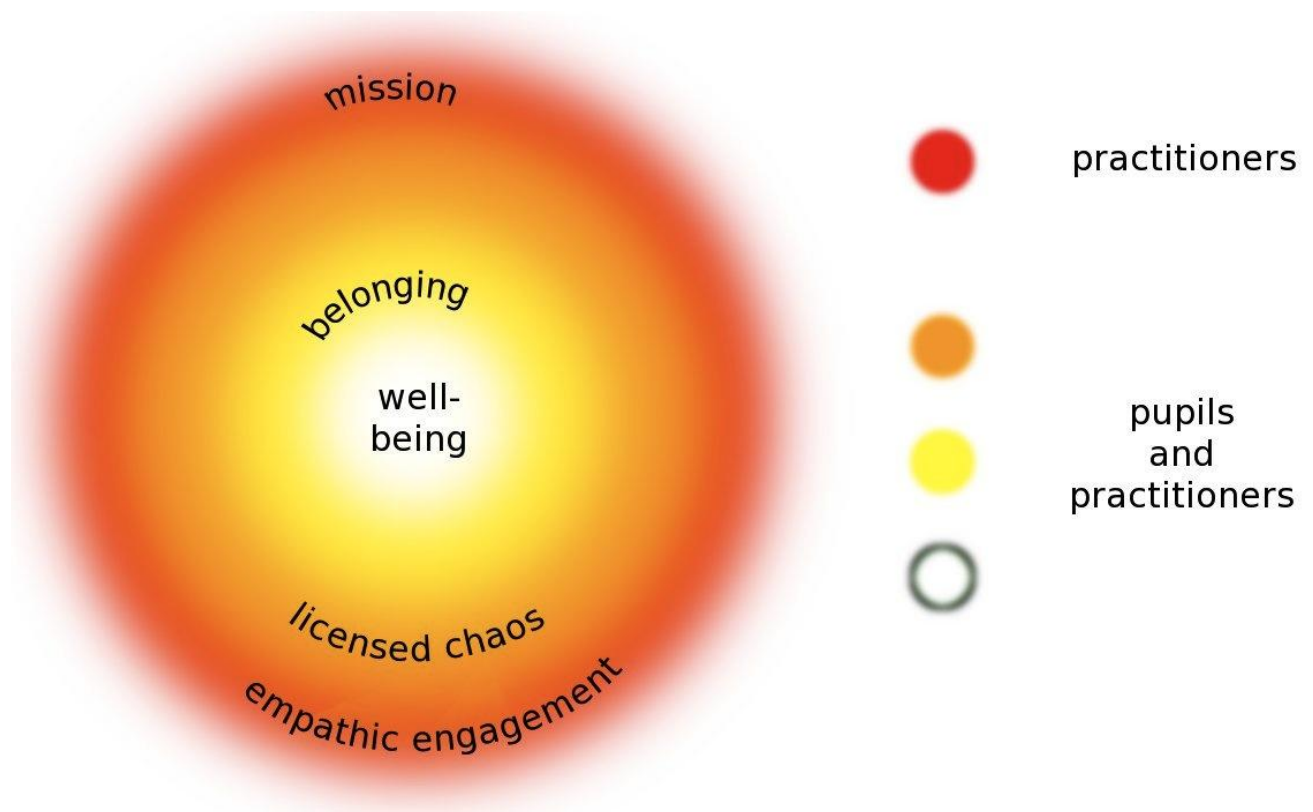
Offering learner agency was a key goal that was woven into the authorised release into play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership by practitioners. Malone (1981) suggests that learner agency is a key factor that may contribute to intrinsic motivation, as does Csikszentmihalyi (1991) in terms of contributing to 'flow' (flow is discussed in my literature review). Offering the pupils agency contributed to the 'messy' process of licensed chaos. It may be that offering agency contributed to pupils' motivation to succeed; pupils at Eastbank struggled to give set interviews, so motivation was mainly externally observed by myself and practitioners. As a result, this thesis could not easily measure pupils' motivation over time. My findings did suggest that pupils were increasingly motivated to attend Eastbank, participate in the ways of learning there and build relationships.

Wegerif (2012) expressed that dialogic education, 'is about empowering the oppressed to speak their own words and so to name the world in their own way' (Wegerif, 2012, p.8). This is a complimentary standpoint to Dewey's view of success as being in the development of new interest in experience. The practitioners at Eastbank sought to empower the pupils to 'name the world in their own way' through building principles (such as adapting to pupils' needs, time being seen as flexible and being allowed to be yourself) and through exploring practice (such as offering independence, idea generation and a voice). They also wove into this the get out clause when any sort of dialogue was out of reach for pupils by starting with

the lived experience of the pupils, whose voices had, in some capacity, been previously rejected. According to dialogic theory, 'education should be understood as opening, sustaining, widening, deepening and scaffolding participation in those dialogues that generate shared meaning' (Wegerif, 2012, p.10).

The concept of 'naming the world' helps me to understand more clearly the trail to well-being taken by Eastbank. By naming the world they were transforming it, bringing a sense of significance. Transformation is a creative act. Practitioners responded to and built on the pupils' voices as they emerged. This has resonances with Vygotsky's (1962) zone of proximal development, where the teacher engages with the perspective of the pupil and vice-versa in order to connect the development of ideas in the pupil to pre-existing culture (Vygotsky, 1962). The attunement necessary is reminiscent of a dialogic perspective, but is different in that it is called upon temporarily as a scaffold to direct individual development in a planned way. Dialogic education uses dialogue to enter more deeply into dialogue rather to achieve a certain direction (Wegerif, 2012). The licensed chaos at Eastbank was multidirectional and did not necessarily involve a practitioner leading a pupil.

The mode of licensed chaos that developed from practitioners' empathic engagement and mission-filled approaches also has resonances with QISA's Active Engagement, outlined in my literature review, which describes a journey of aspiration. Through fostering fun and excitement, curiosity and creativity and a spirit of adventure, pupils can become 'actively engaged and emotionally involved in their school work' (QISA, 2012). Practically, this involves offering pupils new opportunities and challenges that connect with their interests, thus fostering a willingness to engage in the day's challenges. QISA characterizes 'curiosity and creativity' as 'inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a longing to satisfy the mind with new discoveries' (QISA, 2012). The institute states that Active Engagement happens when students are deeply involved in the learning process, characterized by enthusiasm, desire to learn new things and a willingness to take positive, healthy steps toward the future. The licensed chaos pervading Eastbank, particularly in relation to the artists in residence, was also characterized by such immersion, with pupils being enthusiastic and risking openness to engage with and take ownership of new experiences.

Futures education discourse is also relevant to my licensed chaos findings, in particular 'Alternative Futures of Education' (Dator, 2002; Claxton, 2008; Bussey and Inayatullah, 2008), which I outlined in my literature review. Central to this approach is the notion that there is more than one possible future; the aim is not to fix the future or offer certainty, but to

open up alternatives and agency. As a complex entity, Eastbank was interdependent, was composed of a new outworking of principles and had an unpredictable relationship with the community around it. It could not and, due to its epistemology, would not look to offer certainty or fix the future, but did open up alternatives through engaged empathy and mission and offer agency through ensuing licensed chaos. The teaching involved in futures of education moves beyond rational teaching models in order to create an embodied experience of the future (Bussey, 2008). Although the practitioners at Eastbank did not specifically teach about alternative futures of education, together, through the various approaches and their outcomes, practitioners and pupils became an expression of the allowed emergence of personalised journeys. In the licensed chaos of the present they forged a new reality.

6.6 Current policy context

I am returning to Taylor's (2012) review in continuation of the discussion started in my methodology chapter. Taylor (2012) made 28 recommendations in his review, grouped into six expectations, quality assurance, the exclusions trial, commissioning, cost and inspections of AP and separate recommendations for PRUs. Below are the most pertinent recommendations to my study:

> Recommendation 1: That AP policy and practice, nationally and locally, has an increased focus on effective assessment and identification of children's needs.

> Recommendation 2: That information is shared between schools and providers and that locally this leads to clear and realistic plans with baselines against which to measure progress.

> Recommendation 3: All children who are referred to AP should continue to receive appropriate and challenging English and Maths teaching.

> Recommendation 6: That schools rather than LAs should be responsible for commissioning AP.

> Recommendation 9: That when schools decide to send a pupil to AP they share all relevant information with providers, agree the nature of the intervention and set

targets for the pupil. Progress should be regularly monitored and plans put in place for the next stage in the child's life.

Recommendation 11: That the DfE commissions a payment by results trial for AP.

Recommendation 13: That schools work in partnerships with PRUs and LAs to develop funding systems for AP that enable them to use provision flexibly and responsively whilst still supporting sustainability and growth of quality.

Recommendation 15: As part of the new strengthened section 5 inspection, Ofsted ensures that inspectors continue to pay close and consistent attention to how well schools take account of the needs of children in AP.

Recommendation 16: That when Ofsted inspects an AP provider they look at sufficient provision to evaluate pupils' experiences.
(Taylor, 2012, p.24 -26)

Eight of these recommendations advocate seeking ways to respect and adapt to pupils' needs, making decisions based on relationship, teamwork, pupils being offered a voice and the consideration of context and complexity. However, the recommendation of the DfE to commission a payment by results trial for AP is potentially problematic as it sets an expectation that AP has to prove its worth. It also does not take into account the nuanced ways in which AP is effective and relies on all parties having the same understanding of the nature of results in AP. The increased focus on assessment recommended in point 1 would need to incorporate well-being and pupils' experiences. This would need to be woven into recommended baselines against which to measure progress. 'Appropriate' English and Maths teaching would need to consider carefully the context in which the pupils are training or learning.

In light of these recommendations, I find Taylor's vision for AP over the next six years, which has been approved by Michael Gove, (Secretary of State for Education in the UK), pertinent to the findings of this study. Of the twelve 'vision' points he makes, three are of particular relevance to the message of this study:

(89) Secondary schools, PRUs and AP will work with primary schools to enable them to intervene earlier to prevent problems escalating later on. Primary schools will build capacity to work successfully with these children and their good practice will feed back into secondary schools. It may be for some groups of pupils that secondary

schools will adopt a model similar to primary schools where vulnerable children spend much of years 7 and 8 with one teacher or 'nurture groups', such as those found at Mossbourne Academy. This will prevent many of the problems that begin at transition and lead to disillusion with school, behaviour difficulties and truancy.

(90) Schools and PRUs will be held directly accountable for the AP they commission for their pupils. They will be responsible for ensuring that it is suitable, safe and effective.

(91) AP providers will work closely with schools or PRUs to create personalised programmes for individual pupils. AP will operate, not in the shadows of the education world but closely with commissioners, agreeing targets and monitoring progress. AP providers may opt to become AP Free Schools and take over failing PRUs (Taylor, 2012, p.23).

The pupils at Eastbank remained in one of two groups with the same teacher for an academic year, similar to the 'nurture groups' in Taylor's vision, which contributed to community created. The two groups were reconsidered annually, and several pupils remained with the same teacher for their duration at the site. The fact that schools will be directly accountable for the AP they commission means that they will need overall vision, practical examples of practitioner approaches to AP education and insight into wise trusteeship.

6.7 A change of perspective: post-critical research

Over the journey of my PhD, I am coming to see methodology as praxis – reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1986, p.36). At the research site, I have had the opportunity to reflect on the subjective self whilst in context with others. Particularly through life writing, I began a self-reflexive critique on my position as researcher, and came to the writing ontologically with a commitment to be challenged and changed, but also a desire to be embraced and interrogated by the text. As life writing is a way of being for me, I found that through it was a chance to understand the crossroads of self, other, and the context in a form and subject about which I was passionate. In engaging with such emotions, I have grasped that emotion can be analytically interrogated. Adopting life writing as ontology enabled me to embody as well as critically evaluate complexity of communication. I have come to understand that, at times, 'like other cultural groups, academics fail to

227

recognize their practices as cultural/political choices, much less see how they are personally affected by those choices' (Richardson, 1992, p.126). In this way, I have made a methodological shift into post-critical theory from critical theory. Starting from a critical theory perspective, I aimed to bring into focus the restrictive conditions of status quo. Based on my findings from this study, I have questioned the nature of the government stance on AP, offering a potential framework for action in terms of broadening the definition of success and good outcomes in AP and beyond to include well-being and belonging. Unity of empathic engagement and mission, being mindful of context and complexity, can foster a sense of belonging and well-being, in this case through an authorised release into play, immersion, risk-taking and ownership.

The use of story as methodology in my thesis opened up new possibilities for me and contributed to a shift in theoretical perspective. The artistic form of story is able to open a person's senses to invite reaction. It allowed me to present and represent the scene as I saw it, reflecting my own certain cultural understandings to do with, for example, gender, class or ethnicity. Therefore, based on this influence and potential power, I began to demonstrate an ethical sensitivity to my life writing and question how I came to write the narrative, the conditions to which it led, the kind of views it represents and how I obtained my information. I also considered if the text of my life writing concerned itself with ethical issues and whether my research participants were represented fairly, particularly in terms of writing a fair representation of the events that my stories describe. I realised that, whilst acknowledging the creativity that goes into any account and that my writing is socially located, I was seeking a sense of cultural credibility in what I was writing. As I move forward in my use of story as methodology and embody life writing as ontology, I have come to understand the great opportunity available to be able to build on rich social experience and sense making, whilst engaging my creativity in a way that incorporates and recognises the importance of the emotional dimension in peoples' lives (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992).

Initially, when considering how to weave my life writing into my thesis, I viewed it as an opportunity for further triangulation. However, Richardson (2000) encourages us to envision our theories and practices, not in some flat two dimensional way but instead through:

> …the central imaginary (of) the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays, casting off in different

directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose. Not triangulation, crystallisation (Richardson, 2000, p.934).

Through my exploration of story as methodology, I have now come to support this view and see my own inclusion of life writing as a contribution to embodying this. As a scholar of creative and life writing, I have brought into my educational research a passion to show rather than tell, and my growing understanding of its evocative power wisely used, not for the end purpose of analysis, but for connecting.

The inclusion of life writing in my thesis has helped me to grasp the creative role of concept making. I began to see creating concepts as part of a process of my own narrative expression. My exploration of story as methodology and life writing as ontology helped me to wrestle with the notion that '...philosophy is not the simple art of forming, inventing and fabricating concepts, because concepts are not necessarily forms, discoveries, or products. Concepts are not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p.5). My expression of life writing as ontology is a contribution to the already established field of story as methodology. It underlines the potential of life writing as an inquiry into being within the context of educational research; that the instinctive act of engaging in life writing can cultivate one's humanity. By engaging with life writing in this study, I not only experienced growth and learning, but also embodied a certain way of exploring 'what is' without pre-definition. I found not only the written page, but the act of life writing to be a space in which I could wrestle with my humanity within the context of my research setting.

Another methodological approach that contributed to new understandings in my theoretical perspective was reciprocal virtual ethnography. Engaging in virtual ethnography with the pupils at Eastbank had clear advantages. Moving beyond having to use the same time frame meant that pupils could reply to me whenever they wanted. I could still be part of important events in the pupils' lives by engaging with their announcements or exclamations after the moment. I could, at times, observe without being seen and get a general daily sense of how they felt. By its nature it was flexible and was already built into the pupils' lives. Words said online could be queried in person, offering rich and complex connections. Inviting the pupils into my world as presented online helped to build trust and relationship, extending our perceptions of each other as pupil and researcher, to person and person. It made less clear the researcher-researched relationship and enabled a relinquishment of some of the power held by myself in the research site. The pupils also gained a sense of me in the past as well

as the present, as my Facebook written and visual timeline spanned back to 2007, and photographs back to childhood.

However, there were several challenges involved. I was constantly aiming for appropriate interaction with the pupils, wanting connection but also clear boundaries. Fortunately, I found that most of my dilemmas were stemming from my own indecision as to whether to write something or allow access to an area of my Facebook profile as opposed to deliberating over something potentially inappropriate done by a pupil. In fact, the pupils had developed a sense of what was appropriate online with an adult such as myself, as they had several other adults, including family members, on their online profiles and over time had worked out some unwritten rules. Pupils did not personal message me, write on my wall, comment on the photographs to which they had access or, except for one instance, instant message me when we were online at the same time. They did comment on photographs I uploaded to our community Facebook page and write to me on the wall there. Their fluency of online social interaction led me to consider how much to make comments in front of their family and friends on their profiles, deciding to only comment on status updates that seemed to be of particular significance and to post a birthday message. Although I had access to all their personal photographs, I did not make comments, to reflect their choices on my profile. Although I did not ask permission to use anything on our group page as pupils had agreed in advance as part of the research, I did ask permission to use the various screenshots I took of individual's status updates. One male pupil deactivated his Facebook account before I could ask and so I have not included screenshots of his page. I also understood that what I used in my research from Facebook was from a partial performer rather than a whole identity (Hine, 2000, p.49).

A common problem of virtual ethnography is not knowing when to stop (Hine, 2000). Within reciprocal virtual ethnography, the decision is not always with the researcher. In this instance, although I no longer use any information from our joint Facebook page, which I have archived, or pupils' personal profiles, I have decided to keep the pupils on my friend list on Facebook. Should they wish to de-friend me, they can at any time. They regularly appear on my newsfeed and I am aware of what is happening in several of their lives. I am witnessing two of the pupils growing into parenthood and still make occasional congratulatory comments on Facebook statuses as many of them have recently turned eighteen. At some point, I may hide their updates from my wall, only finding out about them if I click on their profile, as they might also do to minimise my presence in their lives. Personally, I see no reason to end the relationships built; I expressed to the pupils that 'you know where I am', and, should they one day wish to get in touch through Facebook, they

can. As a researcher who was initiated in to be a member of the AP site, it does not feel ethical and I do not wish to cut ties when I no longer need them for my research. Although I did not anticipate this conclusion when I began the study at Eastbank, I feel that I have grown in understanding about the nature of ethnography and what it means to research from the inside out. My conclusions are that reciprocal virtual ethnography is an excellent means to engage with hard to reach young people, who are often fluent in the online social networking language and who understand online social etiquette, which can be a minefield for offence and embarrassment. In building friendship in research relationships and engaging in dialogue with participants, especially online, I have begun to have a value position informed by feminist work which I intend to explore further beyond my PhD.

Ethical considerations also contributed to a shift of theoretical perspective. Although I considered ethical implications at the beginning of the study, I found that I was influenced by the practitioners' ethical approach at all stages. Practitioners respected difference at the AP site and applied that respect in situations as they arose. This led me to question my own respect for difference within those situations. The care offered by practitioners to all without exception held me to account in my own research practice there. The growing sense of belonging and well-being within the Eastbank community modelled an empowerment of members and a promotion of justice that I found myself considering more regularly in my data collection there and later analysis. It is hard to say whether I would have been quite as mindful of these issues in the research site without the expectation of practitioners that I would care deeply, but both the pupils and practitioners called forth a consistent ethical mindset in my approach.

Whilst engaging in reciprocity, I was faced with examining my reactions. The fact that I was drawn to several pupils left me vulnerable to focusing more on those pupils, being overly harsh on the practitioners dealing with them, and championing well-being and a sense of belonging in AP out of obligation because I wanted them to feel better. Grounded theory held me accountable to being involved in my enquiry, despite being drawn in as a full participant in the setting. Returning to the literature brought insight and shed light on my findings of well-being and belonging as outcomes, helping me to avoid following personal motivations. In this way, I found the combination of grounded theory and ethnography a reassuring balance. The combined methodologies better enabled the dialogue between methodological expectations and the realities and complexities presented by Eastbank. This dialogue echoed the practitioners' dialogue between mission and empathic engagement.

6.8 Summary

This chapter has argued that well-being and belonging, and the unified path walked by empathic engagement and mission to reach them, are central to sound thinking about AP and mainstream education. The process involved – licensed chaos – and its authorised release of pupils into play, immersion, risk taking and ownership, has been presented as one AP site's way of embodying this journey and has been offered as a model from which other sites could create their own. I have also offered up my experience of reciprocal virtual ethnography and life writing as ontology as ways forward in developing methodological approaches in the field of AP and beyond. Both my findings and my ways of reaching them reflect a cultivation of a person's humanity. To clarify, that does not mean pre-defining what the human subject is, what its essence and nature are, but rather considers 'where the human subject, as a unique, singular individual, comes 'into presence'' (Biesta, 2006, p.11). Biesta (2006, p. ix) highlights the need to look at the question of what it means to be human as a radically open question 'that can only be answered by engaging in education rather than a question that needs to be answered before we can educate'. In positing a common definition of humanity to begin with,

> humanism specifies what the child, student or 'newcomer' must become before giving them the opportunity to show who they are and who they want to be...Humanism thus seems unable to be open to the possibility that newcomers might radically alter our understanding of what it means to be human (Biesta, 2006, p.9).

A move away from seeing pupils as consumers of learning tied to content that needs to be acquired from providers, enables practitioners to work alongside pupils who 'come into presence' through relationships that respond and are responsible (Biesta, 2006). This view fosters an educational attitude that believes that 'we become somebody through the way in which we engage with what we learn' (Biesta, 2006, p.94).

My findings of practitioner approaches at Eastbank and where they led, alongside my emerging methodologies, reflect that it is not possible or desirable to pin down the essence of the human being (Beista, 2006). In the next and final chapter, I will discuss this further in relation to AP and considering a way ahead.

7 Conclusion

7.1 And for what may I hope?

This thesis has told a story of a group of practitioners in AP, some permanent staff and some artists in residence, coming together to cultivate a group of young people's humanity through care and challenge as a core part of democratic educational experience. They did so in a way that mobilised the present as a rich source of possibility and agency, and honoured context and complexity. Whether or not their specific approaches and outcomes are generalizable, the message is universal and urgent. Within AP and beyond, young people need to belong, experience well-being and explore what it means to be human. This needs practitioners to embrace responsibility for those young people and the future of the world that they inhabit.

AP has a wealth of opportunity to embrace the responsibilities of education. To take Biesta's (2006) understanding of the responsibilities of education: the question of how to live with others who are not like us is never far away in AP. Where there might be escape from 'living with others' in a larger mainstream environment, within AP there is no escape from those that are 'other'. This is advantageous if we see learning as a 'reaction to a disturbance, as an attempt to reorganise and reintegrate as a result of disintegration' (Biesta, 2006, p.27). If we can look at learning as a 'response to what is other and different, to what challenges, irritates or even disturbs us, rather than as the acquisition of something we want to possess' (Biesta, 2006, p.27), then AP is well placed to educate with meaning. Learning as responding involves showing who you are and where you stand, and in order to 'come into the world' one needs 'a world inhabited by others who are not like us' (Biesta, 2006, p.27). In acting responsively to difference and otherness, pupils and practitioners have the opportunity to become aware of their own personal and unique responsibility to the other (Biesta, 2006).

AP has a great deal of worldly quality about it; the ever-present realities for pupils are all around and cannot be contained. Spaces that lose their worldly quality 'cease to be spaces where action is possible and freedom can appear' (Biesta, 2006, p.86), which suggests a ripe environment within AP for keeping such a space open. Difficult realities for pupils also preclude predefined or educationally fixed situations. For such reasons pupils clash with mainstream education and find themselves in AP. This lack of predefined or fixed situations in AP can create further opportunity for pupils to come into the world and remain present to it. The context and complexity pervading AP gives pupils reason to reflect upon the 'fragile conditions under which all people can act, under which all people can be a subject' (Biesta,

2006, p.145), which is a foundation for democratic education. It also opens wide the doors for practitioners to ask the difficult questions of what it means to be human and to lead a human life. In all its difficulty to be known, tracked, managed and regulated, AP has the capacity to lead the way in overcoming the humanist foundations of modern education.

Those in AP regularly face the challenge of understanding how best to live with uncertainty, be it due to out-of-school realities at home or regarding the law, or within education and where they will be attending school. This challenge is hailed within the field of educational futures as being key to living in the 21st Century, where 'we might want to celebrate the latent and powerful potential for surprise, disruption and novelty in existence' (Facer, 2012, p.12, in review). Living with not-knowing is empowering, and so 'the challenge is not that we must find ways to 'know' the future, rather we need to find ways to live and act with not-knowing the future (Miller, 2011, as quoted in Facer, 2012, p.10, in review). The field of AP has a valuable position in empowering pupils to celebrate surprise, disruption and novelty, thus embracing the freedom and potential of such an orientation to see potential in every situation and grasp that there is always an opening, a possibility.

The practitioners at Eastbank, led by Dave, saw the opportunity to educate in these ways and took it. They were willing to be responsible for the uniqueness of each pupil and their 'coming into being' (Biesta, 2006), without pre-empting outcomes. Their responsibility displayed engagement through a sense of mission, and openness through engaged empathy. The licensed chaos was a processing space that emerged and held learning as reaction and response in all its mess. Practitioners cared for and challenged, unafraid of the tensions and risks, leaving the question of what it means to be human to be answered together. They made choices that potentially hindered them: the practitioners went in a new direction without being clear what they were not, to themselves or the secondary school that funded the AP site. They also found no way to communicate to decision-makers the significance of what they were offering the pupils in their care. There was yet to be a solution to juggling GCSE work with vocational courses and projects with the artists in residence, due to uncertainty of identity. Despite the problems that may have contributed to Eastbank's closure, the approaches and their evolution and outcomes offer ways of exploring democratic education in AP through a cultivation of one's humanity. The practitioners at Eastbank planted seeds of hope through challenging whilst caring deeply for pupils, which had begun to grow into faith and trust in the world and perhaps, in time, the ability to effect change. I was not unaffected, and in the light of my study, can now hope for the kind of education described by Arendt (1977, p.196):

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token to save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their changes of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us.

Such responsibilities of education are a world away from assimilating or excluding; AP, with policy support, can be poised to fully engage in Arendt's vision of education.

7.2 Original contribution to research

My study asked the following research questions:

1. What characterised the practitioner approaches at Eastbank?
2. Where did these approaches lead?

The mutually transforming partnership of empathic engagement and mission and its evolution within licensed chaos are original contributions to the field as one framework for/of practitioner approach to AP. The overall integrated pattern of empathic engagement and mission, licensed chaos, belonging and well-being is also an original contribution to knowledge. This has led me to argue that unity of empathic engagement and mission as a practitioner approach can lead to important beneficial outcomes for pupils in AP. It has also led me to suggest that it is possible that these integrated patterns are transferable to other contexts in and beyond AP.

In considering the international literature on empirical research within Alternative Provision, there is commonality with my study in terms of relationships being key to success. My thesis is distinctive from the literature in that very few studies chart artist involvement or engagement. Those that do, tend to be an inclusion program within a mainstream school for young people identified as disruptive in lessons, rather than based in a separate alternative provision site. My work has a distinctive position as it sits at the intersection of arts and creativity research and that of alternative education, also overlapping youth work and inclusive education. In addition to this, whereas well-being is generally measured through quantitative means, this thesis shows a path from practitioner approaches to well-being in young people through purely qualitative research. It also moves away from the current focus

on adult well-being and a purely adult perspective on well-being, offering young people a voice within the topic. Moving beyond empathy as perspective taking as shown in much of the literature, this thesis charts practitioners making a judgment about how the conditions a young person finds him or herself in may contribute to their state of mind or impact upon their interests, bringing a holistic contextualisation to a situation and embracing complexity. The study, through its conceptualisation of licensed chaos, also challenges the notion put forward in other literature that highly structured routine is best way to provide a sense of safety for young people in AP.

In terms of process, I have offered an original methodological contribution through my use of life writing in the research process and in communicating the ever-present realities for many pupils in AP. I have used life writing in the following ways; to collect and analyse data whilst integrating it with a grounded theory approach; to better understand my subtly shifting methodological position and my relationship as researcher to my participants; and to communicate a snapshot of the context and complexity surrounding the young people in my study, humanising their ever-present realities. My success in gaining trust from young people who had disengaged from education, particularly via our reciprocal online community started shortly after I arrived at Eastbank, has meant that I have offered rich data about their sense of belonging and well-being in the AP site and beyond.

7.3 Significance of the study

As AP is a largely uninspected and unregulated sector, the organisation of which Michael Gove has recently stated needs to be completely redrawn, this ethnographic case study comes at a key time of re-design for AP in the UK. It offers the generation of emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns showing practitioner approaches in AP. These approaches can lead to community belonging and well-being, which I argue are key instigators in changing pupil perception and need to be included when considering what is success. All broad suggestions from Taylor's (2012) *Improving Alternative Education* report have been approved, leading to governmental goals to increase focus on identification of children's needs and to seek out clear and realistic plans with baselines against which to measure progress. Schools will now be held directly accountable for the AP that they commission for their pupils, and responsible for ensuring that it is suitable, safe and effective. This research can speak into each of these areas: the framework/model presented in this thesis increases focus on identification of children's needs through a combined approach of empathic engagement and mission; the keen awareness of context and complexity and promotion of diversity would help to seek out clear and realistic plans; the

model's outcomes of belonging and well-being contribute to the much needed baselines against which to measure progress; and the overall model could help schools that will be held directly accountable for the AP they commission to understand what is suitable, safe and effective for the pupils in their care. Geoff describes the significance of the study on him as a practitioner in Appendix 4.

Through this study, I have also sought to contribute a new voice to the educational research methodology. The challenge has been thrown down by Gallagher that, 'educational storytellers will need to break new ground and do so in theoretically robust ways; their stories, in both form and content, need to provoke new imaginings' (Gallagher, 2011, p.60). As expressed in my methodology, this study has been the beginning of a journey of doing so, making exploratory attempts to hold fragments together through story and to be part of provoking contestation over the rules that constrain the production of new ideas. The thesis acknowledges that 'the times exceed the categories' (Gallagher, 2011, p.54) and has used story as methodology and embraced life writing as ontology in order to be part of releasing its capacity to reveal the limitations of traditional analysis and conventional theory.

Another challenge has been set: for educational research to restate the 'creative novelty' (Miller, 2011) of the present.

> Educators today are increasingly being asked to take the future into account. If the education research field is to develop an adequate response to such demands...it needs to find ways to mobilise the present as a resource of powerful contingency and possibility. In restating the creative novelty of the present, researchers will create a 'bone in the throat' (Maclure, 2006) that prevents the easy digestion of stories of inevitable futures, whether of decay or delight (Facer, 2012, p.13, in review).

This study has highlighted approaches in AP that embrace the present rather than the future as the source of possibility and agency. I have sought out and experimented with 'methods and resources to tell new stories of the present' (Facer, 2012, in review) through life writing as ontology and reciprocal virtual ethnography in an online community. The approaches outlined in my study, I believe, are also relevant beyond AP into mainstream education. Although they were carved out of sometimes extreme contexts and complexities, the vision to cultivate a young person's humanity through care and challenge is transferable beyond AP as a fundamental part of education.

7.4 My learning journey: overcoming tensions and dilemmas

As discussed in my methodology, Walker (1983) warned that case study can be an uncontrolled intervention in the lives of others, can give a distorted view of the world and can have a tendency to 'embalm' practices which are actually always changing. I have been aware of such historical criticisms and have tried to ensure that my time at Eastbank was mindful and considered regarding the impact of my presence in the pupils' lives. Although I have challenged the status quo of policy in AP, I have been careful to allow the context and complexity of the research site to emerge and present itself without distortion, to the best of my awareness. I acknowledge that the meaning I have made of the context and complexity is through the lens of my life, but I have questioned my voice as researcher throughout the study. Through the generation of emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns, the concepts I put forward in my case study do not 'embalm' practices. Concepts are abstract of time, place, and people and so transcend the problem of setting in stone that which changes.

I was mindful of Atkinson and Delamont's (1985) criticisms of some forms of case study, also highlighted in my methodology. Through current and historical reading and in disseminating my research at conferences, I believe that I have avoided the tendency to reinvent the wheel in my conceptualisations. My concern for ethics has not supplanted issues of theory and practice. I have wrangled with ethical issues, as I discuss in this chapter. However, I have remained committed to theory and practice whilst seeking a way through that respects truth, persons and democracy. Within case studies, the stress upon the unique can lead to the rejection of generalization. However, through a grounded theory approach of generating emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns, I have sought to develop a more general framework and become part of cumulative knowledge and developing theoretical insight in the field of education, particularly in AP. Now at the end of my case study, I agree with Simons (1996), who saw the paradox of uniqueness and the corresponding difficulty of generalizing from a single case as yielding 'unique and universal understanding' (Simons,1996, p.237-8).

The deliberate political agenda of critical theory that I adopted is in tension with the task of the researcher to not have an agenda (Morrison, 1995), as mentioned in my methodology chapter. This has been a very real tension for me: I was determined not to work in an unreflexive way as a result of an agenda, yet did want to give credence to my desire that young people in AP be taught in a way that makes sense to them. My main way of addressing this issue was to raise it regularly with my supervisors and remaining accountable in my professional relationships as I discussed my work. I think that I have struck an acceptable balance of reflexivity and allowing data to emerge without an agenda

channelling it, and being honest about my passion for disaffected young people to be taught in a way that is authentic to them. Although I agree with Walford's (2001) claim that 'all research is researching yourself', through self-awareness I have tried to avoid the analysis and findings saying more about me than about the data. My creative writing highlighted my relationships with the pupils and practitioners at Eastbank, but the aim was to honour the data in that process.

Interviews with pupils proved to be a great challenge. For the first three months I did not interview pupils, except for a few attempts to 'test the water'. I then began semi-structured interviews with individual pupils. Nearly all pupils struggled with the format, immediately self-protecting, perhaps based on negative experiences of school, police or social work interviews in the past. I made interviews as short and informal as possible, but always recorded them as I did not write up notes on my laptop whilst on site, as this also unnerved the pupils and appeared to make me seem as 'other' to them. Eventually, I settled on seating the pupils at one of the computers, letting them get into the flow of an online game before asking them any questions. Once pupils were relaxed and did not have to look at me or see the dictaphone, they spoke more freely, seemingly without worrying if they were phrasing things correctly. I kept the amount of interviews to a minimum and mainly relied upon my field notes and practitioner interviews when considering how pupils were responding to practitioner approaches.

My use of story as methodology has presented various challenges. The writing of the stories was a very natural process during data collection and analysis, as explained through my understanding of the capacity of life writing as ontology, yet I was unsure as to how to incorporate them into my analysis. Through speaking with experienced researchers at the University of Exeter and reading further narrative inquiry texts, I chose not to code them in the same way as my field notes, interviews and photographs. I am satisfied with my choice to write memos instead, allowing themes to emerge out of my writing with awareness as I re-engaged with and considered my life writing. Most of the themes were already emerging out of my coding in Nvivo, but new themes from the creative writing blended very closely with my coding structure coming from interviews, field notes and photographs. Throughout the process I was mindful of Trahar's (2010) highlighting of the challenges to this approach. Despite not coding the life writing as per the rest of my data, it has not been celebrated in an uncritical and unanalysed fashion, nor been treated as unmediated representations of social realities. I have acknowledged throughout this thesis that all stories are shaped by cultural conventions and that my autobiographical creative account is no more authentic than my

other modes of representation. I have found the use of story as methodology a potent way of honouring the data and that it integrates well with more commonly used methods of analysis. I plan to use this method in my future research, exploring further ways of analysing and integrating.

My use of reciprocal virtual ethnography was much more straightforward than anticipated. After deliberating as to how much access to allow pupils to have to my personal life via Facebook and fearing that they might overstep boundaries, I found in fact that all the pupils had come to understand how to engage with adults appropriately online, and had developed a fluent social etiquette, with vast amounts of experience with family members and parents' friends.

The young people in my study did not necessarily fully understand the implications of agreeing to partake in my research and did not always have parents to question pupils' participation on their behalf. Therefore, at each stage of collecting data, I was careful to be clear in what I was doing and offer an easy way for pupils to decline. I was advised by the permanent staff at Eastbank that most of the consent forms to participate in this study were signed by the pupils with forged signatures, as pupils were keen to participate but could not motivate their parents to read or sign the form. After advice from my university, I mailed consent forms to parents, via Eastbank, explaining that I would take their silence as consent unless I heard otherwise. However, without adult representation, I have anguished over requests to pupils for screenshots from Facebook, as it might be easy to take advantage of this group of young people. I have been very careful to respect them to the best of my ability and self-awareness, communicating in a way that best enabled them to understand. I have only used data where I was satisfied that a young person had engaged with my request with understanding.

As explained when discussing the development of my research questions, the sudden site closure posed a dilemma for my research. I needed to adapt quickly and examine my grounded theory approach to ascertain what I had already managed to answer thus far and change course to a direction for which I knew I had the data to lead. On reflection, this change in direction may have worked better than the original goal, as I had to seek out what the data was really a study of and follow its direction rather than my own. My re-framing of the questions to focus on the practitioner approaches still enabled me to document how the pupils were responding to their lives in the present and also to make suggestions as to how that was affecting their sense of the future. It also enabled me to conceptualise practitioner approaches that I see as being of significance.

The closure of Eastbank also proved a source of tension for me beyond the question of my research questions. I had become part of a community that I had grown to care for and, because I understood the implications of the scattering of the individuals there, was sad and disappointed that the work accomplished at Eastbank was not recognised as being worth the investment. I acknowledge that the main school had its government funding cut and no future site for the AP; experimental work at Eastbank could not be as high a priority as the basic running of the mainstream school.

As explained in 4.6.1 in my first findings chapter, the police sergeant spoke in a threatening way to the pupils at Eastbank. This became a tension and dilemma for me, as I found his treatment of the pupils unacceptable and saw this as an abuse of his position. My choice would have been to file an official complaint to the county constabulary, but on advice from my university, I decided to discuss it with the permanent staff at Eastbank and leave it to them to act. They did not, perhaps partly due to Eastbank having recently closed, leaving them focused on their new situations and without a group of pupils now existing to defend. I feel rather haunted by the lack of defence offered to the pupils at that time, when I had the capacity to act. However, I understand that my actions could have compromised my research and thrown into question my role as researcher. It still remains that I believe that the police sergeant sabotaged the pupils' chances of remaining at Eastbank at a crucial time of community negotiation, and I am vexed that he was not held to account for it.

A final tension and dilemma was my own shifting of theoretical perspective during the study, as discussed in my methodology and discussion chapter. Although this may continue to shift, I am less perturbed by it than when I began to deconstruct involuntarily, as expressed through a section of life writing:

I have been unravelling for some time now. My modern world lies about me and I am undone. It began as a loose thread of uncertainty. I did not even have the satisfaction of pulling the thread: it must have caught on some disbelief as I rushed past. Try as they might, my ebbing desire to fix and my need for truth and certainty could not stop the process. Eventually I relented.

And slowly, the feelings of exposure from losing what I had known are feeling instead like an unwrapping, an opening. Not the sort of opening where the light of clarity comes rushing in, but an opening for complications and making partial connections, which seem to block any kind of view of a neat ending. Perhaps even a ripping open of identity that had been held in place by society?

I am baffled to hear myself say it, but I am coming to like this feeling. Come to think of it, I was tired of choosing or not choosing, being limited before I even spoke; of accepting that some things are simply smoothed over. I feel a new space around me – I think I will call it

---

I have learnt an enormous amount from undertaking my PhD thesis, on a personal, professional and academic level. There is a great deal more for me to learn about undertaking research, but I shall take with me into the professional arena a quiet confidence that I have grasped something of the nature of research and the awareness necessary to undertake creative work systematically.

7.5 Limitations of the research

Firstly, this study, rather than offering theory generation, offers emergent conceptualizations formed into integrated patterns that are based on practitioner approaches and their outcomes. It is based on data collected over one academic year spent in one AP site. The concepts posit that a marriage of empathic engagement and mission as an approach evolved as licensed chaos and fostered belonging and well-being. As concepts are abstract of time, place, and people, I am suggesting that it is possible that these integrated patterns are generalisable to other contexts in and beyond AP. However, this has not been researched and I cannot claim that it is the case. My findings seek to offer a contribution to a field undergoing re-design and may offer one way forward for improving the lives of those within it. Further research into empathic engagement and mission being central to AP sites may contribute towards a theory linked to belonging and well-being.

Secondly, I researched the practitioner approaches of the AP site itself and not the main school to which it was affiliated. This is a definite limitation to the study, but a vital one in keeping the thesis manageable and realistic in its time frame. However, the practitioner approaches in the AP site will have been influenced by the leadership of the secondary school to which it was affiliated. To better understand the kind of space offered to the AP

permanent staff by the school leadership would be to better contextualise and make accessible the concepts put forward in this thesis.

Thirdly, due to the narrow focus of process that is normally associated with the term 'pedagogy', I avoided its use, instead referring to practitioner 'approaches', denoting action and interaction as well as method, curriculum and assessment. However, since the recent publication of Thomson et al., (2012) which takes pedagogy to encompass relationships, environment and culture within a wider social context, I have begun to re-frame my study as being one that is characterising practitioner pedagogies after all. Perhaps I could have been braver in my usage and reclamation of the term 'pedagogy' rather than avoiding it at the start. Thomson et al.'s (2012) investigation into the signature pedagogies of creative practitioners in school resonates with my aim of characterising practitioner approaches, and I look forward to continuing my re-framing through this lens.

Finally, in analysing the photographs from the study, I did not differentiate between photos taken by myself and those by the pupils, and coded them all individually or in a cluster if in sequence. It was only at the end of my study that I grouped together some of the pupils' photographs that documented their time at Eastbank, and began to consider how they sat side by side. I have placed some of the pupils' photographs together in appendix four to show a potential area of consideration that was not taken into account during the analysis.

7.6 Recommended further areas of scholarship/future research possibilities

There could be at least six recommended further areas of scholarship coming out of this thesis:

1. Through my continuing contact with some of the pupils online, I have gained a little insight as to how they feel about their future since attending Eastbank. Longitudinal research that explores how young people who have left AP sites feel about their futures can further influence how AP sites function.

2. Eastbank did not focus on connecting with the local community beyond generally seeking to avoid confrontations, inviting artists to work with pupils and enrolling pupils at the local college for Learn 2 Work. However, knitting further into the community, especially in a giving capacity, may be extremely worthwhile, or may hinder the safe space created. It would be interesting to undertake research in an AP site that is seeking to connect in this way with their local and perhaps wider community to better understand impact on belonging and well-being.

3. If there were AP sites keen to use the cohesion of empathic engagement and mission as a core approach, research could be undertaken there to study the outcomes of practitioners' individual, collaborative and communal interpretation of this. Such research would also begin to answer a developmental question of how adaptable this approach is for other AP sites.

4. It would be interesting to locate AP sites that consider themselves to have a high level of belonging and increased well-being amongst staff and pupils. Research looking into how this is manifest could strengthen and broaden the findings of this PhD study.

5. This thesis did not explore the relationship between mainstream schools and their AP sites. This would be an extremely beneficial avenue, as schools will be increasingly responsible for the AP they provide. Research into successful ways of doing so may influence future mainstream ventures becoming successful.

6. AP is likely to change considerably as new policy is implemented over a six year period from 2012. Research that charts new policy implementations would be

beneficial as assistance in assessing direction and progress. This thesis has expressed a concern that policy will potentially continue with a narrow definition of success that devalues well-being. Policy needs to be held accountable to research and listen and respond to pupils' out of school realities shown within that research.

7.7 Dissemination:

The outcomes of my study could be of significant interest to practitioners in AP, senior staff in schools, young people in AP; those in government responsible for AP or inclusion; partners working with schools in terms of creativity/possibility thinking or youth offending prevention. It may also be of interest to other researchers with an interest in AP, Educational Futures, well-being and belonging, possibility thinking, disaffection, pupil voice, key stage three or four, learner agency, personalisation of learning and humanising education. I will look to distribute findings through conference papers, journal articles, lectures and as an Internet resource.

To Close

The aim of this study was to explore the contribution AP can make to young people's lives and how this relates to perceptions of effectiveness. I have achieved this by coming to understand how practitioners in one site offered AP, by establishing outcomes and the kind of success achieved in the site and by developing effective methodologies in researching the field of AP. I hope that my new voice in the field, through the means expressed in my plans for impact and dissemination and through future research, will contribute to the committed work already established within AP that is daring to be responsible for the young people's lives educated therein and for the world they inhabit.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Review of inclusion and AP programmes, research or projects.

Programme / Research / Project	Dates	Method(s)/focus	Key Findings/Conclusions	Reference
An ethnographic deconstruction of identity and sense of self within 3 high schools, classified as representative of 'working class', 'middle class' and 'urban underclass' in a city in the USA.	Early 1980s	Interviews with teachers, students and wider community. A central focus on anti-social behaviours and how this indicates different senses of self for young people. Also on the way that groups in schools reflect wider society the AP methods used, including those employed to make disengagement and withdrawal more manageable.	In the middle class neighbourhood a depressive quality was observed in students who are unable to achieve the high level of academic expectation reserved for the more able AP. This can lead to students taking the 'other programme' which is designed for students who may not be low in ability, but are without the emotional maturity to either excel academically or follow a standard high school study programme. There is a crisis in education's capacity to foster a feeling of personhood within young people, leading to disaffection. This manifests itself differently in high schools attended by different segments of society. Young people follow a pattern of withdrawal from organised public life. There is a consequence of generating a social identity through gang cultures and fighting in working and under class communities, with low motivation for learning and high drop-out rates from classes.	Wexler 1992
Alternative education programmes founded by Fred Gann: Blue Valley Academy (1998-2009); Centre Alternative	1989-2009	Key elements: choice of entry; student commitment; representative of the district it serves; non-punitive by design; environment in support of academic, personal and social change; not terminal by design; counsellor-supported; work	Increased attendance and commitment; increased self-confidence, responsibility and ownership; increased positive interactions between parents, students and staff; decreased instances of school related violence, vandalism, expulsions and dropouts; opportunities for staff to design and implement innovative programmes based on individual needs, and for the traditional school to review current practices and policies relating to individual success. Overall philosophy of 'kids first'.	Gann, 2011

School (1989); Butler Alternative School. Kansas, USA.		experience/community service.		
Hiring students involved in a Stay-in-School partnership as collaborators and inviting them to interview peers in American high schools.	1990	Focus on peer-to-peer interactions as a route towards coaxing greater honesty and transparency from those interviewed than might be the case if they were subject to interviews from researchers. Intention to learn, through dialogue rather than structured interview, how students perceive their various selves and how they relate to school.	Adolescents are developing numerous selves. School generally focuses primarily upon two of these: Self-as-Student and Self-as-my-Work. Others, such as Self-in-Family, Sexual Self, Self-in-Peer-Group, Self-as-Loyal-Friend, and sometimes Self-as-Parent, go largely or entirely unaddressed within a formal education framework. When this is the case, schooling may be experienced as pressure or boredom, with students struggling to find any real meaning or purpose in classroom activities and assignments. Naturally, such a scenario increases the possibility that students will choose to drop out, perceiving formal education as irrelevant to their primary interests and goals.	Farrell, 1990
Kent State University and The University of Michigan: collaboratively written work describing partnerships and initiatives between teachers,	Not Stated	Interviews and observations within various qualitative case studies. Draws from critical theory, feminist theory, life history and teacher-as-researcher studies. Seeking through the research to ask how educators and parents can better gain control of their discourses and how we can	The label 'at risk' is, in itself, damaging. Frameworks of assimilation in schools, linguistically and culturally, further isolate learners who are currently outside the mainstream. When classrooms become landscapes of promise, they offer children a place where their selfhood matters, where they find acceptance and possibility, and can become meaning-makers. Examples of good practice to re-engage those 'at promise' in order to break the cycle of negativity and implicit racism of the 'at risk' label are: Structuring learning-centred collaborative contexts; integration and giving value to different learner experience and background; positive regard;	Swadener & Lubeck, 1995

students, families and schools in order to deconstruct the terminology 'at risk'. USA.		better listen to those at the margins of the culture of power.	intervening early to achieve full inclusion in the fullness of time.	
The Students Completing School Project funded by the Australian Research Council involving a partnership between FIST, DETE and SSABSA. Australia.	1997 – 1999	To provide a forum for the voices of students in order to inform the education community about the factors that facilitate student retention and success in the post-compulsory years of schooling. The focus was on the range and interplay of factors between students' lives, the structure of schools, and the constraints of credentialing system. Interviews.	The experience of schooling was alienating because of a significant mismatch between students' struggles to 'become somebody' and the narrowly defined identity that schools expected. Many students found their post-compulsory schooling was irrelevant in terms of navigating a transition from school to economic independence, endorsed forms of assessment and university which was not inclusive of their needs, and perpetuated a school culture that actively contributed to and produced early school leaving.

Five suggestions were made: minimize the interactive trouble that gets played out between teachers and students; undermine the various forms of harassment that affect young people in schools; assist young people to navigate transition into the labour market; transform the culture of the school so that it has a reputation for acting as an advocate for young people; reduce the policy rhetoric around the credentialing process. | Smyth and Hattam, 2004 |
| McREL synthesis of 118 research studies published between 1985 and 2002: *helping at-risk students* | 2002 | Research was approached from a teacher's perspective, asking 'What are the effective strategies that can be used in classrooms to assist low- | McREL identified six general classroom strategies from the synthesis of the research:

1. Whole class instruction: when choosing strategies the desired outcome should guide the instructional design;

2. Cognitively oriented instruction: code text before reading and | Snow, 2005 |

249

			summarize; draft and self-assess writing; pattern recognition and testing in mathematics;	
meet standards: a synthesis of evidence-based classroom practices. Colorado, USA.		achieving students?' Systematic analysis.	3. Small groups: mixed-ability grouping; quality staff training, activity preparation and facilitation a pre-requisite;	
			4. Tutoring: an effective strategy that should have a strong guiding purpose, can be given by various ages and levels, and needs to be evaluated on a continuous basis to ensure integrity.	
			5. Peer tutoring: effective, particularly for basic skills, with clear structure, training and monitoring in place;	
			6. Computer assisted instruction: effective, particularly in mathematics. Role of teacher significant in this intervention.	
Case study of a performing arts programme provided as an extra-curricular activity at a school in Melbourne with a high rate of early school leaving. Australia.	2003	To create a performance drawing on the life experiences of the young people. Sought to develop reflexive skills and access identity resources and stories based on their own lives that would assists them to live well.	Illustrates the role of drama in enabling young people to engage with identity work. Involvement in the process involves gaining skills and making links between the content discussed and created, the young people's world and the world of which they are a part. An example of how school can provide young people with increasingly sophisticated personal repertoires that they need to manage their lives. Challenges policy makers to recognise the needs of young people for learning experiences that equip them to engage with immediate issues. Rehearse the exercise of choice and decision-making.	Stokes and Wyn 2009, in Riele, 2009
Faculty of Education, Cambridge	2004	Eleven pupils from Years 8 and 9, referred to throughout the project as 'student	Where extrinsic motivation binds students into a task through the promise of praise, of high grades or other reward, the arts are strong on intrinsic motivation – the capacity to engage young people in an	Finney, Hickman,

		teachers', took part, from four schools. They were chosen as their teachers described them as disaffected and disruptive in lessons, and having shown a specific talent relating to one of the arts subjects: Art and Design; Design and Technology; Drama or Music. Interviews and observation.	activity because it is interesting, involving, satisfying or personally challenging. Participants' changing insights into their own behaviour and image in school are well documented with verbatim recall, as are accounts of emerging empathy with the lot of the teacher.	Morrison, Nicholl and Rudduck, 2005
University researched ways in which 'disaffected' young people can re-engage with learning in school through involvement in the arts and through acting as 'student teachers'. UK.				
A programme in Glebe, inner city Sydney, for young people who have disengaged from formal education and are not in any form of work. It was supported through collaboration between a state department of education, a	2006	Through the programme, Hayes formulated some of the socially just principles necessary to create a schooling system that catered to students disadvantaged by poverty. The intent of the programme was not to re-enter students into a system that has already failed them, but to provide them with a meaningful education outside that system. Action research.	Collaborations are critical in bringing about changes that support social transformation. The students and their lives were placed at the centre of the curriculum and flexible pathways were developed to minimise failure - both can occur without compromising intellectual challenge. The ways in which the poor are constructed is a significant social justice issue. Whilst many students have given up on schooling, they have not necessarily given up on learning.	Hayes et al, 2006

youth centre and a university faculty.				
Alternative education for marginalised youth: negotiating risk and hope. Funded through a grant by University of Technology Sydney. Research by Kitty Riele. Australia.	2006-2008	Interviews and observation.	The pedagogy of hope recognises the importance of agency of teachers and takes seriously the complex barriers created by social and institutional structures. It is a provision of resources that can help teachers to deal with challenging circumstances. These are: a positive culture of learning – accentuate the positive, celebrating accomplishments, locating strengths; focusing on possibilities - on possibility rather than statistical probability, high expectations and rejecting deficit beliefs; establishing a community of hope – building bridges between schools and community, create opportunities for participation, funding based on social justice; critical reflection – on whether a hoped-for situation is better, effect of hopes on well-being of others, question common practices and explore new approaches, on how to contribute to a fairer and more democratic society.	te Riele, 2009
Enacting the Ethic of Care research, funded by SSHRCC and undertaken by SFU faculty of Education: Western Canada.	Not stated	How teachers and school administrators perceive and cultivate caring. 14 teachers and administrators from various educational settings participated in a four year enquiry that sought to understand and explore the practices and conditions that would support them in initiating and sustaining the ethic of care in their day-to-	The enactment of care leads to capacity-building of educators' ability to sustain practices of care for the other, in particular the significantly different other. Participants found this process fulfilling and saw their role in the school with greater acuity. Enacting the ethic of care makes a better school for students and teachers in the present, and has the potential to impact the wider community as students and teachers engage with more distant others in ethically caring ways.	Beck & Cassidy, 2009, in Riele 2009

		day school lives.		
Bringing students exhibiting challenging behaviour into an after-school programme (The Twilight Academy) designed to meet their academic and emotional needs, and support them in achieving high-school diplomas and finding work.	Not stated	By separating 60 challenging students out from the rest of the school, giving them additional attention in the same buildings, yet at a different time of day, teachers aimed to address the root causes of their recalcitrance. Innovative learning techniques, counselling, and practical support were used to effect real and lasting change in both their behaviour and their prospects.	Of 12 students eligible to graduate during the period of study, 11 did so and the 12th succeeded after enrolling in summer school. This compares with the expectation, prior to the academy's foundation, that none would ever receive a high school diploma. Four subsequently enrolled in a local community college, two received offers of full-time work, and several more continued to work at jobs they had found or been placed in during the school year. Although two students were expelled during the year in question, behavioural problems among those who remained almost disappeared. It is theorised that the combination of high levels of support and attention, the capacity to learn at their own pace, and the lack of an 'audience' for their antics all contributed to this improvement. Unfailing belief in the students, evinced by the teachers and administrators of the programme, lifted them to successes they could not have imagined previously. Lessons learnt include a preference for running the programme during the day if possible, to relieve social stigma, and lessening reliance upon computer terminals for learning.	D'Angelo and Zemanick, 2009
Case study of three community-based organisations working with disengaged young people in an inner-city,	Not stated	Exploring how alternative approaches with 14-16 year olds contributed to engaging young people in learning and made a difference in their lives. Observations and interviews.	Flexibility at the heart of their practices. Most young people acknowledged their time at the projects as better enabling them to face difficult futures. A culture of respect, security and relationships of trust were crucial in making their learning experiences worthwhile. Conceptualising goals and purposes of learning beyond the narrow objectives of targets, examinations and knowledge transmission, to broader aims embedded in social experience and organisational practices. An ethos of belonging and resilience was crucial. Risks of continuing damaging behaviour was reduced through seeking to	Milbourne, 2009, in te Riele, 2009

			understand and work with the young people's perspectives.	
The New Jersey Urban Youth Research Initiative, USA	2012	An inclusive, pan-institutional approach that empowers young people (including those traditionally disadvantaged) to research and articulate their own analysis of education policy.	Young people drew on their research findings to actively engage and challenge local policy developments. Conclusion: 'those of us committed to democratic public education find ourselves at a precarious crossroads. The hinge of democracy, justice and education is delicate and under attack.'	Fine, Ayala and Zaal, as quoted in Francis and Mills, 2012
Three flexi-schools in Queensland, Australia, catering to homeless, disenfranchised, low-SES (socio-economic status), and Indigenous students.	On-going	Re-engaging students who have left/been excluded from mainstream education, offering flexible attendance, crèche, kitchen facilities, smaller class sizes, supportive environment to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.	Flexibility of provision can attract students who have given up on mainstream education back to school. Taking into account circumstances such as pregnancy/motherhood, poor nutrition, family challenges that make consistent attendance difficult, and poverty, and providing support with these concerns, relieves students of the need to act out and can remotivate them. Resisting the urge to apply pressure (instead allowing students the freedom not to work, on the understanding that subsequent failure is their own responsibility) reconnects them with the consequences of their behaviour. Some risk that success of flexi-schools can provide mainstream educators with a 'get-out clause', and that range of outcomes, while positive, is somewhat stereotyped (ie boys and young men may find themselves steered towards manual work, girls and young women towards hair and beauty industry).	McGregor, Mills, and Thomson, 2012, in Lingard, Thomson, and Wrigley (Ed), 2012
Education of the children of landless workers in Brazil.	On-going	The struggle of the Landless Worker's Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, or MST) involves	Education must be sympathetic to the struggles of the MST (ie mainstream teachings that denounce their movement as criminal are inappropriate). Pedagogies of collective organisation, of the earth, of culture, of work and production, bring children in touch with the essence of the movement of which they are already a part. Time for	Caldart, Movement of Landless Workers, 2012, in

		entire families. Since its inception, the development of schooling that meets the needs of the children of such families has been a key priority.	engagement in productive activities, study, and leisure, develop and reinforce the skills children need to work the earth, allow them freedom to play, and introduce them to activities they may be interested in. All learning takes place within the context of the practical and political realities of childrens' situation, yet is focussed upon care and nurturance of their young minds and bodies to encourage self-worth and self-respect.	Lingard, Thomson, and Wrigley (Ed), 2012
Nursery schooling, largely for children of minority ethnic heritage, many of whom speak English as a second language, in the heart of Birmingham.	On-going	Emphasis on inside and outside play, storytelling, and the use of multipurpose materials. Commitment to 'being led by children': children choose activities from a range available each day. Peer-to-peer massage. Speaking and listening to children respectfully and seriously, and attending to their particular needs.	Providing an environment in which children are free to learn creatively, exercise curiosity, and explore their world leads to outstanding outcomes (OfSTED consistently rates the school 'outstanding'). Broad, varied range of activities, including partnerships with artists, dancers, engineers, etc, sparks childrens' imagination despite circumstances which might conventionally be thought of as barriers (comparatively limited economic resources, ethnic minority backgrounds, English as an additional language). Constant innovation, conceiving of development of children, staff, and of the school itself as a journey, continues to open fresh possibilities.	Rose and Thomson, 2012, in Lingard, Thomson, and Wrigley (Ed), 2012
Reframing the experiences of at-risk youth in Chicago public schools to place it in a broader social and political context and heal local	On-going	Broadening the perspective of youths in inner-city schools by drawing their attention to the social structures that oppress them all equally. Giving them a focus for their sense of disenfranchisement and dispossession that unites	'Critical mathematics' can assist students in comprehending the hows and wherefores of their situations, thus alleviating the need to act out in violent, anti-social ways and increasing the will to organise and challenge the power structures that are weighted against them. When students understand, for example, the outrageous cost of housing in their community, or the inequities of the mortgage system, they recognise the root causes of injustice and become more motivated to address those rather than battle fruitlessly and tragically with one another. Co-operation and organisation among	Gutstein, 2012, in Lingard, Thomson, and Wrigley (Ed), 2012

| rivalries. | | them in activism, rather than miring them in gang warfare. | members of low-income, marginalised communities can lead to real shifts in both attitude and behaviour. | |

Appendix 2: overview of methods used

Appendix: Methods used for each participant

Participants	Methods					
	Virtual observation	In-person observation	Written Interview	Oral Interview	My Photography	Pupils' Photography
Dave (lead teacher)	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Geoff (artist in residence)	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Wolf & Water (artists in residence)	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Teaching Assistants	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Pupils	✓	✓	✓ (via facebook)	✓	✓	✓

Appendix: Methods used for each research question

Research Questions	Participants	Methods		
		Written and Oral Interviews	Virtual and In-Person Observation	Photography
1	Practitioners	✓	In-person only	✓
	Pupils	✓	✓	✓
2	Practitioners	✓	In-person only	✓
	Pupils	✓	✓	✓

Appendix: Methods used over time

Methods	Oct 2009	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010	Jun 2010	Jul 2010
Practitioner Interviews	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupil Interviews	-	(✓)[*]	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
In-person Observations	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Virtual Observations	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
My Photography	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupil Photography	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[*]early attempt made but unsuccessful due to trust and design issues

Appendix 3: Abbreviations for interviews and field notes

Field Notes 1 24.05.10 Geoff's session

Field Notes 2 18.11.09 Construction site visit at Exeter College.

Field Notes 3 10.05.10 Geoff's session.

Field Notes 4 17.05.10 Geoff's session.

Field Notes 5 24.5.10 Woodlands day trip.

Field Notes 6 15.03.10 Geoff's session in the small office. Individuals.

Field Notes 7 28.01.10 Wolf and Water radio show session and my initiation

Field Notes 8 22.02.10 Jay comes to the unit after attempted suicide. Wolf and Water session

Field Notes 9 20.11.09 Motor Mechanics. First session with Phil.

Field Notes 10 25.11.09 Construction at College. Stressful session.

Field Notes 11 26.11.09 At the unit. Initiation time. 'Do you love me?'

Field Notes 12 14.01.10 First day back after Christmas. Readjusting day.

Field Notes 13 21.01.10 Day at the unit. Unsettled day.

Field Notes 14 25.01.10 Wolf and Water Comedy Show session

Field Notes 15 07.12.10 Brief notes on visits at College on Wed, Thurs, Fri in Dec.

Field Notes 16 11.11.09 First official day at the unit. Taking it all in

Field Notes 17 26.04.10 Geoff's session

Interview 1 Beth on Eastbank closing

Interview 2 Craig 29 March 2010

Interview 3 Dean feedback on Geoff's session April 2010

Interview 4 Dave on Eastbank closing

Interview 5 Damon 29 March 2010

Interview 6 Damon last day

Interview 7 Helen on Eastbank closing 17 May 2010

Interview 8 Jack last day

Interview 9 Jolie and Sharon feedback from meeting

Interview 10 Jolie last day

Interview 11 Jay on next year's plans

Interview 12 Kate on next year's plans

Interview 13 Kirk feedback from meeting

Interview 14 Kirk March 29 2010

Interview 15 Kirk July last week of Eastbank

Interview 16 Kirk first time on instruments since primary school 17 may 2010

Interview 17 Les 29 March 2010

Interview 18 Les last week

Interview 19 Lee 29 March 2010

Interview 20 Lee and Kirk feedback on Geoff's penultimate session

Interview 21 Lee feedback from meeting

Interview 22 Lee last day

Interview 23 Lee last week of Eastbank

Interview 24 New Lee last week of term

Interview 25 Paul construction tutor 19 May 2010

Interview 26 Restorative Justice Meeting

Interview 27 Restorative Justice 2

Interview 28 Rosa and Helen on how Eastbank fostered aspiration

Interview 29 Rosa on Eastbank closing

Interview 30 Rosa cont'd

Interview 31 Sharon and Charmaine 29 March 2010

Interview 32 Sharon last day

Interview 33 Tim last day

Interview 34 Tim March 29 2010

Interview 35 Tim's feedback on Geoff's fourth session

Interview 36 Wolf and Water Jules

Interview 37 Wolf and Water

Interview 38 Wolf & Water Mac Interview

Interview 39 Lee on W and Water

Interview 40 Tim Wolf & Water

Interview 41 Tim on W and W

Interview 42 Sharon Wolf & Water

Interview 43 Lee Wolf & Water

Interview 44 Les on Wolf & Water

Interview 45 Jay on Wolf & Water

Interview 46 Jolie on Wolf & Water

Interview 47 Charmaine on Wolf & Water

Written interview 1 with Geoff: pre-planning 03.03.10

Written interview 2 with Dave: aspiration

Written interview 3 with Geoff 5.10.10: What do we mean when we talk about aspirations? Why is fostering aspirations seen as being important? A failure of care.

Geoff's blog 1 15.03.10

Geoff's blog 2 10 and 17.05.10

Geoff's blog 3 26.04.10

Geoff's blog 4 14.05.10

Appendix 4: Geoff's response to reading my thesis

Outside the norm: Practitioner approaches in alternative provision

Does the message matter?

What is the message? That taking care of young people matters. It is an essential need and without it nothing of value can be done. Once care taking is established other things become possible. Well, there is plenty of evidence to support that. But Margo has gone beyond that. Her examination and analysis of practitioner approaches leads her to propose models explaining processes and outcomes which raise the possibility of categorising and evaluating the work being done in Alternative Provision. She puts well-being and belonging as central along with the need to see their development both in context and complexity. If we agree that they are fundamental enabling conditions and we can see that certain clearly modelled ways of working allow these to flourish then we can begin to devise ways of gathering evidence on their effectiveness from simple data such as attendance, punctuality, participation, student questionnaires and interviews through to much more complex reporting carried out by skilled observers looking for evidence of empathic engagement and mission and their effects.

I do have a problem with the term "licensed chaos" though not with Margo's articulation of it. Mission is fine. The argument about putting well-being and belonging as fundamental is long overdue as is the need to drastically overhaul ideas about relationship and so develop empathic engagement in education but I can't imagine successfully approaching any school with the idea that I want to introduce chaos! Is there not perhaps something in the work on creativity or possibility thinking that could be developed into a usable term? Maybe I'm being overly cautious.

Researcher involvement

The situation at Eastbank demanded the researcher's involvement. Without that Margo would not have been allowed anything more than the most superficial access by the students (and possibly the practitioners) who would have continued to self-protect. Would the deep understanding that she articulates have been possible without her being involved, without her demonstrating her commitment to the community at Eastbank?

The description of empathic engagement shows that it is quite possible to engage and observe simultaneously. Of course one must work very quickly. As a musician I would say that the cognitive side of our emotions works far faster than our head and perhaps it is the sense of mission that generates the emotional head of steam that allows us to do that.

It is Margo's courageous decision to report through her life writing that convinces me of the correctness of her choice to allow herself to become involved. It speaks to me above anything else in her thesis, telling me that she knows what we are trying to do and why. And while my work requires me to engage "with a dry eye and a gentle heart", when reading those passages I broke down in tears. I find it compelling evidence.

Another as my voice?

I hope it is clear that I feel my work is fairly represented here. I used to articulate my own ideas about teaching for an external audience but the lack of response or the shrug of the shoulders with a "What can we do about it?" left me feeling that most people just didn't care. In attempting to analyse why alternatives were being rejected I came to the conclusion that a primary (though unarticulated) imperative of our education system is to maintain the current power structures in our society and I've taken politicians' talk about raising aspirations as so much froth. As to the practical manifestation of that in school: well one head, I think, hated the developing democracy in my classroom (although he told me not to bother looking for ways to engage my students as they were a waste of space) while others would tell me they loved what I was doing but what would Ofsted think? So I gave up speaking for myself; it seemed a waste of time.

I continue to articulate my ideas, but in the classroom, in the interaction between student and teacher. My energy has gone into finding opportunities to do that. As long as I've felt that my students find it a valuable and authentic experience I think I've been prepared in turn to shrug my shoulders and say "Well, do I need a voice beyond that?"

Of course Margo speaks for herself but she has given my voice a space as well. It feels strange and unfamiliar after all this time.

Impact on me as a practitioner and as a person

Prior to the invitation to run some workshops at Eastbank I had stopped having anything to do with the education system and was back to teaching privately and working as a musician. Eastbank showed me that I still had something to offer the system, albeit on the fringes, and since then I've worked in a Pupil Referral Unit and now in a Special School.

I've seen that there are others exploring alternatives, both practitioners and researchers. Following up on some of the references in the thesis has been illuminating particularly the work of Gert Biesta on reclaiming the role of the teacher, teaching and learning as an interaction, the art of teaching as opposed to the teacher being simply a technician and the sociological and political implications of that from moves to dictate the type of research done (in my opinion to exclude any research that doesn't come up with the right answers) to the exclusion of democracy from education.

The to and fro of ideas has been invigorating as has the opportunity to reflect in depth and over a period of time and is something I will miss. Perhaps every school could have a researcher on the staff as a stimulant.

The development of the idea of empathic engagement and the brilliant synthesis of it with mission as a mutually conditioning pair was an eye-opener. It made me think of what happens when people have a mission but lack empathic engagement! I've been involved in arguments in schools about bringing in elements of therapeutic practice. This offers an alternative. My guess is that few teachers would argue with the idea of teaching as a vocation (mission). Coupled with empathic engagement as a means of developing well-being and belonging, and recognition of the importance of context and the need to deal with the ambiguities of complexity, it provides a powerful vision of an educational future.

Geoff Mead, London, October 2012

Appendix 5

A pupil-eye view: photographs taken by pupils with my camera

Pupil proud of plumbing joins, Learn2work

Pupil and researcher playing cards

Filming the comedy show with Wolf and Water, with researcher , practitioners and pupils
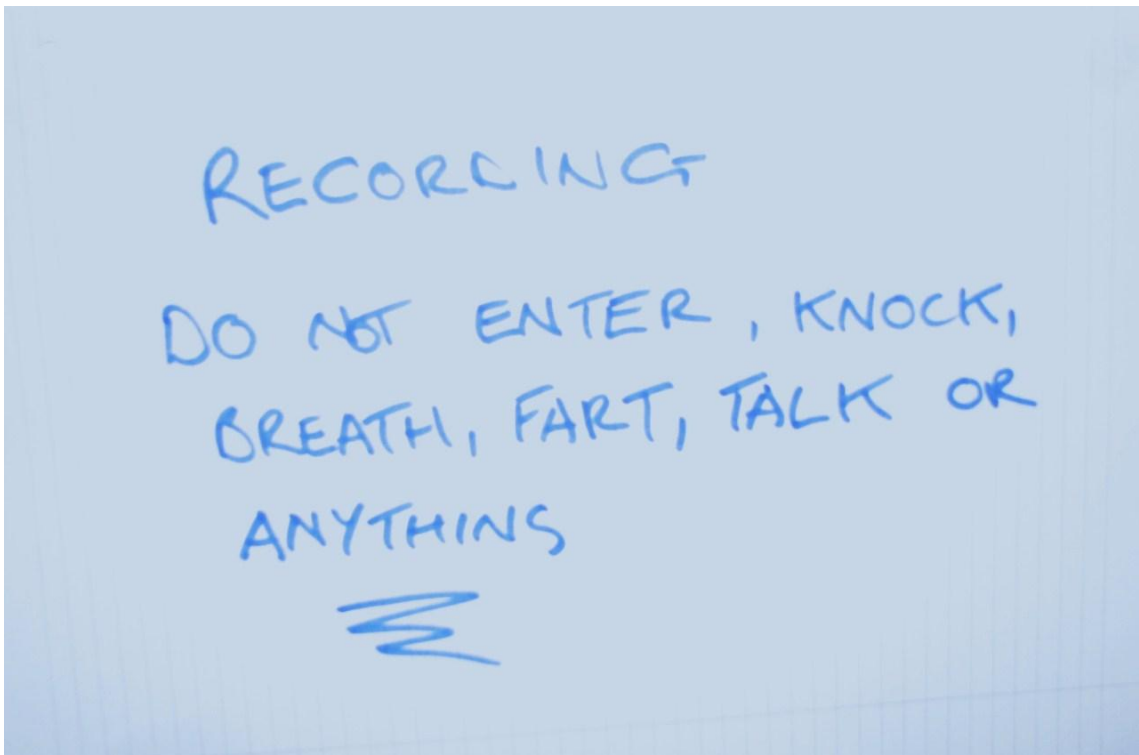

Filming the comedy show with Wolf and Water

Motor mechanic's yard at Learn2work

Construction yard at Learn2work

Pupils and researcher getting ready to film comedy show

RECORCING

DO NOT ENTER, KNOCK, BREATH, FART, TALK OR ANYTHINS

Notice on door at Eastbank during filming

Pupil popped to the 'chippy' for lunch

Footy at break time

Dave – lead teacher

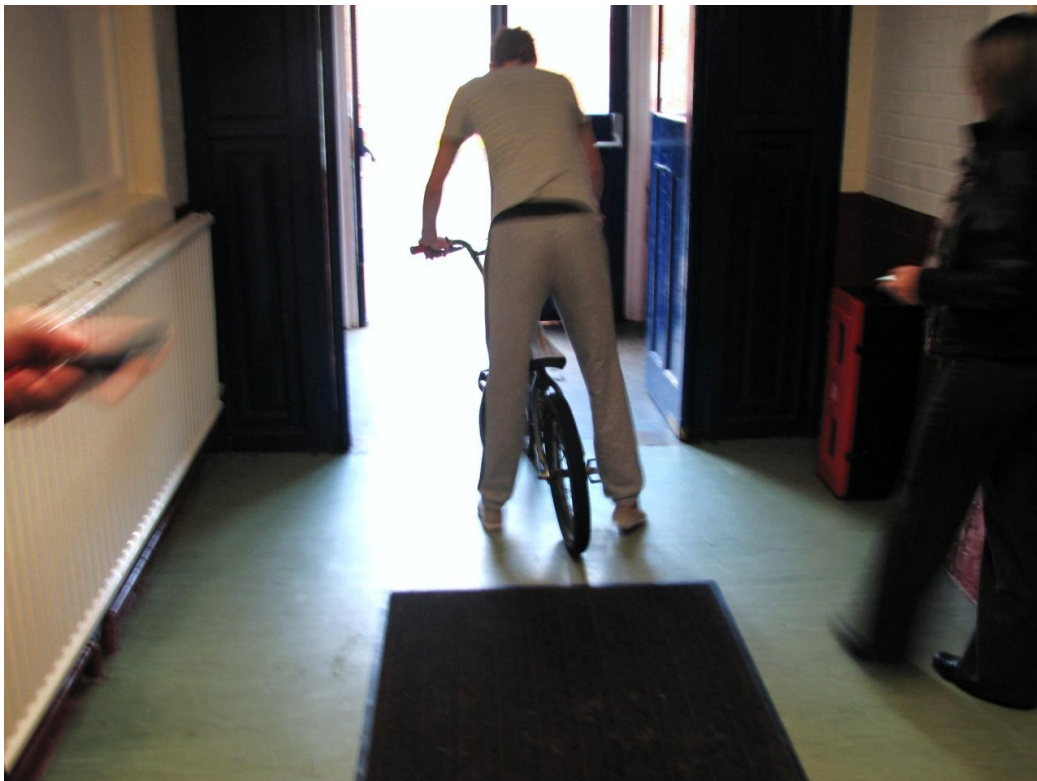"Getting our own back on the photographer": Margo - researcher

"How it is": in the corridor at Eastbank

Pupil on bike where it shouldn't be

Break time at Learn2work

After construction session at Learn2work

Researcher mucking in

Wolf and Water artist in residence

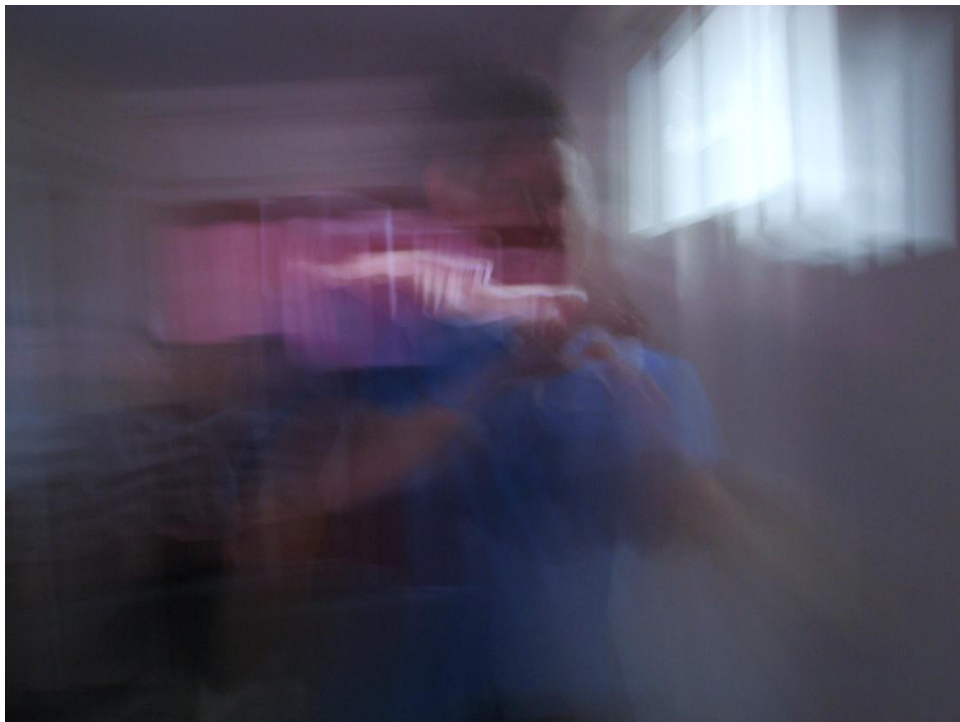Practitioners handing out prizes

Pupil proud of wall

Pupil and Wolf & Water artist in residence

Artists in residence

Artist in residence

Pupil self-portrait in toilet mirror, experiment

Appendix 6: Certificate of ethical research approval

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS
You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/ and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR **COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). DO **NOT** **COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Margery Greenwood

Your student no: 580031458

Return address for this certificate:

Degree/Programme of Study: Four year PhD

Project Supervisor(s): Anna Craft and Nadine Schaefer

Your email address: mag209@ex.ac.uk

Tel: 07736 160116

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:.......Greenwood..**date:**...10.12.09........

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 580031458

Title of your project:

Harnessing aspiration in educational futures amongst disaffected Key Stage Four pupils: a case study of involvement in education at an alternative provision site.

Brief description of your research project:

A case study spanning up to two years in a mid-Devon alternative provision site for disaffected key stage four pupils, which provides places for excluded pupils, or those at risk of permanent exclusion. This site is regularly involved in vocational and creative partnership work with artists and favours a very different approach to learning than often found in secondary schools. I wish to ask how pupils perceive their futures – in particular their educational futures – and investigate how these perceptions may develop over their time at the site, through their engagement with the setting and their out of school realities. I also wish to explore beliefs held about their capacities to improve educational opportunities. The qualitative research is being undertaken within a critical theory paradigm, which provides a potential framework for social action in relation to educational futures, 'possibility thinking' and disaffection. The study will adopt ethnographic approaches combined with grounded theory, enabling the development of theory emergent from data as opposed to data emerging from theory.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

Fourteen pupils, aged 14, 15 and 16
One teacher
Three specialist teaching assistants
Vocational trainers on the Learn to Work course
Artists that are invited to work on projects at the site eg. Wolf and Water - drama providers specialising in working with young people
Supply staff
Support networks for pupils outside of school eg. Social worker, and representatives in link institutions, for example: sixth form college, agricultural college, EDP drug and alcohol services

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs)

I intend to gain informed consent from pupils, teachers, parents/carers and professional artists/workers and offer them opportunity to discuss the process and findings as they unfold. Before the thesis is submitted, the head teacher Andrew Lovett will be consulted in respect of how the school, its staff and pupils are anonymized; agreement of all participants will be

sought as to the strategy ultimately adopted to ensure privacy. Disguising places or people is not easy, especially as this site is unique in lots of ways. Certainly within the institution, participants are likely to be recognized. Therefore, these issues will be approached with senior management throughout the process; I intend to highlight specific examples at staff meetings after pupils have left, and be open to suggestions as to how best to protect anonymity in that instance, beyond pseudonym. I will ensure that those participating are aware of their right to withdraw at any time for any or no reason. Confidentiality issues will be carefully explored as and when each issue arises. At least one pupil is subject to a protection order and information about all pupils and especially this one, is particularly sensitive. I will ensure that no information will be passed on, and participants' responses are anonymized.

I need to ensure that permission has been given to conduct the research, so that participants know of the focus on educational futures and the impact the setting and other events may have on pupils' aspiration. Pupils and staff will be talked through the aims of the research in early January and followed up with written consent forms to be signed by staff, pupils and parents/carers, prior to fieldwork beginning in earnest. Consent issues will also be picked addressed throughout the time on site. Ethical guidelines have been designed in correspondence with the lead teacher at the site, to address contextual issues and sensitive situations. I will also need to agree arrangements for transferring ownership of my records to myself of participants' actions, writing and speech to for analysis within my thesis. I partly intend to do this by giving leadership at the site the opportunity to read a draft of transcripts in which they are participants before undertaking analysis. I will also include the transferring of ownership in the initial contract. I may also share some transcripts with pupils (only those that are in the interviews being transcribed), although I have been advised that they could feel intimidated by being offered long pieces of written transcripts to read.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Methods used for data collection will include interviews (recorded and transcribed), observation, still photography, video diaries, field notes and relevant documentation from the school. Although staff have already indicated that they are willing to write a blog, I will endeavour not to increase their workload and cause them stress. Video diaries will be on the pupils' terms and undertaken when they wish to document. All data and material produced with these methods will be kept confidential and only included in the thesis with the participants' permission. In terms of photography, all photos that I intend to use will be uploaded to the site's private Facebook page weekly, to give pupils and staff the opportunity to request for specific photographs to be excluded. Parental permission for photographs of pupils to be taken has already been given. Both staff and pupils will decide together what I will be given access to in terms of artefacts, during the whole group meetings in the afternoon, if/when I choose to put in a specific request.

In terms of analysis, through triangulation, the use of multiple methods of enquiry and bringing together data from different sources, I aim to strengthen confidence in evidence collected, I may also be able to involve other observers. I hope to be able to develop relationships with peers and others who feel able to question the research processes and outcomes, and will seek to receive this openly.

I aim to allow each person's voice to be heard in the research, recognizing them as real people with real agency. It is important for me to acknowledge that my answers are not

superior to any other perspectives (see final section below), and that my research may have consequences in the lives of the lives of the participants. I would like decision-making in the research to come out of working towards an equalized power relationship where I aim to become attuned to the everyday concerns of those involved.

In tune with the values set out above, these co-participative principles have been the subject of in depth discussion with staff at and associated with the school, and to an extent with potential pupil participants, over a number of months in preparation for this formal process of ethical research approval.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

Participants will be reassured of safe storage of data. This will be locked in the office at the alternative provision site or locked through password/key at my residence. If any issues of distress occur in this matter, I will seek advice from my supervisors and/or other professionals.

In terms of special needs, no pupils are statemented at present. One pupil has a personal education plan, which remains locked in the site office. One pupil is diabetic, who may leave any interview situation suddenly to attend to blood sugar level.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

In framing the research problem, questions and methods and in making choices, research participants can unintentionally be denied power since researchers have their own cultural agendas, concerns, and interests. I am keen to acknowledge my subjectivity and account for any biases regarding participants with an aim of reflexive practice.

This type of critical theory research is at risk of deciding on behalf of the participants that they are oppressed or that they need an advocate for a certain issue. I aim to always be aware of this and to practise critical listening.

Where there may be tension between respect for democracy, truth and persons, I aim to take counsel from other researchers, especially my supervisors, and will include in my thesis a discussion of the issues involved and how I have chosen to resolve them.

---

*This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

This project has been approved for the period: Wed 6th January 2010   **until: July 2011**

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): ...ARull...........................date:...b|12|09...........

N.B. **To Supervisor:** *Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.*

SELL unique approval reference:...........D|09|10|27.............

Signed:......Salah J....li...........................date:...11|12/2009.......
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Bibliography

Abbott, J., 2010. *Overschooled but undereducated: How the crisis in education is jeopardizing our adolescents.* London: Continuum.

Arendt, H., 1977. *Between past and future: Eight exercises in political thought.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Arnot, M. and Reay, D., 2007. A sociology of pedagogic voice. *Discourse*, 28(3), pp.327-342.

Atkinson, P. and Delamont, S., 1985. Bread and dreams or bread and circuses? A critique of 'case study' research in education. In: M. Shipman, ed. 1985. *Educational Research. Principles, Policies and Practices*. London: Falmer, pp. 26-45.

Baker, S. A., 2012. From the criminal crowd to the "mediated crowd": The impact of social media on the 2011 English riots. *Safer Communities*, 11(1), pp.40-49.

Bakhtin, M.M., 1981. *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Edited by M. Holquist. Translated by C. and M. Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M., 1986. Speech genres and other late essays. Edited by C. Emerson and M. Holquist.Translated by V.W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Ball, S.J., 1990. *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Ball, S., 2001. Performatives and fabrications in the education economy: towards the performative society. In: D.Gleeson and C. Husbands, eds. 2001. *The performing school: managing, teaching and learning in a performance culture*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Ball, S. J., 2003. *Class strategies and the education market: The middle classes and social advantage*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Bank of England, 2008. *Inflation Report.* [pdf] Available at: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/inflationreport/ir08nov.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2009].

Basini, A., 1981. Urban schools and 'disruptive pupils': a study of some ILEA support units, *Educational Review*, 33.3.

Bassey, M., 1999. *Case Study Research in Educational Settings.* Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Baumeister, R. F., and Leary, M. R., 1995. The need to belong: Desire for inter-personal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529.

BBC News UK, 2012. *England rioters 'poorer, younger, less educated'.* Available at: <www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15426720>. Accessed on 04 August 2012.

Bell, I., 2012. *Statistical bulletin on the public disorder of 6th to 9th August 2011 – February 2012 update.* London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/criminal-justice/public-disorder-august-11>.

Bell, J., 1991. *Doing Your Research Project.* 3rd ed. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Bell, W., 1997. *Foundations of futures studies, Vol. 1*. NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Bell, W., 2002. Making people responsible: The possible, the probable, and the preferable. In: J. A. Dator, ed. *Advancing futures: futures studies in higher education.* [pdf] Westport, CT: Praeger Studies on the 21st Century, pp.33-52. Available at: <http://www.yale.edu/sociology/faculty/pages/bell/MakingPeopleResponsible2.pdf> [Accessed 4 Sep 2012].

Bell, W., 2003. *Foundations of futures studies, Vol. 1: History, purposes, knowledge.* 2nd edition. NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Biesta, G. J. J., 2006. *Beyond learning: Democratic education for a human future.* Boulder: Paradigm.

Bishop, R., 2005. Freeing ourselves from neocolonial domination in research: A Kaupapa Maori approach to creating knowledge. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, eds. 2005. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research,* 109-138. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bloom, L. R., 1997. Locked in uneasy sisterhood: Reflections on feminist methodology and research relations. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 28(1), 111-122.

Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. K., 1992. *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Second edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Booth, T. and Coulby, D., eds., 1987. *Producing and Reducing Disaffection*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J-C., 1977. *Reproduction: In education, society and culture.* London: Sage.

Bradley, J., 1986. *Approaches to disruption. A review of the literature.* Slough: NFER.

Bragg, S., 2007. *Consulting young people: A review of the literature. A report for Creative Partnerships.* London: Arts Council England.

Bronfenbrenner, U., 1979. *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brookes, M., Goodall, E. and Heady, L., 2007. *Misspent youth: the cost of truancy and exclusion*, London: New Philanthropy Capital. Available at: <www.philanthropycapital.org/publications/education/truancy_and_exclusion/truancy_and_e xclusion_cost.aspx>. Accessed 14 February 2011.

Bruner, J., 1966. *Toward a theory of instruction*. London: Oxford University Press.

Bruner, J., 1996. *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bundick, M., 2012. *The active voice: The role of student voice in promoting students' engagement in school*. Commentary draft of paper presented at the AERA 2012 Conference in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, University of Pittsburgh.

Burnard, P. et al, 2006. Possibility thinking. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 14(3), pp.243-262.

Burr, V., 2003. *Social constructionism.* 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Busier, H. et al, 1997. Intimacy in research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), pp.165-170.

Bussey, M., 2008. Embodied education: Reflections on sustainable education. *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability,* 43(3), 139-147*.*

Bussey, M. and Inayatullah, S., 2008. Pathways: Alternative educational futures. In: M. Bussey, S. Inayatullah, and I. Milojevic, eds. 2008. *Alternative Educational Futures.* Rotterdam: Sense.

Bussey, M., Inayatullah, S. and Milojevic, I., eds. 2008. *Alternative Educational Futures.* Rotterdam: Sense.

CapeUK, 2009. Available at: <www.capeuk.org> [Accessed on 21.8.09].
Carspecken, P.F. and Apple, M., 1992. Critical qualitative research: Theory, method, and practice. In: M. LeCompte, W. Milroy, J. Preissle, eds. 1992. *The handbook of qualitative research in education.* Stamford, CT and London: Academic Press, pp.507-553.

Chappell, K., 2006. *Creativity within late primary age dance education: Unlocking expert specialist dance teachers conceptions and approaches.* Ph.D. London: Laban. Available at: <http://kn.open.ac.uk/public/document.cfm?documentid=8627>.

Chappell, K., 2006. *Creativity as individual, collaborative and communal.* Proceedings of dance and the child international conference. The Hague, July 2006, pp. 42–53.

Chappell, K., 2007. Creativity in primary level dance education: Moving beyond assumption. *Research in Dance Education*, 8(1), pp.27-52.

Chappell, K., 2008. Towards humanising creativity. UNESCO Observatory. E-Journal Special Issue. *Creativity, policy and practice discourses: productive tensions in the new millennium,* Volume 1, Issue 3, December 2008. <http://www.abp.unimelb.edu.au/unesco/ejournal/vol-one-issue-three.html>.

Chappell, K., 2008. Fostering creative learning. In: *AERA Annual Conference*, New York, NY.

Chappell, K., 2011. Journeys of becoming: Humanising creativity. In: K. Chappell, L. Rolfe, A. Craft and V. Jobbins, eds. 2011. *Close encounters: Dance partners for creativity*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.

Chappell, K., Craft, A., Burnard, P., Cremin, T., 2008. Question-posing and question-responding: The heart of 'possibility thinking' in the early years. *Early Years*, 28(3), pp.267-286.

Chappell, K., Craft, A., Rolfe, L., & Jobbins, V., 2009. Dance partners for creativity: Choreographing space for co-participative research into creativity and partnership in dance education. *Research in Dance Education Creativity Special Issue*, 10(3), pp.177-197.

Chappell, K. and Craft, A., 2011. Creative learning conversations: Producing living dialogic spaces? *Educational Research*, 53(3), pp. 363–385.

Chappell, K., Rolfe, L., Craft, A., Jobbins, V., eds., 2011. *Close encounters: Dance partners for creativity*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.

Charmaz, K., 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* London: Sage.

Clack, J., 2008. *An historical and analytical study of the progression and development of possibility thinking from conceptual development to today.* Unpublished masters dissertation, MSc in Educational Research Methods, University of Exeter, August 2008.

Claxton, G., 2008. *What's the point of school?* Oxford: Oneworld

Clough, P., 2002. *Narratives and fictions in educational research (Doing qualitative research in educational settings).* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cohen, J., 1999. Social and emotional learning past and present: A psychoeducational dialogue. In J. Cohen (Ed.), *Educating minds and hearts: Social emotional learning and the passage into adolescence.* New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 2–23.

Cohen, J., 2006. Social, emotional, ethical, and academic education: Creating a climate for learning, participation in democracy, and well-being. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(2), pp.201-237.

Cohen, L. , Manion, L. and Morrison, K., 2005. *Research Methods in Education*. 6th edition. Oxon: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K., 2007. *Research Methods in Education*. 7th edition. Oxon: Routledge.

Craft, A., 1999. Creative development in the early years: Some implications of policy for practice. *Curriculum* 10(1), pp.135-50.

Craft, A., 2000. *Creativity across the primary curriculum*: *Framing and developing practice.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Craft, A., 2001. Little c creativity. In A. Craft, B. Jeffrey and M. Leibling, eds., 2001. *Creativity in Education*. London: Continuum, pp.45-61.

Craft, A., 2002. *Creativity and early years education.* London: Continuum.

Craft, A., 2005. *Creativity in schools, tensions and dilemmas.* London: Routledge.

Craft, A., 2007. Possibility thinking in the early years and primary classroom. In: Tan, A.G., ed. *Creativity: A handbook for teachers*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, pp.231-250.

Craft, A., 2008. Creativity and early years settings. In: A. Paige-Smith and A. Craft, eds. 2008. *Developing reflective practice in the early years.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Craft, A., 2010. Possibility thinking and fostering creativity with wisdom: Opportunities and constraints in an English context. In R. Beghetto and J. Kaufman, eds. 2010. *Nurturing creativity in the classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Craft, A., 2011. Becoming meddlers in the middle. In K. Chappell, L. Rolfe, A. Craft, & V. Jobbins, eds. *Close encounters: Dance partners for creativity*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Craft, A. 2011(a). Creativity and early years settings. In A. Paige-Smith, & A. Craft, eds. 2011. *Developing reflective practice in the early years*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Craft, A., 2011(b). The possibilities are endless! *Teach Nursery*, 1(3), pp.49-50.

Craft, 2011(c). Approaches to creativity across the UK. In: J. Sefton-Green, P. Thomson, K. Jones and L. Bresler, eds. 2011. *The Routledge international handbook of creative learning*. London: Routledge.

Craft, A., Burnard, P., Grainger, T., 2005. *Research design for progression in creative learning project (PICL).* Funded by Creative Partnerships - internal working paper, January 2005.

Craft, A., and Chappell, K., 2009. Fostering possibility through co-researching creative movement with 7-11 year olds. In: S. Blenkinsop, and K. Egan, eds. *The imagination in*

education: Extending the boundaries of theory and practice. Newcastle upton Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Craft, A. and Chappell, K., 2008. Fostering possibility through co-researching creative movement with 7-11 year olds. *Proceedings of imaginative educational research group research symposium* held Vancouver, July 2007.

Craft, A., Chappell, K., and Twinning, P., 2008. Learners reconceptualising education: Widening participation through creative engagement? *Innovations in education and teaching international*, 43(3), pp.235-245.

Craft, A., Cremin, T., Burnard, P. and Chappell, K., 2008. Possibility thinking. In: A. Craft, T. Cremin, and P. Burnard, eds. 2008. *Creative learning 3-11 and how we document it.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Craft, A., Chappell, K., Burnard, P., Cremin, T. and Dragovic, T., 2008. *Possibility Thinking.* Paper presented at British Educational Research Association annual conference, Edinburgh, September 2008.

Craft, A., Cremin T., Burnard, P., Dragovic, T. & Chappell, K., 2012. Possibility thinking: Culminative studies of an evidence-based concept driving creativity? *Education* 3(13).

Craft, A., Grainger, T. and Burnard, P., 2005. Documenting creative learning: Reflections after the symposium. April 2005: unpublished working paper.

Craft, A. and Jeffrey, B., 2008. Creativity and performativity in teaching and learning: tensions, dilemmas, constraints, accommodations and synthesis. *British educational research journal,* 34(5), pp.577-584.

Craft, A., McConnon, L., and Matthews, A., 2012. Child-initiated play and professional creativity: Enabling four-year-olds' possibility thinking. *Thinking skills and creativity*, 7(1), pp.48-61.

Cremin, T., Burnard, P., and Craft, A., 2006. Pedagogy and possibility thinking in the early years. *International journal of thinking skills and creativity,* 1(2), Autumn 2006, pp.108-119 .

Creative Partnerships website, 2009. www.creative-partnerships.com. Accessed on 2.8.09.

Crotty, M., 1998. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.* London: Sage.

Csikszentmihalyi M., 1991. *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.* New York: Harper & Row.

Csikszentmihalyi, M.,1997. *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life.* New York: Basic Books.

Cullen, M.A., Fletcher-Campbell, F., Bowen, E., Osgood, J. and Kelleher, S., 2000. *Alternative Education Provision at Key Stage 4* (LGA Research Report 11). Slough: NFER.

DAISI website, 2008. www.daisi.org.uk. Accessed on 2 August 2009.
Dator, J., 2002. *Advancing futures: Futures studies in higher education.* New York: Praeger.

D'Angelo, F., and Zemanick, R., 2009. The Twilight Academy: An alternative education program that works. *Preventing school failure*, 53(4), pp 211-218.

DCSF, 2007. *Education and Skills, School Welfare, Behaviour and Attendance*. Statistical First Release, 26 June 2007. London: DCSF.

DCSF, 2008. *The White Paper, Back on Track: A strategy for modernising alternative provision for young people*. Available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm74/7410/7410.pdf> [Accessed on 07.07.2009].

Deasy, R., 2002. *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development.* Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1994. *What is philosophy?* London: Verso.

Denzin, N., 1997. *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dewey, J., 1897. My Pedagogic Creed (accessed online) Dewey, J., 1897, My Pedagogic Creed. *School Journal, 54*, 77-80. Available at: <http://dewey.pragmatism.org/creed.htm>

Dewey, J., 1902. *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J., 1916. *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press.

Dewey, J., 1933. *How we think.* New York: Heath and Co.

Dewey, J., 1958. *Experience and education.* New York: Macmillan.

Denscombe, M., 1995. Explorations in group interviews: an evaluation of a reflexive and partisan approach. *British educational research journal*, 21(2), pp131-148.

Denscombe, M., 1998. *The good research guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

DfE, 2012. *Alternative Provision.* Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00211923/alternative-provision>. Accessed on 1 June 2012.

DfE, 2012, www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001080/sfr17-2012.pdf, as accessed on 02.08.12.

DfES, 2005. *14–19 Education and Skills.* London: DfES.

Dictionary.com, 2009. <www.dictionary.com>. Accessed on 2.8.09.

Diener, E., 2012, New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research. *American Psychologist*, 67(8), p. 590.

Disch, L.J., 1994. *Hannah Arendt and the limits of philosophy.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Droogsma, R., 2005. *Infusing the critical research paradigm with activism: The case for activist research in intercultural communication.* <http://www.allacademic.com//meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/9/0/9/3/pages190930/p 190930-1.php> Accessed on 2 August 2009.

Dweck, C., 2000. *Self theories: Their role in motivation, personality and development*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Eastman, A., 2011. *No excuses: A review of educational exclusion*. London: Centre for Social Justice.

Egan, K., 1997. *The educated mind: How cognitive tools shape our understanding.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Egan, K., 2008. *The future of education, Reimagining our schools from the ground up*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Elias, M. et al., 1997. *Promoting social and emotional learning: A guide for educators*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Ellis, C. and Flaherty, M., eds. 1992. *Investigating subjectivity research on lived experience.* Thousand Oaks: Sage

Ellsworth, E. and Miller, J.L., 1996. Working difference in education. *Curriculum Inquiry.* 26(3), pp.245-263.

Emmison, M., 2004. The conceptualization and analysis of visual data. In: D. Silverman, *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Exclusion Appeals In England, 2007/08. Statistical First Release. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000860/SFR18_2009.pdf> Accessed on 4 August 2009.

Facer, K., 2012. *Education, the problem of the future and the possibilities of the present in education research.* Preparation for Special Issue on 'Educational Futures' for the International Journal of Education Research.

Farrell, E., 1990. *Hanging in and dropping out: Voices of at risk high-school students*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Fattore, T., Mason, J. and Watson, E., 2009. When children are asked about their well-being: Towards a framework for guiding policy. *Child Indicators Research* 2, pp. 57–77.

Feinstein, L. and Duckworth, K., 2006. Development in the early years: Its importance for school performance and adult outcomes. *Wider Benefits of Learning, Research Report No. 20, November 2006.* London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education.

Fielding, M., 2001. Students as radical agents of change. *Journal of Educational Change, 2*(2), pp.123-141.

Fielding, M., 2007. The Human cost and intellectual poverty of high performance schooling: Radical philosophy, John MacMurray and the remaking of person-centred education. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 22(4), pp.383-409.

Fielding, M. and Moss, P., 2011. *Radical education and the common school: A democratic alternative.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Fielding, M. and Ruddock, J., 2002. *The transformative potential of student voice: Confronting the power issues.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Exeter, England, 12-14 September 2002.

Fine, M., 1994. Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, eds. 1994. *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Finney, J., Hickman, R., Morrison, M., Nicholl, B., and Rudduck, J., 2005. *Rebuilding engagement through the Arts: Responding to disaffected students*. Cambridge: Pearson.

Foucault, M., 1974. *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

Foucault, M., 1977. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London, Penguin.

Francis, B. and Mills, M., 2012. Schools as damaging organisations: Instigating a dialogue concerning alternative model of schooling. *Pedagogy Culture and Society*, 20(2), pp. 251-271.

Freimuth, V. S. and Mettger, W., 1990. Is there a hard-to-reach audience?. *Public Health Reports*, 105(3), pp.232-238.

Freire, P., 1972. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Freire, P., 1986. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Fuller, C., 2009. *Sociology, gender and educational aspirations.* London: Continuum.

Furman, G. C., 1998. Postmodernism and community in schools: Unraveling the paradox. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34(3), pp.298-328.

Gallagher, K. M., 2011. In search of a theoretical basis for storytelling in education research: Story as method. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 34(1), pp.49-61.

Galton, M., 2008. *Creative practitioners in schools and classrooms*. Final Report of the project: The Pedagogy of Creative Practitioners in Schools. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

Gann, F. M., 2011. *Groundwork: a practitioner's guide to building alternative education programs*. Bloomington: iUniverse.

Gardner, H., 1991. *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H., 1993. *Creating minds*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H., Kornhaber, M. and Wake, W., 1996. *Intelligence: Multiple perspectives.* Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Geertz, C., 1973. Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-30.

Gerver, R., 2010. *Creating tomorrow's schools today: Education - our children - their futures.* London: Continuum.

Glaser, B., 2002. Conceptualization: On theory and theorizing using grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 1(2), pp.23-38.

Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L., 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Goffman, E., 1961. *Asylums*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Goodenow, C., and Grady, K. E., 1993. The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), pp.60-71.

Gore, J., 2003. "What we can do for you? What can 'we' do for 'you'?" In: A. Darder, M. Baltodano and R. D. Torres, eds. 2003. *The critical pedagogy reader.* New York/London: Routledge Falmer, pp.331-348.

Gove, 2012. *Review of alternative provision*. Available at: <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/michael%20gove%20letter%20to%20charlie%20taylor%208%20march%202012.pdf> [Accessed on 18.08.2012].
Green, A., 2007. Children's commissioner for England at an education press meeting <www.free-school-from-government-control.com/press-reports-2007.html>.

Graham, A. and Fitzgerald, R., 2011. Supporting children's social and emotional well-being: Does 'having a say' matter? *Children and Society* Vol. 25 (2011), pp. 447–457.

Greene, M., 1995. *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Greene, M., 1997. Exclusions and awakenings. In A. Neumann and P.L. Peterson, eds. 1997. *Learning from our lives.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M., 2003. In search of critical pedagogy. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, and R. Torres, eds. 2003. *The critical pedagogy reader*. New York, London: Routledge Farmer, pp.97-112.

Greenwood, M., Chappell, K., Craft, A., Rolfe, L., Jobbins, V., 2011. *Dance partners for creativity: practitioner resource*. Available from: <http://0education.exeter.ac.uk.lib.exeter.ac.uk/dpc/> Accessed on 04.08.11.

Gruen, L., 2009. Attending to nature: Empathetic engagement with the more than human world. *Ethics & the Environment,* 14(2). Indiana University Press, pp.23-38.

Habermas, J., 1963. *Theory and Practice* (trans. J. Viertel). London: Heinemann.

Hadfield, M. and Haw, K., 2001. 'Voice', young people and action research: Hearing, listening, responding. *Educational Action Research*, 9(3), pp.485-499.

Hall, L., Woods, S., Aylett, R., Paiva, A. and Newall, L., 2005. Achieving empathic engagement through affective interaction with synthetic characters. In: J. Tao, T. Tan and R. W. Picard, eds. 2005. *Affective Computing and Intelligent Interaction*, LNCS 3784, pp. 731 – 738. Heidelberg: Springer.

Hammersley, M. and Traianou, A., 2012. *Ethics and Educational Research*. British Educational Research Association on-line resource. Available at < http://www.bera.ac.uk/category/keywords/ethics> [Accessed 12 April 2012]

Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., and Ryan, J., 1996. *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents.* Bristol, PA: Falmer.

Harrison, J., MacGibbon, L., and Morton, M., 2001. Regimes of trustworthiness in qualitative research: The rigors of reciprocity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(3), pp.323-345.

Hayes, D., Mills, M., Christie, P. and Lingard, B., 2006. *Teachers making a difference.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Henwood, K.L. and Pidgeon, N.F., 2003. Grounded theory in psychology. In P.M. Camic, J.E. Rhodes and L. Yardley, eds. *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press, pp131-155.

Hicks, D., 1994. *Educating for the future: A practical classroom guide.* Godalming, Surrey: WWF, UK.

Hicks, D., 2002. *Lessons for the future: The missing dimension in education.* London and New York: Routledge/Falmer.

Hicks, D., 2004. Teaching for tomorrow: How can futures studies contribute to peace education? *Journal of Peace Education* 1(2), pp.165-178.

Hicks, D., 2008. A futures perspective: Lessons from the school room. In M. Bussey, S. Inayatullah, and I. Milojevic, eds. 2008. A*lternative educational futures: Pedagogies for emergent worlds*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Hine, C., 2000. *Virtual Ethnography.* London: Sage.

Hirst, J. and Robertshaw, D., 2003. *Breaking the cycle of failure: examining the impact of arts activity on young people attending Pupil Referral Units in Doncaster.* Doncaster community Arts Journal.

Holquist, M., 2007. *Diologism: Bahktin and his world.* Kindle books.

Holt, J., 1970. *What do I do Monday?* New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc.

Home Office, 2011. *An overview of recorded crimes and arrests resulting from disorder events in August 2011.* London: Home Office. ISBN: 978-1-84987-586-8.

Honig, B., 1993. *Political theory and the displacement of politics.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hooks, B., 1984. *Feminist theory from margin to center.* Boston: South End Press.

Horkheimer, M., 1937. Traditional and critical theory. In: Horkheimer, M., 1972. *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* New York: Herder and Herder.

IAP (Inspiration Aspiration Partnership Project), 2007, DAISI website, <www.daisi.org.uk> Accessed on 12 July 2009.

Inayatullah, 2003., quoted within Mapping Educational Futures: Six Foundational Concepts and the Six Pillars Approach. In: Bussey, M., Inayatullah, S. and Milojevic, I., 2008. *Alternative Educational Futures.* Rotterdam: Sense.

Inayatullah, 2008., quoted within Images and Trends in Tension: The alternative futures of the university. In: Bussey, M., Inayatullah, S. and Milojevic, I., 2008. *Alternative Educational Futures*. Rotterdam: Sense.

Jackson, A.Y. and Mazzei, L.A. eds., 2009. *Voice in Qualitative Inquiry: challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research.* London: Routledge.

Jeffrey, B., 2005. Final Report of the Creative Learning and Student Perspectives Research Project (CLASP), A European Commission Funded project through the Socrates Programme, Action 6.1, Number 2002 – 4682 / 002 – 001. SO2 – 61OBGE. Milton Keynes: http://clasp.open.ac.uk.

Jeffrey, B. and Craft, A., 2003. *Creative teaching and teaching for creativity: distinctions and relationships.* Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Special Interest Group in Creativity in Education Conference, 3 February, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

Jeffrey, B. and Craft, A., 2004. Teaching creatively and teaching for creativity: Distinctions and relationships. *Educational Studies*, 30(1), pp.77-87.

Jeffrey, B. and Craft, A., 2006. Creative learning and possibility thinking. In Jeffrey, B., ed. 2006. *Creative learning practices: European experiences*. London: The Tufnell Press, pp.73-91.

Jeffrey, B. and Troman, G., 2004. Time for ethnography. *British Educational Research Journal.* 30(4), pp.535-548.

Jeffrey, B. and Woods, P., 2003. *The creative school: A framework for success, quality and effectiveness*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Jeffery, G., ed. 2005. *The creative college: Building a successful learning culture in the arts*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Jeffery, G. and Ledgard, A., 2009. *The TAPP (Teacher Artist Partnership Programme) model and what we learned through developing it.* [pdf] Leeds: CapeUK. Available at: <http://www.capeuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/CapeUK_TAPP_01.pdf> [Accessed 1 August 2012] p49.

Jeffrey, R. and Craft, A., 2001. The universalization of creativity. In: A. Craft, R. Jeffrey and M. Leibling, eds. 2001. *Creativity in education*. London: Continuum.

Jones, N. and Sumner, A., 2009. Does mixed methods research matter to understanding childhood well-being? *Social Indicators Research* 90, pp. 33–50.

Kidger, J., Gunnell, D., Biddle, L., Campbell, R. and Donovan, J., 2010. Part and parcel of teaching? Secondary school staff's views on supporting student emotional health and well-being. *British Educational Research Journal* 36(6), pp. 919–935.

Kincheloe, J. L., and McLaren, P., 2005. Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, eds. 2005. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd ed., pp.303-342. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kinder, K., Wilkin, A., Moor, H., Derrington, C. and Hogarth, S., 1999. Raising Behaviour: 2. Nil exclusion: policy and practice. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Kinderman, P., Schwannauer, M., Pontin, E. and Tai, S., 2011. The development and validation of a general measure of well-being: The BBC well-being scale*. Quality of Life Research*, 20, pp.1035–1042.

Kvale, S., 1996. *Interviews*. London: Sage.

Laevers, F., 1993. Deep level learning: An exemplary application on the area of physical knowledge. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 1(1), pp.53-68.

Larson, C., 1997. Re-presenting the subject: Problems in personal narrative inquiry. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(4), pp.455-470.

Larsson, J. and Dahlin, B., 2012. Educating far from equilibrium: Chaos philosophy and the quest for complexity in education. *Complicity: An international journal of complexity and education,* 9(2), pp. 1-14.

Lather, P., 1993. Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *Sociological Quarterly*, 34, 673-694.

LeCompte, M. and Preissle, J., 1993. *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research.* Second edition. London: Academic Press.

Lee, R. M., 1993. *Doing research on sensitive topics*. London: Sage Publications.

Levin, B., 2000. Putting students at the centre in education reform. *International Journal of Educational Change*, 1(2), pp.155-172.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Zilber, T., 1998. Narrative research: Reading, analysis and interpretation. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Applied social research methods series volume 47.

Lincoln, Y. S., 1995. Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 1(3), pp.275-289.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba E. G., 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lindlof, T. R. and Taylor, B. C., 2002. *Qualitative communication research methods*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Linell, P., 2009. *Rethinking language, mind and world dialogically: Interactional and contextual theories of human sense-making.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Littlejohn, S. W., 2002.*Theories of human communication.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Lovell, J. and Cooper, P., 1997. Positive alternatives to school exclusion: An empirical investigation. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 2(3), pp.12-22.

Lupton, R., 2003. *Poverty street: The dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Lyotard, J-F., 1984. *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

MacDonald, B., and Walker, R., 1975. Case study and the social philosophy of educational research. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 5(1), pp.2-12.

MacLure, M., 2006. The bone in the throat: Some uncertain thoughts on baroque method. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(6), pp.729-745.

Malinowski, B., 1961. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: an Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagos of Melanesian New Guinea.* New York: Dutton.

Malone, T. W., 1981. Towards a theory of intrinsically motivating instruction. *Cognitive Science*, 5(4), pp:333-369.

Markus, H., and Nurius, P., 1986. Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), pp.954-969.

Marshall, M., 2011. Achieving successful outcomes through alternative education provision. *Literacy Today*, 66, pp. 25-26.

Mason, C., Steedly, K., and Thormann, M., 2005. *The impact of arts integration: Voice, choice and access*. Washington, DC: VSA Arts.

Maxwell, L., 2006. The long arm of the law. *Education Week*, 26(8), pp. 25–28.

Mazzei, L.A. and Jackson, A.Y., 2009. The limit of voice. In A. Jackson & L. Mazzei, eds. *Voice in qualitative inquiry: Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research*. (1-13). London: Routledge.

McGonigal, J., 2004. Interactive or dialogic teaching? The case of the 'inspirational' teacher. *Westminster Studies in Education,* 27(2), pp.115-126.

McGrath, J. ed., 1970. *Social and psychological factors in stress.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

McGregor, G., Mills, M. and Thomson, P., 2012. Educating in the margins, lessons for the mainstream. In: T. Wrigley, P. Thomson and B. Lingard, Eds. *Changing schools: Alternative ways to make a world of difference*. London: Routledge, pp. 47-60.

McLellan, R., Galton, M., Steward, S. and Page, C., 2012. *The impact of creative partnerships on the wellbeing of children and young people.* Final Report to Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE).

McWilliam, E., 2008. Unlearning how to teach. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 45(3), pp.263-269.

Memidex online dictionary, 2012. Memidex.com/disaffection. [online] [Accessed on 03.08.2012]

Merleau-Ponty, M., 1964. *Le visible et l'invisible*. Paris: Gallimard.

Merleau-Ponty, M., 1968. *The Visible and the Invisible* (Edited by Claude Lefort and translated by Alphonso Lingis). Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2012, Merriam-Webster.com. [online] Merriam-Webster Incorporated [Accessed 10.08.2012]

Miller, R., 2011. Being without existing: The futures community at a turning point? A comment on Jay Ogilvy's 'Facing the fold'. *Foresight*, 13(4), pp.24-34.

Ministry of Justice, 2012. *August public disorder statistics bulletin*. Available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/statistics/criminal-justice-stats/public-disorder-stats/august-public-disorder-stats-bulletin-130912.pdf> [Accessed on 13.09.2012].

Mitra, D. L., 2004. The significance of students: Can increasing 'student voice' in schools lead to gains in youth development? *Teachers College Record*, 106(4), pp.651–688.

Morin, E., 1999. *Homeland earth*: *A manifesto for the new millennium.* Cresskill: Hampton Press.

Morrison, K. R. B., 1993. *Planning and accomplishing school-centered evaluation*. Norfolk: Peter Francis Publishers.

Morrison, K. R. B., 1995. *Habermas and the school curriculum*. Unpublished PHD thesis, School of Education, University of Durham.

Moser, C. and McIlwaine, C., 2004. *Encounters with violence in Latin America: Urban poor perceptions from Colombia and Guatemala*. London: Routledge, in Jones and Sumner ibid.

Munn, P., Lloyd, G. and Cullen, M.A., 2000. *Alternatives to exclusion from school.* London: Paul Chapman.

295

National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE), 1999. A*ll our futures: Creativity, culture and education*. London: Department for Education and Employment.

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), 2000. *Alternative education provision at Key Stage 4*. Available at: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/AEP01/AEP01.pdf> [Accessed on 22.07.2012].

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), 2006. *The longer term impact of creative partnerships on the attainment of young people*. Slough, NFER.

Nisbet, J. and Watt, J., 1980. Case Study. In: *Rediguide 26; Guides in Educational Research*. Nottingham University, School of Education. Oxford: TRC-Rediguides Ltd.

Nisbet, J. and Watt, J., 1984. Case study. In: J. Bell et al, eds. 1984. *Conducting small-scale investigations in educational management.* London: Harper and Row, pp.79-92.

O'Donoghue, T., 2007. *Planning your qualitative research project*. Oxon: Routledge.

OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education), 2006. *Creative partnerships: Initiative and impact*. London: Ofsted.

OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education), 2011. *Alternative provision*. Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100233> [Accessed on 11.08.2012].
Osterman, K., 2000. Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), pp.323-367

Oxford dictionary, 2009. www.ask-oxford.com. Accessed on 17.8.09.

Oxford English Dictionary, 2012. Oxford English Dictionary Online. [online] Oxford: Oxford University Press [Accessed 10.08.2012]

Oyserman, D., Terry, K., Bybee, D., 2002. A possible selves intervention to enhance school involvement. *Journal of Adolescence,* 25, pp.313-326.

Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D., 1976. Evaluation as illumination. In: D. Tawney, ed. 1976. *Curriculum evaluation today: Trends and implications.* London: Macmillan, pp.84-101.

Parsons, C., 1994. *Excluded primary school children: managing the debris.* Paper presented at the BERA conference, University of Oxford, Department of Educational Studies, September 8 -11.

Parsons, C., 2011. *Strategic alternatives to exclusion from school*. Revised edition. Stoke On Trent: Trentham

Pascal, C. and Bertram, A., eds. 1997. *Effective early learning: Case studies of improvement*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Peterson, C., Park, N., and Seligman, M. E. P., (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6(1), pp.25-41.

Pettigrew, S. F., 2000. Ethnography and grounded theory: A happy marriage? In: S. J. Hoch and R. J. Meyer, eds. *Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 27.* Association for Consumer Research, pp.256-260.

Pink, S., 2001. *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media and representation in research.* London: Sage.

Pope, R., 2005. *Creativity: Theory, history, practice.* Routledge, Oxon.

Pringle, E., 2008. Artists' perspectives on art practice and pedagogy. In J. Sefton-Green, ed. 2008. *Creative learning.* London: Creative Partnerships (www.creative-partnerships.com).

Prus, R. C., 1996. *Symbolic interaction and ethnographic research: Intersubjectivity and the study of human lived experience.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

QCA (Qualification and Curriculum Authority) and DfES (Department for Education and Employment), 2000. *Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.* London: Department for Education and Employment/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, 2011, *My Voice National Student Report (grades 6-12.)* [pdf] Available at: <http://www.qisa.org/publications/docs/MyVoiceNationalStudentReport (Grades6-12) 2011.pdf> [Accessed 22 July 2012].

Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (QISA), 2012. *Three guiding principles.* Available at: <http://www.qisa.org/publications/docs/ThreeGuidingPrinciples.pdf> [Accessed on 05.06.2012].

Rathbone, 2005. *Chorley: LEAP (Lancashire Education Alternative Provision)* Available at: <http://www.rathboneuk.org/location.aspx?ID=21>. Accessed on 3 August 2012.

Reinharz, S., 1997. Who am I? The need for a variety of selves in the field. In R. Hertz, ed., 1997. *Reflexivity and voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rhodes, M., 1961. An analysis of creativity. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 42(7), Apr. 1961, pp.305-311.

Richardson, L., 1992. The consequences of poetic representation. In C. Ellis and M. G. Flaherty, eds. *Investigating subjectivity: Research on lived experience.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.125-137.

Richardson, L., 2000. Writing: A method of inquiry. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, eds. 2000. 2nd ed. *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

297

Riessmann, C., 1993. *Narrative Analysis.* London: Sage.

Riessman, C. K., 2004. Narrative analysis. In M. S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Futing Liao, eds. 2004. *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.705-709.

Riot From Wrong, 2012. Online video available at: < http://riotfromwrong.com/> [Accessed on 3 Sept 2012].

Roberts, P., 2006. *Nurturing creativity in young people: A report to government to inform future policy*. London: DCMS.

Robson, C., 2002. *Real world research.* Second edition. Oxford: Blackwell.

Rogers, M., 1998. Student responses to learning about futures. In: D. Hicks and R. Slaughter, eds. 1998. *Futures Education: World Yearbook of Education*. London: Kogan Page.

Rolfe, L., 2009. Dance partners for creativity: Growing pains? Dance and the Child international conference paper /presentation. Jamaica, August 2009.

Rose, G., (2004). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
Rousseau, J-J.,1911. *Treatise on education*. D. Appleton and company / University of Minnesota.

Ruddock, J. and Flutter, J., 2000. Pupil Participation and Pupil Perspective: 'Carving a New Order of Experience.' *Cambridge Journal of Education* [on-line], 30 (1), 75-89.

Russell, L., 2007. Visual methods in researching the arts and inclusion: Possibilities and dilemmas. *Ethnography and Education,* 2(1), pp.39-55.

Ryff, C. D., 1989. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57, pp. 1069–1081.

Sanders, D., 1997. *New perspectives on disaffection*. London: Cassell.

Sardar, Z., 1985. *Islamic futures: The shape of ideas to come*. London: Mansell.

Schutz, A., 2001. John Dewey's conundrum: Can democratic schools empower? *Teachers College Record,* 103(2), pp.267-302.

Seligman, M. E. P., 2002. *Authentic happiness*. New York: Free Press.

Shank, G. and Brown, L., 2007. Exploring educational research literacy. Oxon: Routledge.

Sharples, M., 1999. *How we write: Writing as creative design*. London: Routledge

Simons, H., 1996. The paradox of case study. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26(2), pp.225-40.

Sky News, 2011. *London Teenage Looters Interviewed by Sky News*. Available at: < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqt_kdaJjFA> [Accessed 18 May 2012].

Slaughter, R., 2008. Beyond 'the Future of' Responding to the Civilisational Challenge. Available at: <http://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2008/20>.

Smith, G., 2006. *Hard-to-reach groups don't exist*. Delib <http://www.delib.co.uk/dblog/hard-to-reach-groups-don-t-exist>.

Smyth, J. and Hattam, R., 2004. *Dropping out, drifting off, being excluded: Becoming somebody without school*. New York: Peter Lang.

Solomon, D., Watson, M., Battistich, V., Schaps, E. and Delucchi, K., 1996. Creating classrooms that students experience as communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24(6), pp.719-748.

Snow, D.R., 2005. *Classroom strategies for helping at-risk students*. VA: ASCD

Spendlove, D. and Wyse, D., 2005. Definitions and barriers: Teachers' perceptions of creative learning. Presented at *International Symposium Documenting Creative Learning: What, How and Why?* University of Cambridge, April 2005.

Stake, R., 1995. *The art of case study research.* London:Sage.

Stake, R., 1998. Case studies. In: N. Denzin, and Y. Lincoln, eds. 1998. *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. London, Sage.

Stanley, L. and Wise, S., 1993. *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*. London: Routledge.

Stenhouse, L., 1985. Case study methods. In: T. Husen and T. N. Postlethwaite, eds. 1985. *International encyclopaedia of education.* First edition. Oxford: Pergamon.

Steuer, N., Marks, N., Thompson, S., Abdallah, S. and Michaelson, J., 2009. *National Accounts of Well-being.* London: New Economics Foundation.

Stirling, M., 1992. How many pupils are being excluded? British Journal of Special Education, 19(4), pp.128-130.

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J., 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J., 1994. Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln, eds. 1994. Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.273-285.

Stronach, I. and MacLure, M., 1997. *Educational research undone: The postmodern embrace.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Sturman, A., 1994. Case study methods. In: J. P. Keeves, ed. *Educational Research, Methodology and Measurement: an International Handbook.* 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon, pp.61-66.

Sullivan, P. and Porter, J. E., 1997. *Opening spaces: Writing technologies and critical research practices.* Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Swadener, B. B. and Lubeck S., Eds., 1995. *Children and families "at promise": Deconstructing the discourse of risk.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Taylor Report, 2012. http://www.brightgreenlearning.co.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Taylor%20Report%202012%20Summary.pdf

te Riele, K., 2009. *Making schools different: Alternative approaches to educating young people.* London: SAGE.

The Free Dictionary, 2012. Thefreedictionary.com/mission [online] [Accessed on 08.08.2012]

Thomson, P., 2002. *Schooling the rustbelt kids: Making the difference in changing times.* Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Thomson, P., 2008. Children and young people: Voices in visual research. In: P. Thomson, ed. 2008. *Doing visual research with children and young people.* London: Routledge, pp.1-19.

Thomson, P., Hall, C., Jones, K. & Sefton-Green, J., 2012. The signature pedagogies project Final Report. Newcastle upon Tyne: Creativity, Culture and Education. Available at: <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/Signature_Pedagogies_Final_Report_April_2012.pdf> [accessed on 18 October 2012].

Thomson, P.L., Hall, C. and Russell, L., 2006. An arts project failed, censored or...? A critical incident approach to artist-school partnerships. *Changing English.* 13(1), pp29-44.

Thomson, P. and Russell, R., 2007. *Mapping the alternatives to permanent exclusion.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/a0010414/what-is-alternative-provision>.

Thomson, P. and Russell, L., 2009. Data, data everywhere – but not all the numbers that count? Mapping alternative provisions for students excluded from school. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(4), pp.423-438.

Thomson, P. and Walker, M., 2010. Last words: Why doctoral study? In: P. Thomson and M. Walker, eds. *The Routledge doctoral student's companion: getting to grips with research in education and the social sciences.* London: Routledge, pp.390-403.

Tiberius, V., 2006. Well-being: Psychological research for philosophers. *Philosophy Compass*, 1(5), p 494.

Tierney, W.G. and Lincoln. Y.S., eds. 1997. *Representation and the text*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Trahar, S., 2010. Changing Landscapes and Shifting Identities in Higher Education, *International Conference on University Learning and Teaching*, University of Hatfield, Conference Contribution, 2010.

TREADZ, 2004. *An evaluation of a creative arts project taking place in Devon Pupil Referral Units.* Unpublished paper by DAISI <www.daisi.org.uk>.

Trinh, T. M-ha., 1992. *Framer framed*. New York: Routledge.

UNICEF, 2007. Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries. *Innocenti Report Card 7*, 2007, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.

Usher, P., 1996. Feminist approaches to research. In D. Scott and R. Usher, eds. 1996. *Understanding educational research.* London: Routledge, pp.120-142.
Vernon, P., 1989. The nature-nurture problem in creativity. In: J. Glover, R. Ronning and C. Reynolds, eds. 1989. *Handbook of creativity*. London: Plenum Press, pp.93-98.

Vygotsky, L. S., 1962. *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. S., 1978. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, and E Souberman, eds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Waldrop, M., 1992. *Complexity: The emerging science at the edge of order and chaos.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Walford, G., 2001. *Doing qualitative educational research process.* London: Continuum.

Walker, R., 1983. Three good reasons for not doing case studies in curriculum research. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 15(2), pp.155-165.

Walker, R. 1986. The conduct of educational case studies: ethics, theory and procedures. In: M. Hammersley, ed. 1986. *Controversies in classroom research.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Walkerdine, V., 1988. *The mastery of reason.* London: Routledge.

Wegerif, R., 2008. <http://www.rupertwegerif.name>. Accessed on 8th May 2009.

Wegerif, R., 2007. *Dialogic education and technology: Expanding the space of learning.* New York and Berlin: Springer. Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Series , Vol. 7 2007, XII, 338.

Wegerif, R., 2012. Dialogic Education in the Age of the Internet. Draft Chapter for *Meaning-Centered Education: International Perspectives and Explorations in Higher Education.* Edited by Olga Kovbasyuk. London: Routledge.

Weiner, B., ed. 1974. *Achievement motivation and attribution theory.* Morristown, New Jersey: General Learning Press.

Weiner, B., 1996. *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research.* Thousand Oaks : Sage.

Wexler, P., Crichlow, W., Kern, J. and Martusewicz, R., 1992. *Becoming somebody: Toward a social psychology of school.* London: Falmer Press.

Wigfield, A., 1994. Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation: A developmental perspective. *Educational Psychology Review*, 6(1), pp.49-78.

Wittgenstein, L., 1972. *Philosophical investigations.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Yin, R. K., 1994. *Case study research: Design and methods.* Second edition. London: Sage.

York, R., Heron, J.M. and Wolff, S., 1972. Exclusion from school. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 13(4), pp.259-266.

Zeichner, K., 2008. *Creating third spaces in the education of teachers and education researchers.* Notes/powerpoint from BERA 2008 keynote.