

TRACING THE MINDSHIFT IN PRESERVICE TEACHERS: LEARNING LANDSCAPES

by
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ABSTRACT

TRACING THE MINDSHIFT IN PRESERVICE TEACHERS: LEARNING LANDSCAPES

The search for quality and relevance in higher education curriculum drives educational reform. In 2004, research supporting an *'Inquiry into the suitability of current preservice teacher education courses'* was presented to the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Training in Victoria (Victorian Parliament, Education and Training Committee 2005) and another in 2009 titled, *'Inquiry into effective strategies for teacher professional learning'* Final report (Victorian Parliament, Education and Training Committee 2009). In response to this reconceptualisation of teacher education for the 21st century, questions have been raised by academics; and in this new context, debate and research are focussing on the hegemony of preservice teacher education (Shulman 1987; Cochran-Smith 2001; Loughran 2006). Reform of teacher education has been a focus of historical and contemporary community debate. The development of educational programs for teachers implies the generation of higher levels of thinking, metacognition and learning to enable preservice teachers to think about their own thinking (Pohl 2000). The aim of this research is to describe the layers of learning experiences and development involved in preservice teacher education and, in particular, to articulate a reflective pedagogical paradigm that is inherent in the process of becoming a reflective practitioner. Research into higher education plays a meaningful role by informing contemporary public debate and assisting in directing policy-makers in the development and optimisation of higher education.

Current pedagogical research and practice within the School of Education at Victoria University provides preservice teachers with an opportunity to work on innovative activities related to their teaching and learning, consequently providing them with appropriate educational structures and pedagogy. This research focuses on these existing teacher education practices in the light of socially (Freire 1978) and critically (Bourdieu 1998) reflective views in the existing context (Schön 1983).

This thesis explores the ways preservice teachers develop knowledge of teaching and learning and their cognitive landscapes as they become professional educators. The research seeks to investigate whether there is a mindshift presence for these participants, and the impact that such mindshifts have on their professional identity. Underpinning this study is the idea that the

experiences preservice teachers bring to their practice are relevant to shaping their development. The narratives acknowledge significant journeys of preservice teachers through a ‘montage of experiences’ which impact on the the generating of personal and professional practice.

Such experiences in conjunction with the establishment of educational and pedagogical knowledge contribute to the transition to becoming an effective contemporary teacher. The transition involves a form of mindshift towards contemplation of the nature of teaching and learning.

This research contains a review of literature exploring a range of theory, research findings and connections in higher education teaching and learning and is located in a university setting in Victoria, Australia. The review explores many socio-cultural, political, philosophical and educational elements in the related literature to establish links between those factors that bring about mindshift during teacher development.

Data are derived from interviews with 10 preservice teachers and focus on developing an understanding of the mindshift transition, concepts, issues and observations held by and elicited from them during their journey and experiential learning. Data have been gathered through conversations which encouraged dialogues enabled through artful practice. Such an approach aims to explore the importance of conversation to the exploration of the ‘montage of experience’ in reflective art work by accepting and utilising the fact that art making practice acts as a space from which preservice teacher participants can engage with and voice their personal, professional and vocational experiences and reflections.

The research is conducted as a qualitative ethnographic study. The thesis proceeds through individual narratives of participants to a synthesising conclusion which identifies some significant emerging themes from conversations. These themes are drawn together into a meaningful list of characteristics for teacher education programs and academics to consider when designing preservice teacher curriculum and for graduates when entering the field.

The results of the research show potential for shaping the educational structure and approaches in higher education. By involving matters that relate to thoughtful post-structural approaches and contemporary pedagogical theory, the study presents some deep insights and aims to contribute to better informed policy, planning and to improved teaching and learning practice in teacher education.

STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Julie Arnold, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Tracing the mindshift in preservice teachers: Learning landscapes* is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive tables, figures, bibliography references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

.....

Julie Arnold

Date:

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DEDICATION

To Greer and Lily

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND: LOCATING THE RESEARCH

My interest in preservice teacher education has many dimensions, but I am particularly interested in the development of preservice teachers in relation to the contextualised learning that contributes to deeper thinking processes and disposition. In 2007, while observing preservice teachers in school practicum, it struck me, as I see it in the field that these people arrive at their professional role through a dazzling variety of rich and lived experiences. While watching preservice teachers in the process of learning, it is at times possible to see ‘aha’ or ‘light bulb’ moments where understanding is reached and there comes a sense of recognising the transition; often the process appears seamless, but it has great impact on the learner. I became curious about the seemingly undervalued breadth of knowledge already established in and possessed by my students. As both a constructivist and researcher, I felt it should be possible to identify those learning moments where understanding regarding their common pedagogical aims took shape in these eclectic groups of individuals. It is exciting for the constructivist researcher to observe the transition; when the existence of preservice teacher prior knowledge becomes the pedagogical platform for building on and strengthening teacher understanding.

Stories and accounts of sound and well-developed values revealing ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al. 1992; Zipin 2009) are particularly evident when preservice teachers plan and implement lessons in classrooms in school settings and subsequently, when they reflect on their classroom practice (Dewey 1963; Schön 1983; and Van Manen 1995). Mentor teachers and university colleagues often term this an ‘aha’ (Nieto 2013), or ‘light bulb’ moment for preservice teachers. This research seeks to trace the conditions and the contributors that provide this type of learning, by examining the experiences and following the mindshift of preservice teachers in their final year of their degree.

Initial observations over 30 years of teaching led me to the hypothesis that a change in mindshift among preservice teachers could be in some way empirically appraised. I had seen changes in behaviour and attitude of these preservice teachers as they progressed through their learning. This thesis originated in my own professional and personal desire to explore how such a change could

come about—and if it could be induced and made measurable. The data from the interviews and art making are actually a concrete representation of a mindshift—particularly of a cognitive and intellectual shift.

As the work developed the inquiry held connections from my perspective of innovation and uniqueness and the mindshift connections which became apparent were touched upon in my investigation but had been previously explored—though not to this end—by various theoreticians, not only from pedagogy but also from literature and philosophy. It would seem in fact that this mindshift is—to varying degrees—a common human experience, albeit an individual and personal experience. It is in this sense, then, that the mindshift observed by this thesis is at once a phenomenon which occurs (and sometimes many times in a person's life), is qualitative, and occurs to varying degrees of depth of self-learning and awareness in the individual.

Surprisingly, I found the process of mindshift has a depth of practice requiring further questions, so, there are questions of method and philosophy and the notions of self and experience in learning and self-awareness that are incapable of resolution. I seek not to be prescriptive in my analysis of the phenomenon but rather to be descriptive of its unfolding. By so doing I hope that further more informed and indeed, enlightened research into the topic will occur.

Given this recognisable personal enlightenment—from start to finish—on the part of the researcher, I am confident that there exists from observations a distinguished 'praxis'—a process or protocol which may be generalisable. In this sense, then, I seek to invite the reader to partake of this process, to, in effect, become a third presence at the data collection stage, capable of applying their own evaluative lens to my observations and my participants' activities in a way that draws from their own experiences of parallel phenomena.

I was reluctant to relinquish my established position as a teacher in order to conduct the research in this thesis. This is partly driven by the underlying notion of praxis inquiry to which I ascribe—and which will be discussed at length later—which deliberately does not delineate between learning and actions (Schön 1983). Thus, as I am a teacher of some years standing, it is incumbent upon me to maintain that role to some extent. In fact, it must be admitted that in many ways it is impossible for me to discard this cloak.

This thesis, then serves as an invitation to the reader to engage in a three way conversation: a discussion, that recognises not only that change in mindset is ubiquitous but also that the form it takes is recognisable and familiar to each person. These kinds of enlightenment occur all the time and to all people.

The research topic under investigation in this thesis explores the ways in which ten preservice teachers develop knowledge of teaching and learning practice as they become professional

educators. This research seeks to investigate whether there is a mindshift presence for these participants, and the impact that such mindshifts have on their professional identity. The research is located in one university setting in Victoria, Australia. Given the sample size of this study is small, the findings speak only on behalf of the participants involved. In this respect, the findings do not seek to generalise and speak on behalf of all preservice teachers involved in Bachelor of Education teacher education programs, but provide an account of ten preservice teachers.

By building on research undertaken by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999), this investigation focuses on the power and relevance of mindset in preservice teacher education that is presumed to play an important role in the development, socialisation and induction of teachers to the world of comprehensive practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999). It is possible for most teachers (and teacher researchers) to appraise and to gauge understanding, even if, as David Perkins points out, this may be merely a case of '[w]e know it when we see it' (Perkins 1998, p. 41). Teachers seek to identify these very moments of understanding when probing their students to explain what, how and when they know. Tracing such 'what', 'when' and 'how' transitions within the learning and development of teachers themselves in the manner undertaken in this research will assist university educational reform and further understanding and improvement of the professional development of preservice teachers.

Teacher education has emerged and moved on from the mere acquisition of skills, content and competencies (Eisner 1994). Therefore and importantly in this research, by adopting a hegemonic and reflective approach (Schön 1983; Fullen & Hargreaves 1991; Schulman 1999) this is an attempt primarily to establish a perspective derived from the students' viewpoint rather than proceeding from a purely academic spectrum. The 'ability to think and act flexibly with what one knows' (Perkins 1998, p. 40) is a simple definition that represents the shifting landscape when describing the profound learning moments in preservice teacher performance. The shift in paradigm from skills acquisition has placed the preservice teacher in a demanding and highly intellectualised position. Teachers are now understood to be learners and researchers themselves (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, & LeCornu 2003) and are situated in the 21st century within challenging environments where learning has come to be understood as a 'set of cultural, social, and institutional processes that occur *throughout* an individual's life' (Maher & Harford 2004, p. 5, emphasis added). Learning should never be entirely commodified; it is an integrated social activity that takes place within and between humans (Dewey 1938; Eisner 1994).

The emerging themes that have developed from the data—for that is what a methodology achieves: the imposed themes—are to a large extent my own personal delineations of human character. These specific priorities on my part are of course to a large extent arbitrary and contingent on my own life and life story; other researchers may choose to examine different aspects of their subjects' life worlds. And that is to be encouraged for, even though the particular human aspects

or themes discussed here may be contentious, the fact that some change in attitude and behaviour does take place is incontrovertible and requires further examination.

For many, the role of the educator implies that the individual possesses an inherent ability to be transformative in his or her vision through recognition of the connection between self and context. Successful educators, and indeed, preservice teachers, are those who are able to be critical of their own limitations and who, in the process, create visions of pathways that will necessarily lead to an enriched professional status. This process is cyclic and continuous. Reflective practitioners are committed to re-conceptualising themselves as both learners and teachers and embrace a contextual approach to self-discovery. Researchers have struggled to understand preservice teachers' mindshift as they move towards becoming a professional practitioner. The process of self-discovery itself generates a particular kind of mindshift that is likely to influence professional philosophy and practice. This research locates and traces the authenticity and applicability of various parameters of the process of 'mindshift'.

Teachers should be regarded as multidimensional beings (Fullen & Hargreaves 1991) willing to conceptualise their own evolving selves as teachers (Kemmis & Smith 2008). Such conceptualisation requires on their part a willing disposition, and an aptitude for adopting varied teaching capacities and circumstances. This research investigates the processes of contemporary teacher education, the development of preservice teachers and their movement toward becoming professional and reflective, self-conceptualising practitioners.

Reflecting on practicum has become one way for preservice teachers to consider the increasingly important responsibility to see themselves as learners. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2003) suggest that such thinking should be expanded to encompass considering the 'teacher as learner', 'teacher as researcher' and 'teacher as reflective practitioner' (p. 160). It is argued that these are some of the ideas that could be used to signify changes that have occurred in re-conceptualising teaching (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2003; Loughran 2006). It is by providing new perspectives and directions—directions that nourish this metamorphosis so as to inform the processes for teaching and learning—that this research aims to contribute to insights that address the ever-changing situations that university lecturers and higher education leaders—those who teach the teachers to teach—must face.

In the tradition of Dewey (1938), who suggested the need for an approach to inquiry for the development of a critical perspective, this research attempts to explore the perspectives of participants with a view to examining the self and emerging personal critique (Freire 1978; Bourdieu 1984; Giroux 1997; Kincheloe 1993; McLaren 1998). This sense of self-knowledge is captured by Loughran when he reminds us the teacher self comes about by

exploring the nature of concerns and the manner in which they develop and shift throughout the course of a teacher preparation program, the need to better understand oneself inevitably emerges. For students of teaching there is a need to ‘come to know oneself’ and in so doing, to use such knowledge to help shape the development of the professional self through recognition of, and response to, the behaviours, competencies, beliefs, identity and mission that influence the manner in which the self functions, and influences the nature of, a teaching and learning environment. (Loughran 2006, p. 121)

QUALITATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY

Qualitative ethnographic research (Huberman & Miles 1994) is useful to further explain and understand perspectives of preservice teachers. Qualitative data by means of interviews and artwork enabled an organised process to examine deeply perspectives and conceptual choices and decisions. Often focusing on questions to understand and illuminate meaning, a qualitative methodology can be flexible in its adaptation of how to develop an appropriate methodological approach or style (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Attride-Stirling 2001; Chase 2005; Prosser 2008; Mason 2012; Aspland 2015). Qualitative method fits this study by foregrounding the generative data as participants delve into their development as they move fully into their roles as professional practitioners. Educational ethnography is historically concerned with issues, tensions and tackling questions of agency and structures in schooling (Yon 2003). In this study, the findings from data drive the research by means of documenting the participants’ stories. From the beginning, this methodology appeared to hold great potential for the presentation of emergent themes relating to learning. To this end, this study provides stories of events, relationships and circumstances and emerges as data which record the authentic voices of preservice teachers—data that relate and connect personal themes of philosophy, learning, ethos, energy and the metacognitive nature of these human beings.

When framing the question for this research, I attempted to identify an appropriate method for tracing and documenting preservice teachers’ mindshift in their learning and an approach enabling rich dialogic engagement. A multimodal method as outlined was chosen to build and heighten conversation with preservice teachers to penetrate depths of meaning on the topic of mindshift. I use the term ‘mindshift’ on the assumption that beliefs and human attributes can shift (Dweck 2012). Dweck refers to this shift in mindset as ‘a growth mindset (or an incremental theory)’ (Dweck 2012, p. 615) and she states these people can increase effort to develop their learning and ‘take steps to develop their personality or moral character over time’ (Dweck 2012, p. 615). The term ‘mindshift’ implies a temporal intellectual and personal state. As the researcher and working alongside, I was more able to observe or search for the shift. Qualitative ethnographic

method provided a valuable process for tracing this movement, which enabled practical encounter, engagement and art, which is only gained by qualitative process.

Interpreting data assisted in generating new ideas and connections. A thematic network (Attride-Sirling 2001) was developed as a tool for organising emerging characteristics described by the participants. As a tool, it is limited to emphasising connections, but does not construct nor generate analysis. So, there was a framework identified for the analytical interpretation that directed this investigation by means of an approach that provided in-depth discussion embedded and interacted within the narratives. A process for reviewing narrative data for analysis aligned with the tradition of interpretive methods (Savin-Baden & Major 2013) highlights epiphanies and themes. In addition to the interpretive process, Denzin (2001) offers a framework for classifying the epiphanic nature of the narratives. Interpreting the results of the conversations was appropriate and, as the interpreter, I wanted to take a closer, deeper look at the process and interpretive and interactive methods and to explore strategies for making connections from the participants' narratives. Given interpretive interactionists are 'interpreters of problematic, lived experiences involving symbolic interaction between two or more persons' (Denzin 2001, p. 32), this approach made it possible to construct a framework for the researcher (and the reader) which revealed tensions and experiences of the preservice teacher when learning.

The research aims to invite the reader too, to reflect on the retelling of stories and lived experiences. It does this by presenting the stories which detail various pathways adopted or adapted by 10 preservice teachers that have led them to teacher education and recount the moments whereby each have crafted their professional (and personal) identities. An interpretative dialogue runs alongside the accounts and is one of the key features for seeking out emerging themes and frames the ethnographic method and in this instance it proved a valid method.

CRITICAL DIALOGUE

Concerned with transformative education rather than transfer of content, I am trying to foreground reflective dialogue for critical and transformative practice and the opportunity for broader reflexivity and a shift in selfhood. It is the process of opening dialogue for reflective and reflexive opportunity which may be lacking in these preservice teachers. My intentions rather than contentions are set on activating reflective practice in this research, not only to investigate responses of the participants, but especially to research the role of art making using painting to facilitate conversation to illuminate transformation.

Investigating the process and possibility of furthering transformative teacher education; one which explicitly takes place within a hegemonic education system of guided self-reflection and self-

discovery as is advocated by Freire (1996). With this in mind, my position as a preservice teacher educator means that I, by default, assume an elite position within that hegemony. So, who are the parties to this dialogue and what are the particular dominant ideologies that are in common? Throughout this thesis, an attempt is made to work alongside participants where meaning making is co-created rather than dictated by a position of privilege.

Investigating the development of preservice teachers as conducted in this study also embraces the notions of a philosophy of emancipatory action (Freire 1996) of self-knowledge (Giroux 1997) and of respecting the construct of 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1983). The following section provides an appraisal of these various underlying approaches and attempts, by aligning them with a literature review that in part addresses various aspects of the research process, to construct a vision of the framework underlying the study itself. Before embarking on that journey, however, it seems appropriate to briefly expand on the notion of emancipatory action in order to underline its importance to the dialogic construction of this study.

Paolo Freire's theory of oppression embarks on a critique of a perceived socio-political and cultural divide (Freire 1996). Freire is deeply concerned with the role of pedagogy and the intrinsic link to the process of political struggle. His notion of conscientisation is connected to education that, in essence, deconstructs social relations so as to show deeply driven contradictions in the hegemonic dialogue in the broader context of society (Freire 1972 1996). He argues that the actions of dominant elites impose anti-dialogical conditions and consequently comprise oppressive action. It is Freire's notion of dialogical action (or inaction) which is fundamental to this research and pedagogy and has been designed with intentions to foreground dialogue and the social act. When a dialogical context is constructed between those in authority and the communities they oversee a critical process for transfer of power to the community is initiated and it is with this same manner and tone that interviews are conducted in this study. It is the socio-political context of dialogic that enables the personalisation and establishment of relational values in this methodological approach. This is not to say authority cannot and does not co-exist since a 'dialogical theory of action opposes both authoritarianism and license, and thereby, affirms authority and freedom. There is no freedom without authority, but there is only authority without freedom' (Freire & Faundez 1989, p. 159). For participants in this study, it is the awareness and understanding of the balance of power that is particularly important. Additionally, it is the awareness of political and social constructs that influence one's notion of being in the world that may contribute to shaping the broader pedagogical thinking around educational and research processes for the participating preservice teachers. This reflective process is undoubtedly an important approach when catering for diversity among preservice teachers in this educational setting.

A Freirian philosophy presents educational research with challenges because of its implications for the critique of methodologies. This methodology calls attention to the *nature* of research inquiry

in a way that considers pathways that enable participants to engage in questioning, thoughtful and rigorous critique processes. It is only in the fostering of opportunities for ‘reflection in action’ that there can evolve a greater insight into and a resistance of dominant ideologies. Change, following on from the acquisition of a critical lens, is more likely to evolve.

Peter McLaren (in Giroux & McLaren 1994) speculates on the challenges of postmodern social theory to deal with human experience. He claims modernity has tended to cloud reason and meaning and, in the search for understanding, has created what he terms a ‘labyrinthian path of enlightenment’ (Giroux & McLaren 1994, p. 196). Additionally, postmodern social theory has revealed that the existence of cultural and social forces often lack the critical aspects that are gained through language and practice (Giroux & McLaren 1994). In this study, such a critical dialogue is formed ethnographically in that it engages with ‘human centred’ lived experience; thus it has connections with emancipatory practices in these instances by virtue of its critique on cultural funds of knowledge. In the tradition of Freire, Giroux and McLaren (1994) suggests that many educators and social researchers must engage in this kind of critique in order to ‘redefine the relationship between culture and politics in order to deepen and extend the basis for transformative and emancipatory practice’ (Giroux & McLaren 1994, p. 30). This methodological position allows for a space to consider autonomy, ‘freedom’ and reflection in action. The participants identify competing boundaries of authority and the sense of their transformation that occurs throughout this reflective process.

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCHER

When research is designed through visual and intertextual approaches both the participant researcher and the readers of the text are provided with ways to read the multiple storylines. Without visibility in mind we are unlikely to understand how to enact curriculum for all or develop the conceptual and professional knowledge required to design curriculum research for globalised and hyper-real times. (Moss 2011, p. 300)

The origins of this thesis lie in the unfolding of a mindshift on my own part. Suddenly, and one of the characteristics of this phenomenon is its suddenness, I realised that I had been hearing reports from my students over a long period of time that related changes in their attitudes, outlook, teaching and learning and also towards their chosen occupation during their years as preservice teachers. And I noticed this occurred for me too. When observing preservice teachers in their practicum classrooms, I reflect on many elements of their work, but more recently the notion that something is happening to these people that make the work and effort they are investing in during their preservice teacher years, qualitatively different to just getting the right marks or qualifications for a job. For me, I wondered if there was an awakening of a sense of vocation, of a calling, or mindset which cultivated towards teaching.

It occurred to me that I was holding up a mirror. I had experienced sudden moments of awakening, where a sudden realisation of deeper meaning in a critical sense, an awareness of something deeper at play occurred. This chapter will pick up moments of my life world and my artistic self and present the voice of the researcher. Narratives of my lived experience which contribute, influence and construct mindshift for me are contained in the following commentary in which I have explored and documented experiences and mindshift where,

- comparatively sudden mindshift is recognised;
- the pattern is always there, but now becomes clear;
- there can be a sense of such an arrival at a cognitive stance or temporal space.

BEING, BELONGING AND BECOMING

There exists a vast amount of research in preservice teacher education and what sets this thesis aside are artful reflections from Preservice teachers where methodology enables art and narrative accounts mutually weave together inform the inquiry. Narrated experiences provide personal accounts and, in some instances, epiphanies, which trace each journey. My role of researcher is to make meaning of and clarify each journey by documenting the stories and the layers of meaning that appear as emergent threads and are significant to the inquiry and subsequent findings. So, who am I? How do I frame and inform? Did I elect this process which evolved from a depth of history, traditions, ‘funds of knowledge’ (Bourdieu 1983) and time? I acknowledge my limitations and offerings, but from where I stand, my epiphanic events have been a result of consequences and lived experiences of being, belonging and becoming of self.

From the outset, I have wanted to locate myself within this study. Viewing the world and how I look at the world has entailed the challenge of unravelling and interpreting events. I aim to seek out moments of learning and rummage around the cognitive events and consequences that pervade my narrative and in a way learn to make meaning of my personal epiphanies. My role as researcher was to make meaning and clarify the stories of others to assist in interpreting the layers of learning and being from participants. But that is only part of the process to look inward and trace the threads of my own. Let me sketch and elaborate on the events that led me to beginning this study.

EARLY YEARS AND LEARNING

Growing up in a small town in central Victoria in the 1950s and 1960s seems, on reflection, a time of conservatism, where country and political life resonated with honest working-class inhabitants who were sheltered from global forces. Entering school aged four in the early 1960s for me

was a happy time. However, I do remember the struggle of not being able to read or count well compared to my peers. I tended to lag behind. This may have been at least partly due to starting school so young and possibly being one of the youngest children in the class. It seemed to be a common problem, particularly with Australian children whose birthdays fall around the middle of the year. I suspect that the lack of funding of childcare and early childhood education put further pressures on families to have their children start school early in order to reduce costs to parents and enable mothers to undertake more paid work.

Later during the 1960s and 1970s, students in the classroom were streamed depending on their academic ability. Being in the group of low academic achievers (termed the ‘wombat group’) had a resounding effect on me. I had learnt to play, skip, learn a language; but I had also come to know what being in the ‘wombat group’ really meant. It meant that I was not able to read, count or learn as well as the other children. And each day the ‘strugglers’ were separated from the other children in the classroom and this reaffirmed the new identity I took on at the age of five. School was not turning out as I thought. It was exhausting and the partnership I was tangled in was sagging and dividing. Tears spring to my eyes even now—I could not hide from the ranking and the phenomena that had so easily ‘happened’ and lurked without any warning.

It was not until my late 20s I began to dispute the claim made by my teachers. I began to believe that maybe someone had made a mistake and set out to see if I could enter university. Eventually, I did enter university and planned a career in teaching. On reflection, embarking on a career in teaching was prompted by an incident during my school years; one single experience which I thought of many times years later—a relived (Denzin 2001) epiphanic moment. Reflecting back to this moment has formed and informed a life-long inquiry process. Igniting this inquiry included new questions such as ‘What does learning look like? How do we learn? When does learning occur and what contributes to support learning to take place?’

ARTFUL PRACTICE

I was the daughter and grand-daughter of accomplished musicians and certainly influenced by music and performing arts. As a young girl, I was in a way, programmed by music. Music had the ability to tell stories of sadness, passion and playfulness. I paid attention to melodies and these narratives framed a lot of my early learning. Some years later, the visual arts unfolded to reveal a new knowledge of the world—we formed a relationship. The creative arts were part of me and we became intimate friends. Later, I began teaching primary schools in the area of visual and performing arts.

It occurred to me when teaching the arts that improving artful pedagogy was a science and required highly reflective abilities and skills. I suspect I noticed the students who for some reason

were engaged, failing or excelling and wondered why such learning developments and cognitive patterns occurred. The arts seemed a wonderful way to connect and learn. Most students achieved great results in art and they had minimal difficulty reflecting, presenting, gaining skills and discussing truthfully their ability. Many years ago while discussing art with a Year 1 student, I stated, 'You are very good at drawing. When you grow up you may want to be an artist'. He looked up to me from his drawing and replied, 'I'm already an artist'. This moment changed me and re-positioned my educational philosophy. I was reminded of a teacher I did not want to be. At this moment it was reaffirmed that I was also the learner. Epiphanies come so unexpectedly, but they come.

HIGHER EDUCATION

University life enabled me to study and write about the things that matter. However, at times I grew tired of written forms of communicating and imagined expressing in other ways. I find I increasingly want to express my understanding through art, finding visual modes, and so began foregrounding artful practice as well as writing and did this for preservice teachers in my classes as well. The point of this story is to position the view I hold about the practice of teaching and learning. Working in the field in teacher education is a great space for researching. Observing, listening, doing and being are the strategies that enable learning and understanding. This brings me to my two main contentions for this thesis. Firstly, there are times in schools when some preservice teachers have the capacity to act as a 'professional practitioner'. When referring to the 'professional practitioner' I mean acting and reacting as a professional team member of a school and in the classroom. This involves an observable change in behaviour and identity. It can be termed an 'epiphany'. This type of change is visible and sometimes called an 'aha' moment. This change is not visible in all preservice teachers. Secondly, qualitative arts-based inquiry methods of research often pursue artful responses to questions and these methods are well documented (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). The mode of inquiry I have chosen is a viable methodological approach and I want to re-affirm this practice as a tool of reflective acquisition of the epiphanic experiences described above. These experiences and issues described became the foundations and the basic provocations that underpin my research and methodology.

PLACE, SPACE AND STUDIO

There is a kind of energy that is derived from a space that acts as an impetus to share and shift attention to acknowledge meaningful encounters. It is a space that is secure and safe. Let me describe the space that became important to the success of the artful interviews in this study. In early 2004, Victoria University established a creative arts precinct campus in an outer area of Melbourne. This campus ceased to operate in 2010 and was located on a hilltop in outer north-

west of Melbourne. Of note is the fact that this site is of great historical and political significance. Originally, the site was a boys' orphanage during the 1800s it became a 'lunatic' asylum. More recently, it has been a home to disabled adults and during the 1980s and 1990s individuals were moved to integrated care homes within the community. Victoria University acquired the property and established a creative arts precinct in the historical buildings. This was the location chosen for the research and was here that the interviews took place. To fully understand the space, it is important to realise that the precinct situated on a hill far from the city, held a 'quietness' as well as historical legacy, social alienation and geographical isolation being naturally associated with such a building in the community. It became a space which represented social disconnection and painful patterns of human injustice and events. These days it seems to ask of individuals to think and reflect upon the past.

For the interviews, I chose a small room that looked out upon the landscape and hills to the north. Generally, the room captured the sun and was light and warm during the early spring when the interviews took place. It was nice to look out upon the landscape and speculate what others before us had thought of the view from their perspective, experience and existence. This was a space designed for thinking and reflecting. So it was in this space, steeped in history, the interviewees recounted stories and documented meaning of their past and future.

I was able to identify a physical place and position that enriched the work. By creating an open, unrestricted and safe and secure area, a dialogic and artful exchange grew in the space. Here, in the space, metaphysical patterns of artful play and epiphanic story enable an act of illumination or conscientisation and can promote a kind of shift—just as Freire's concept of conscientisation promotes a kind of Marxist mindshift and enabled a socialist epiphany, resulting in a sudden realisation of one's place in a hegemonic social system. Historical, cultural, artful practice and praxis are central components of the research.

In this study I have the integrated role of artist and researcher. In this instance, the audience is also invited to join the process in a cosmos of knowledge and to become spectator and actor to privileged moments and spontaneity of learning. This work represents and embraces the internal mechanism and process of being that engages at the point of learning.

MORE RECENT EVENTS

Matthew McDonald (2008) draws a distinction of the phenomena and recognises that such transformative epiphanic mindshifts are underresearched. McDonald (2008) implemented a narrative approach to collecting and analysing participants' epiphanies for two main reasons: the first, because of the importance of theoretical affinity with existential philosophy and the second,

to understand that ‘epiphanies can be achieved only by obtaining an account of the participant’s life history and with it, his or her temporal unfolding sense of self-identity’ (Polkinghorne 1988, pp. 125–155, as cited in McDonald 2008, p. 92).

Multiple ways of viewing and experiencing are introduced to the reader. Now the reader is reminded of a move from a modernist to post-modernist form by experiencing multiple readings from the interpretive actions of the viewer. We have come to realise it is not what the author brings but what the viewer brings to the work. My art work exists within the thesis too and not only mirrors a multimodal platform, but emulates my symbolic ideas and I had hoped would contribute to my conscientisation and epiphanic learning experience. It is in this form and framework that has contributed to my personal learning and mindshift alongside my perspectives and standpoint. See Figure 1.1. My artwork is expressive and abstract and is symbolic of the bright and burning decision to learn about the participant. Moreover my brushwork on the canvas is part of the participants’ story and captures the ‘momentary’ interplay between artist, viewer, interpreter and praxiologist.

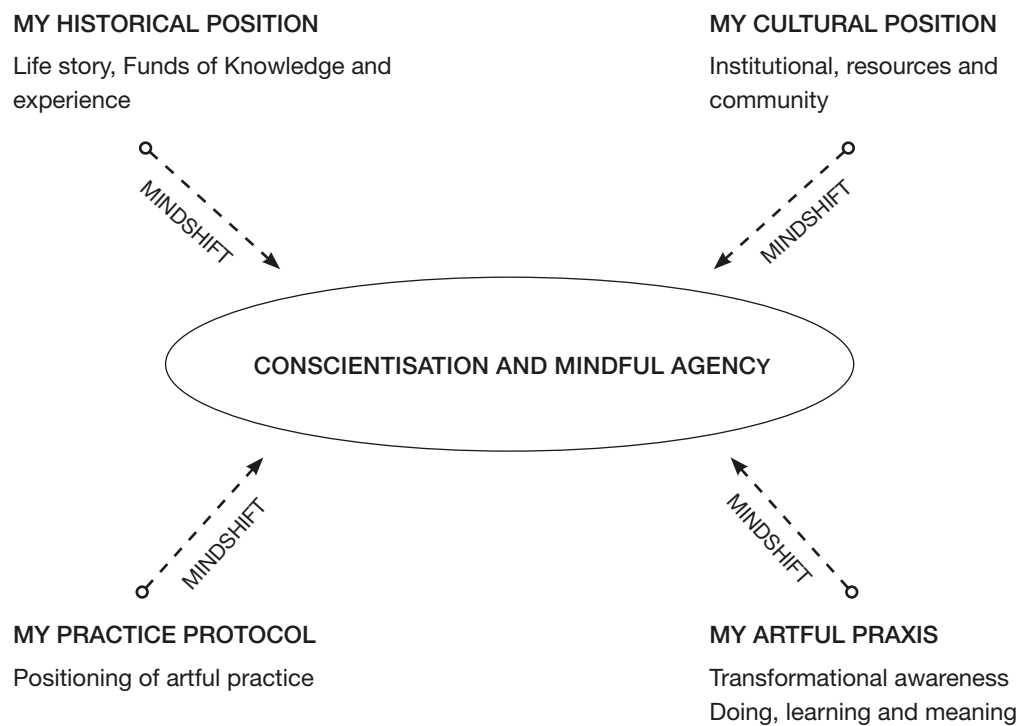


Figure 1.1: Framework for constructing participants’ stories

My story documents the complex processes that prevail within the body and the fragility of lived experience. Although bound by socio-cultural constructs and systems that enable or block, but nevertheless operate simultaneously, my story and images are symbolic and reflect ideas and versions of self-identity. The creation of such images can be generalised to seek meaning to the cognitive learning and transformative experience of the participants in this study.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

As a teacher and storyteller, I explore and explain pedagogy. For me, the process of explaining and making meaning by means of a written text is insufficient to encompass thoughtful ideas and reflection. For me, it is important to tap into a creative space for exploring meaning. Often, frustration manifests from writing and I can find myself literally running out of words to explain my understandings. During these times clear connections can arise through the use of visual images as texts that seek to connect underpinning meanings. Visual text in the form of painting provides endless possibilities for narrative generation of knowledge and also provides the opportunity for further critique and imagining.

I frequently paint to subjectively explore the topic of my learning and deepen my thinking. My interest in involvement of both teacher and learner (and researcher) and the connections between them have shown me that these can be highly textual and potentially explosive. The paintings produced in the course of this research parallel the personal being of, and involvement in dialogue between, the participant (as learner and teacher) and me (as teacher, learner *and* researcher). So art experiences are attentive to and describe specific moments in the student participants' and my own learning. This type of abstraction is complex and is derived from an ingrained respect for the visual interpretive process.

We now understand that for teachers, teaching is bound up with the fundamental problem of traditions of teaching. Organisational arrangements, traditional beliefs and motivation may be responsible for restrictive ability for improvement and effective teaching and learning. Teachers are required to improve school life, but maybe shaped by arrangements which diminish improved direction (Fullen & Hargreaves 1991); they are shaped by social forces and dominant cultural educational beliefs. As with all studies, this research is challenged with unveiling those forces and social realities that enable personal ethical responsibility when focusing on human wellbeing while inquiring into the professional practitioner.

Formulating flexible and well-planned preservice teacher curricula requires embedding creative opportunities for students and this relies heavily on creative teachers and academics (McGoldrick 2002). Here lies a gap. A constant in this research is the role of art making by me (teacher) and participant (preservice teacher) to facilitate dialogue, not necessarily through an interpretation of the art (although interpretation of art is fore-grounded at times in the interview process), but by using painting to enrich the conversation.

The aim of this research was to facilitate dialogue with an emphasis on the visual image as the core of the 'conversation'. The image is privileged and, as will be seen, it is not an adjunctive aspect of the work but at the core of the conversation. The thesis is structured in such a way as to be

read as much as possible with an equal emphasis on the art works. Chapter 1 has taken the reader in to the world of the question that led to this research; Chapter 2 is a review of literature and Chapter 3 provides insights regarding the data, methodology and analytical process and brings the reader to a comfortable point from which to read the interviews.

The core of the work is the chapters of data, which bring the life stories of the 10 participants to the reader. Chapters 4–13 are able to be read in any order and indeed are an invitation to see the art products and the exhibition of meanings that arise on considering epiphanies for these women and men. Chapters 14 and 15 include a discussion and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORIES ON LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

This review introduces some of the major approaches generated in current debates regarding the many contemporary learning theories relevant to preservice teacher education. These perspectives apply to education generally, but also reflect the current trend in tertiary teacher education in Victoria, Australia. Historically, we can see there has been a shift in approaches (Dewey 1963; Vygotsky 1978; Perkins 1995; Mahar & Harford 2005; Wilks 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez 1992) and a growing movement toward a new intellectual environment for preservice teachers. Additionally, with the growth in literature around the theories of learning and knowledge has become a broad and highly debated topic. It is a considerable task to review the information necessary to establish a comprehensive educational philosophy with regards to preservice teachers. And preservice teachers are themselves encouraged to view contemporary educational developments in the light of the historical connections that have guided pedagogical practice in the 21st century. Learning theories and knowledge have increasingly been framed within neo-liberalisation and economic imperatives underpinning education (Bauman 2004). The term ‘knowledge economy’ is an example of the new language which refers to the increasingly fundamental economic role that learning and knowledge acquisition play in contemporary life; a situation that has been described by as an ‘epochal transformation’ (Florida & Kenney 1991, p. 637). It is not the purpose of this review to engage in the debate, but rather to highlight the recent theories and socio-political issues that direct the thinking and impact on the learning and development of preservice teachers within this study.

A background paper published in 2005 by the then Victorian Department of Education and Training (Mahar & Hartford 2005)—more recently known as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development—identifies the following theories and factors underlying notions of learning as:

- cognitive learning theories
- social learning theories
- constructivist theories
- experiential learning

- adult learning, or andragogy
- multiple intelligences
- situated learning theory and communities of practice
- neurological development and functioning
- emotional and social factors
- generic skills
- the ICT revolution.

(Mahar & Hartford 2005 pp. 7–15)

There are many innovative education approaches implemented in teacher education in the state. It is clear from the approaches listed above that a broad range of teaching and learning is required by students involved in teacher education. Knowledge of these approaches is highly valued in preservice teacher practice. Constructivism, critical theory and reflective practice, however, are particularly relevant and become a focus for this study.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Since this study is concerned with interpreting and improving the way in which preservice teacher education is implemented, it is essential to recognise, first, the importance of constructivist theory and its role in effective transition for graduate teachers, and consequently, the role of a theory–practice relationship to ensure effective practice in teacher education. Constructivism that is relational and dialogical is linked to an heuristic and interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). This research is based on constructivist theory in that it documents reflections from experiences of teaching and learning practice in the life and the work of preservice teachers. Dewey (1938) points out,

It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even activities in experience. Everything depends on the quality of the experience which is had. The quality of any experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences. (Dewey 1938, p. 27)

Research into preservice teacher development and expertise often provides accounts and perspectives that describe understanding of the conditions of teaching and learning and connections to experiences of preservice teachers in the classroom (Dewey 1963; Bourdieu 1983; 1991; Perkins 1995; Palmer 1998; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Kincheloe 2003b; Davies, Grace & Eckersley 2008; Pietsch & Williamson 2010). This research, while acknowledging the progressive scholarly critiques and approaches, focuses also

on knowledge, expertise and prior learning that students bring to their chosen field of teaching. Accessing cultural values, capabilities and latent ‘funds of knowledge’ which form and inform preservice teacher’s learning should not be overlooked in teacher education. Human and social experiences are bound by socio-political and cultural forces and can either hinder or encourage agency. The ability to critique becomes crucial and education issues without considering reflective practice of schools, curriculum, capabilities, standards and skills, understate the personal funds of knowledge that is deep and highly personalised (Bourdieu 1983; Moll et al. 1992).

Foundations for developing effective contemporary classrooms experiences have been researched teaching and learning themes that include, inquiry and experiential learning (Dewey 1963), constructivism (Vygotsky 1978; Perkins 1995; Wilks 2005); effective preservice teacher education (Shulman 1987; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Cochran-Smith 2001) and reflective practice (Schön, D 1983; Kruger & Cherednichenko 2006; Loughran 2006). Metacognition and recognition of mindshifts in learning may be of equal importance for preservice teacher education. Identifying and evidencing learning through the relational and dialogical encounter through art making may assist in this process and that is at the core of this research.

Teacher competence is dependent primarily on personal qualities, relational competencies, and then on the ability to teach subject matter which is acquired through familiarity with the relationship between theory and practice (Larsen 2007). This stance is important to this research in its focus on reflecting on ‘experience’ and recognising the value of a socio-cultural process in learning. While competencies are certainly important (Pietsch & Williamson 2010) it is experience and ‘funds of knowledge’ (Bourdieu 1983) that provide the platform for examining social competencies and moral commitment for learning to occur. Neil Hooley argues there are a tension and an added requirement for contemporary teachers in the classroom.

Teachers are, of course, caught in a double bind. On the one hand, they implement their professional responsibilities as dictated by formal curriculum and school policies. On the other, they enact their professional responsibilities in the interests of families and students that they may judge as not being met by state and local circumstances. Here, the notion of professional practice takes on a moral character, whereby the practitioner must do what is judged as right by the community regardless of the prescriptions of others. (Hooley 2013, p. 136)

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND PRAXIS

This research seeks to recognise and foreground those experiences that contribute to the moments of learning that contribute to a mindshift and result in self-awareness and a cultural paradigm shift toward a reflective and context sensitive professional teacher practitioner. Learning does not occur

in small components or self-contained episodes but through a collection of experiences and past events that look more like a montage (Wilks et al. 2004). The term adopted is ‘montage’ (Wilks et al. 2004, and in particular, it will articulate the reflective pedagogical paradigm that is inherent in the process of becoming a reflective practitioner (Schön 1983; Bruner 1986; Pollard 2002).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) argue reflection is required during inquiry in order to establish a ‘stance’ and together with realistic perspectives and experiential learning may accomplish a particular ‘stance’ or way of being (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999). This research sets out to further the map the cognitive landscapes by means of acquisition of new knowledge and shifts which abound on the learning journey for preservice teachers toward self-efficacy and teacher identity. Jerome Bruner in particular offers some assistance regarding the nature of the thematic analysis that will occur. Bruner agrees there are two modes of thought or cognitive functioning or ‘landscapes’ as the title notes. Constructing reality implies a dualistic mode of knowing. When questioning the meaning of experiences, ‘[o]ne seeks explanations context free and universal, and the other context sensitive and particular’ (Bruner 1986, in Lyons & LaBoskey eds. 2002, p. 15). There are many cognitive and structural layers in the learning to be acquired by teachers in their development as teachers who are able to shift perspectives in order to feel confident about their place and future in school and community. This research describes these layers of personal development and identity of ten preservice teachers.

Schneich (2003) believes identity of self can be changed by a conceptual and sincere personal shift and believes experience contributes to learning connections when individuals sincerely want to learn and seek help from others. Furthermore, Schneich argues ‘sincere intentions’ assist the learning process. When asking ‘who can I learn from and who can help me to become better’ (Schneich 2003, p. 59), there takes place an important self-dialogue in the reflective and reflexive metacognitive process. This kind of meta-cognition is essential to becoming a professional practitioner and allows for self-critique to also emerge. This research shines a light on the lived experience of 10 preservice teacher narratives in a bid to trace their thinking towards attaining professional identity, professional knowledge and professional action (Palmer 1998; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Loughran 2006). Using narrative to reveal the layers of metacognitive connections allows us to gain insights into aspects aligned with becoming a teacher. In addition, making public and celebrating contemporary viewpoints of preservice teachers enables us to find answers to the question, ‘what’s really going on here?’

PRESERVICE TEACHERS AND THE PROFESSION

A survey conducted by the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), Surveys & Workforce Analysis Section in 2006 found preservice teachers are attracted to becoming teachers for three main reasons. The results of the survey indicated that a majority of preservice teachers,

‘wanted to make a difference’. Some ‘wanted to teach/work with children’ while others ‘wanted to work in an area of specialisation/interest’ (DEST, Surveys & Workforce Analysis Section 2006, p. 3). These factors were found to be the top three reasons for Victorian preservice teachers entering the profession in 2006. While some of these types of pragmatic responses appear in the interviews within this research, the data also indicate a commitment by preservice teachers to weighty ideologies and values that support their decision to become teachers. Although not the focus, this research does illuminate some of the reasons for entering the profession and provides a closer examination and depth of analysis by means of qualitative method. The results by DEST in 2006 were consistent with those in 2004, demonstrating that the majority of teacher education students undertook their courses because they wanted to make a difference or wanted to teach/work with children.

The DEST survey (2006) required students to comment on their teacher education experience—particularly their experiences gained in practicum as well as their views on course content and found,

Final Year Teacher Education students were overwhelmingly positive about the value of their practicum experience, but more critical about the content of their courses. Many felt that there was too much focus on theory. The majority intended to find a teaching job after graduation, with plans to work as a teacher for over five years.

Of those who commented about their course content, a significant majority had negative comments, with many responses expressing dissatisfaction with the amount of theory they were expected to study. Of those who had specific comments on the balance between theory and practice, again, the majority had negative views. (DEST 2006, p. 22)

A similar finding was also evidenced by Skilbeck and Connell (2004) in their research of teachers conducted for the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs MCEETYA Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce (Skilbeck & Connell 2004, p. 50). Their research indicated that practicum placements have impact on preservice teachers by the fourth year of study. Research undertaken by Victoria University (Cherednichenko & Kruger 2005, pp. 1–25) changed the manner in which the practicum experience is approached for preservice teachers in teacher education courses. The approach that was developed has led to an improved practicum model that includes,

- extended time in schools
- purposeful and authentic learning experience
- authentic preservice teacher assessment
- partnership approaches that are focused and recognised by schools, university and preservice teacher and reflect a change in culture from previous models

- resourcing for sustainability
- applied curriculum projects for preservice teachers that increase responsibilities in the classroom and whole school development
- increased liaison with mentor and university colleagues
- A range of site-based teacher education (SBTE) groups situated in schools settings with a university lecturer.

A MODEL FOR LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The preservice teachers interviewed in this thesis therefore have a vast amount of experience in schools (90–100 days) by the time they reach fourth year. Research undertaken in 2005–07 (Kruger et al. 2009) explored the vital relationships between schools and university and the establishment of protocols and vision shared by each stakeholder. Part of the study was to examine the preservice teacher experience in relation to applied curriculum projects (Kruger et al. 2009). Applied curriculum projects (ACPs) have been embedded into the practicum and form a catalyst for reflecting and praxis inquiry while the preservice teachers are in the school setting (Cherednichenko & Kruger 2005).

We have therefore entered a new age where an unprecedented emergence of applied cultural practice for preservice teachers provides a platform for describing experiences and linking theory and practice. Teams of preservice teachers working together on ACPs guide each other and seek meaning through pedagogical conversations and scrutinise situations, curriculum and events within the context of the school. At this stage a framework developed can assist preservice teachers in documenting data. A praxis inquiry protocol developed by Kruger & Cherednichenko (2006) assists preservice teachers to describe, explain and theorise on experiences from the classroom as they emerge.

Focusing on case writing (Shulman 1992; Wasserman 1993; Whitcomb 2002) with preservice teachers provides a systematic platform for researching and subsequently understanding an educational problem. Here, preservice teachers are able to analyse their own stories and those of colleagues. New information and communication can be developed and development of a more sophisticated language can be articulated to interpret the information.

The praxis inquiry protocol (Cherednichenko & Kruger 2005) is a Victoria University College of Education model that takes this process further. Here, the preservice teachers' experiences generate personal theoretical perspectives to form a basis for learning about teaching on which to build relevant, justifiable and effective practice. Preservice teachers are asked to pose ontological, epistemological and technical questions about their practice. Implementing such a process,

sustains critical conversations about school practice as well as the university coursework (Kruger & Cherednichenko 2006), which are highly valued and drawn into this research process and method. The ontological questions encourage thinking that challenges preservice teachers' own value judgements about their involvement and teaching (Cacciattolo, Eckersley & Neal 2009). Framing questions and providing opportunities for preservice teachers to reflect by way of storytelling and painting extend and demonstrate a praxis inquiry approach implemented in this study. In essence, through engaging in the praxis inquiry process, preservice teachers are able to generate epistemological understandings to make connections between theory, practice and dialogue in a way that increases the potential for hermeneutic activity.

Interpreting theory, experience and practice is at the core of this work and presents a hermeneutic approach to the work. Figure 2.1 provides a representation of the Hermeneutic cycle for this study. This hermeneutic circle presented below demonstrates the process of the inquirer when interpreting and understanding knowledge from various forms of text, in this case, artful, gestural and narrative processes. When the researcher is exposed to the layers of textual elements, it shapes the interpretive analysis, which presents a cyclic pattern. The interpretive hermeneutic process can be ongoing and never end (Denzin 2001).

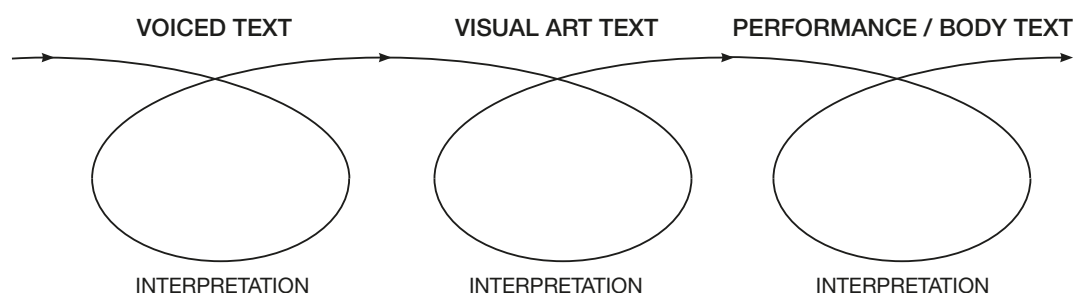


Figure 2.1: The hermeneutic interpretive model

Of course not all students have such profitable hermeneutic activity (See Figure 2.1) during reflections and conversations. Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue that teachers' knowledge is embedded in historical and social patterns that are determined by previous experiences. However, more importantly, the view on teachers' knowledge emphasises the value of critical thinking in teachers and preservice teachers, and their individual ability to abstract and interpret practice and knowledge through critical thought. The pedagogical essence of case writing presents valuable learning and analysis (Carr & Kemmis 1986); however, subsequent reflective discussion provides the opportunity for critical thought processes. The point to be made here and the important connection to this study is that artful practice acts in a similar way to case writing and provides opportunity for thought processing.

Praxis inquiry seems essential to the construction of new knowledge and is particularly well suited to SBTE programs. 'Teacher researchers are better prepared to become higher-order

thinkers who tie classroom activities to profound pedagogical, social, historical and philosophical purposes' (Kincheloe 2003a, p. 183). The preservice teachers are not only inspired by the stories, but they often feel empowered to articulate in a way that enhanced the epistemological dialogue (the voiced text). The depth of analysis became a feature of the conversations within this study. Critical analysis and hermeneutic interpretation gained momentum and enhanced higher levels of thinking. Using research-based, theoretical informed reflection, teachers as researchers come to see dimensions of schooling that had been previously unseen and engage in actions that raise the conceptual and ethical quality of their professional practice. A new world of education is created (Kincheloe 2003a). There are similar features in this study to those described by Kincheloe (2003a), such as, students examining their own practice and reflecting on their world. Visual art images as text and interviews reveal much about themselves too. This research highlights a critical process of articulating, performing and painting to enable new awakenings of self and others, place and space.

LINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Victoria University's encouragement of authentic teacher inquiry-based learning is one example of effective teacher education. Many academics recognise the central role of inquiry, and of providing an authentic environment for preservice teachers to successfully negotiate their transition into effective practice.

Genuine partnerships mean that the social inclusion outcomes may have a transformational impact rather than reproducing existing social conditions. As people's lives and outlooks are transformed by education, they may then in turn transform education and influence how institutions such as schools and universities understand themselves and their work. (Davies, Grace & Eckersley 2008, p. 13)

Additionally, 'site-based' teacher education has a particularly pivotal role in strengthening the practice-theory notion of teacher education. Genuine partnerships features include student-centred learning and intellectual challenges, skill development, academic rigour, reflective practice, a sense of place and authenticity.

A new model always involves a risk. We expect our students to be responsible risk takers. University staff often take moderated risks when choosing experiences to implement programs in order to gain new knowledge for preservice teachers. This is to be encouraged in areas to do with partnerships and to support the notion of 'access and success'. According to Anthony Giddens, '[r]isk always needs to be disciplined, but active risk-taking is a core element of a dynamic economy and an innovative society' (Giddens 1999, p. 35). Much debate has surrounded

the issues stemming from effects of contemporary changes and transition. Giddens describes risk as an integral element of innovative change: ‘We may need quite often to be bold rather than cautious in supporting scientific innovation or other forms of change. After all, one root of the term “risk” in the original Portuguese means “to dare”’ (Giddens 1999, p. 35).

REFLEXIVE PRACTICE

Sociological theory has produced many perspectives, meanings and connections with the term ‘reflexivity’. (Charalambos & Nicos 2008) ‘The reflexive process is multi-dimensional and highly ambivalent’ (Charalambos & Nicos 2008, p. 11). The approach to reflexivity by Bourdieu is an indispensable definition of reflexivity for the purpose of this study.

Bourdieu distinguishes between the observer, who reflects upon his/her action, and the social agent, who acts according to the “logic of practice” that works in the context of habitus, situation, or embodiment (but not reflexivity), of course, this kind of agency does not require any conscious rational analysis; it is performed with the help of possessed predispositions which are unconsciously operationalized. (Charalambos & Nicos 2008, p. 10)

Charalambos and Nicos have provided a comprehensive review of the historical, sociological and critical approaches and discourse around reflexivity. Although there exist clear similarities in reflexivity within ethnomethodology, Giddens tends to incorporate a psychoanalytic perspective (Charalambos & Nicos 2008). He believes, ‘the concurrent utilization of “reflexivity” and “practical consciousness” seems to solve the problem of how the practical ingenuity of ordinary actors in their ongoing reflexive accomplishment of social order can be combined with an absence of full rational control over action’ (Giddens 1993, p. 164). On the other hand, Bourdieu believes ‘that agents do not simply “follow rules”; they can also design tactics and strategies.’ (Charalambos & Nicos 2008, p. 9) Here lies a distinction; it is the imagination and ‘funds of knowledge’ of reflecting participants, rather than actions of actors, that draw on reflexive transformations. For this study, the concept of reflexivity is based on the Bourdieu notion of in association with expression, actions and imagination. The artful play is reflexive and shall be contextualised as reflexivity in the thesis.

Taking account of inclusive methodologies in recent curriculum in Australia, we find approaches in the educational institution that inform practice on how teachers organise and provide inclusive classroom practice.

Implicit in recent Australian approaches is that pedagogy is developed in the workplace and is the practice or craft representing teachers’ accumulated wisdom acquired over

many years ... Thus, valued are practitioners' wisdom and the ability for Australian teachers to engage in reflective practice and hence learn from their own practice. (Moss 2011, p. 291)

The importance of linking theory with practice is central to preservice teacher education.

A study undertaken by Larsen (2007) found that teacher competence is dependent primarily on personal qualities and relational competencies and secondly, on the ability to teach subject matter, which is acquired through relationship of theory and practice (Larsen 2007). Aronowitz and Giroux point out that while approaching curriculum and organising practices is complex, '[c]urriculum does not merely offer courses and skills: it functions to name and privilege particular histories and experiences' (Aronowitz & Giroux 1991, p. 96), therefore engaging in reflective dialogue becomes essential to the day-to-day approach in educational practice.

Acknowledging the assumption that all students can learn, preservice teaching students in Victoria should meet specific criteria related to achieving professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement to meet the Victorian Institute of Teaching requirements. The ideologies of the framework typify the benchmarks that can be measured. Dennis Atkinson states 'competency statements still do not capture what it is like to teach' (Atkinson 2003, p. 380) and argues there are other processes that are agents in learning to teach. Similarly, reflective practice and reflexive practice (Schön 1983), has provided further reconceptualising of professional practitioner based on teacher as researcher (Loughran 2006). There are therefore critical and reflexive requirements for the practitioner in 21st-century education.

Dweck (1999) presents an educational argument and develops a position regarding two types of intelligence. This discussion is important to include here as it has implications for the formulating of preservice teacher curriculum. Dweck (1999) argues that some students develop a performance and goal orientated approach to learning. This is what Dweck terms 'entity view' or 'growth mindset', in which students are observed as being fixed in their learning. The second type of learner according to Dweck is the 'incremental' learner, where the student has the ability to be more flexible and malleable in their learning approach. The two types of learners identified in the research assist in explaining the varied nature and capacity of students to be motivated in inherently different ways. The role of the teacher/academic is to be mindful of the differences in the learning, and to be strategically looking for social forces that exist in the context of workplace. Additionally, on the topic of curriculum, constituted language and constructs may seem to be inclusive but paradoxically often embody socio-political marginalisation. In the context of schools as the workplace for preservice teachers, Dweck's research, like my study, aims to stimulate further discussion about the ideal teacher as reflexive and flexible in their response as learners and researchers.

The emergence of these learning theories has impact on the artful teaching and learning spaces and processes for preservice teachers. ‘Preservice teachers need to engage with works of art in safe spaces. They need to explore the relationship between works of art and the self as a rehearsal for their future crossings with students when they will reconstruct information into artful curricula. (Karel 2003, p. 46). The critique outlined in this discussion offers the reader an insight into the relationship of creativity and cultural capacity of learners to engage in deeper thinking during preservice teacher education.

When tracing the learning moments in the higher education of preservice teachers, it is important to view them within the larger educational context. ‘The identification of those moments when we honor our expressiveness, see with new eyes or hear with keener ears’, allow us to ‘walk on both sides of the street in our personal and professional lives’ (Karel 2003, p. 46). The path of this theoretical thesis is to signify what contributes to the learning and the learning process in a deeper and weighty manner. The challenge is to substantiate not only is what is learned but how it is learned in the context of important learning moments of preservice teachers. Wilks et al. (2004) believe that stories assist teachers by building these learning moments as forms of dialogical and higher order thinking and this philosophy underpins the development of training programs for teachers. Beattie (2001) signifies the importance of stories and brings together a collection of teacher narratives in *The art of teaching to teach* (Beattie 2001). Similarly, Donaldson and Marnick (1995) assemble and provide a collection of personal stories authored by educational leaders with the aim of understanding and improving professional practice in educational leadership. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2003) examine teacher education and in particular discuss *identity* in view of self-analysis of attitudes.

More recently, Norman Denzin has associated ‘epiphanies’ with interpretive interactionism research methodology. I want to provide an overview and set a contention that both processes have inherent similarities. Epiphanies have the potential to change one’s view of the world. Interactive moments ‘have the potential to create transformational experiences’ (Denzin 2001, p. 34) for participants, while ‘Interpretive interactionists want to interpret, perform and change the world’ (Denzin 2001, p. 26). Interactive moments are described and occur within this research.

Denzin (2001) believes there are four types of epiphanies (See Table 2.1).

TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
Major	Traumatic
Cumulative	Series of events
Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
Relived	Recounting many times

Table 2.1: Epiphany types

Denzin's epiphanic continuum may be foregrounded through investigating elements of identity, artistry, sensitivity, emotion, aesthetics, cognitive activity, knowledge and action. My research is based on a strong understanding of relevant literature, such as the work of Parker Palmer and his research involving teacher education by describing preservice teacher experiences, identity formation, teaching approaches, praxis inquiry and evaluation (Palmer 1998). These themes have been important in the initial steps of providing theoretical insights for the research when identifying and discerning patterns of epiphanic mindshift in preservice teachers.

'Epiphany', a term with origins rooted in Christianity, is also associated with postmodern and critical ethnography. Matthew McDonald (2005) provides an extensive and scholarly insight into epiphanic moments, titled *Epiphanies: An existential philosophical and psychological inquiry*. His research has determined six epiphanic characteristics. He explored the epiphanic literature and devised a set of core characteristics based on research previously from the field. McDonald's study reveals that epiphanic experiences are associated with antecedents, suddenness, personal transformation, illumination/insight, meaning-making and are enduring in nature (McDonald 2005). This interpretation suggests or perhaps distinguishes encounters and predispositions to these events.

Matthew McDonald defines epiphanies as,

sudden and abrupt insights and/or changes in perspective that transform the individual's concept of self and identity through the creation of new meaning in the individual's life. Epiphanies are momentary experiences of transcendence that are enduring and distinct from other types of developmental change and transformation. (McDonald 2005 p. 14)

Apart from religious early writers, James Joyce was one of the first to focus on the topic of epiphanies. *Portrait of the artist as a young man* (Joyce 1916) is a work that implemented moments of epiphany. Although Joyce was a religious person in his early years, he did not use the term 'epiphany' in the religious context. For him, it was employed as a descriptor for the sudden 'revelation or whatness of a thing' (Ellmann 1959, p. 83). His work demanded that he must seek moments such as these 'not among gods, but among men, in casual, unostentatious, even unpleasant moments' (Ellmann 1959, p. 83). At times used as a device to expose an uneasy narrative, Joyce's subtle function of the 'epiphanies are sometimes splenetic, but often portray the accession of a sudden joy' (Ellmann 1959, p. 84). At a time when Freud was developing 'dream therapy' in the field of psychoanalysis, this was a fertile time for experimenting with literature where '[t]his kind of epiphany, which suggests the secret life of the spirit, connects with a group of dreams' (Ellmann 1959, p. 85). Joyce was able to use this idea of the epiphany (Denzin 2001) to explain the interactional circumstances and to observe and position turning points or pivotal moments for his characters in his stories. These moments 'leave marks' (Denzin 2001, p. 34) on characters and 'have the potential to create transformative experiences' (Denzin 2001, p. 34).

His ability to reveal social and relational issues and provides opportunity for this reader to engage in a critical appreciation of the construction of such experiences.

PERSPECTIVES THAT FRAME THE RESEARCH

According to Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln, ‘constructivism connects action to praxis and builds on antifoundational arguments while encouraging experimental and multivoiced texts’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 184). They argue that although the lines of research modes and paradigms are socially constructed they are beginning to merge and the ‘borders have blurred’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 184). Contention has arisen concerning the increasing perspectives of inquiry of the postmodern period. Experimentation in qualitative writing is exciting. It presents new research platforms and is accompanied by specific challenges to validity and reliability. This study, although located in ‘blurred’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005 p. 184) territory, is located essentially in social ethnography and relies heavily on interpretive interactionism (Denzin 2001).

In the struggle to make sense of a new way to interpret and organise analysis, ontological, epistemological and methodological interpretive processes become necessary. For instance, Perkins believes understanding goes beyond knowledge and ‘*flexible performance is* [italics in original] the understanding’ (Perkins 1998, p. 42). Considering my view of the world, I believe understanding to be as Perkins suggests, beyond ‘routine’ (Perkins 1998, p. 42) and where understanding is performance, interpretive (Denzin 2001), flexible and contextualised. ‘The net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm, or an interpretive framework ... All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 22).

CRITICAL THEORY

In this section I want to further frame the research in association with the work of Freire and Bourdieu. I argue that the critical perspective I have taken is based on communicating lived experience that is reflective and dialogic. The ethnographic approach takes ordinary everyday stories to share and reveal extraordinary discoveries of human experience. While sharing experiences, participants describe characteristics of cultural settings, values and acquired agency.

BOURDIEU

Bourdieu refers to this acquisition and embedded dominant legitimate disposition that has developed and is enforced by the field and culture, as ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). ‘Habitus is an unlimited source of free production of thoughts, perceptions, expressions and

actions, which are always conditioned by the historical and social bases of their production' (Bourdieu 1980, p. 80, as cited in Charalambos & Nicos 2008, p. 9) and implementing an educational lens 'habitus' can be 'the product of internalisation of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after PA [pedagogic action] has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalized arbitrary' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1997, p. 31). While exploring 'habitus' of participants, this study assumes the existence of such social and internal forces as a dominant factor in the development of the disposition and values of the preservice teacher identity. Robyn Zevenbergen (2006) believes, a Bourdieuan perspective and the notion of habitus is a useful basis for theorising how preservice teachers gain identity.

Bourdieu's work has been most useful in theorising how preservice teacher graduates come to gain a sense of self as they become teachers. In particular, his notions of field, habitus and cultural capital are most relevant. As such, the inclusive analysis and contexts for preservice teacher stories ring true for this study, when we are able to understand the existence of the temporal and cultural bound identities when interviewing. Acknowledging this assists to focus and attend to the underpinning developmental shift that each story reveals. Here, the work of Bourdieu provides a basis for understanding this metamorphic shift that occurs in the artworks and the 10 stories of the preservice teachers. 'Bourdieu's theory offers concepts that allow this situation to be theorised through notions of identity and the wider social, cultural arena within which identity can be construed' (Zevenbergen 2006, p. 1). Acknowledging pedagogic action, habitus and practice in this study are associated with social conditions of power and privilege (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977).

FREIRE AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

When engaging in social research, dialogic activity connects not only but should move beyond a level of communication to reach deeper reflective thinking. 'Dialogue', 'engagement with others', 'relating in a critical way', 'history', 'cultural detachment', 'consciousness', 'problematise', 'recreate' and 'praxis' are terms and phrases associated with Freire's theory of 'emancipatory action'. I shall try to show the implicit use of such ideas in the process of communicating the position taken in this thesis. From this standpoint, it is imperative that the work be seen to not only be 'relating with the world' (Freire 1973, p. 5), but evidences that participants' build on existing knowledge of the real world. Only then can they enter a dialogical reflection that enables the researcher to understand dialectically different forms in which human beings know by being in relationship with the world (Freire 1973, p. 100). Similarly, this study is undertaken for the purpose of engaging in dialogue as an act of conscious and critical thought in addition to an encounter of critical thought activity as praxis in their teaching.

For humans to become critical in the process of challenging the existing culture and social forces that prevail (in this instance, educational institutions and systems), then, dialogue is an imperative within the process of reflection and re-creating. Acting on critical ideologies, for example,

‘underfunded schools’, can lead to transformation of equity and access. ‘If men are unable to perceive critically the themes of their time, and thus intervene actively in reality, they are carried along in the wake of change’ (Freire 1973, p. 7).

For the participants involved in this study, true reflection that leads to self-determination requires elements of detachment, self-examination and inquiry. ‘Human beings are active beings, capable of reflection on themselves and on the activity in which they are engaged. They are able to detach themselves from the world in order to find their place in it and with it’ (Freire 1973, p. 105). Of course not all participants are able to engage in such a discourse, but participants at times are able to detach themselves as they are not yet teachers and in this way there is a level of detachment that enables them (as fourth year preservice teachers) to find themselves in a place where they can create and imagine an ideology that is not bound by the very system they have experienced, but rather one that they are about to enter.

If, however, being able to reflect is more reliable if it assumes some distance, then artful practice can be the enabling distraction from the natural world. At times, ‘the nearness which one identifies with the natural world makes the act of “entering into” it difficult’ (Freire 1973, p. 105). Artful practice acts as a neutral space and time for reflecting by participants and often ‘come so close to the natural world that they feel more *part* [italics by author] of this world than transformers of the world’ (Freire 1973, p. 105).

Extending dialogue and reflection by means of praxis is essential to critical thinking. In this instance the act of art making is connected to the discourse to allow acting on ‘thought-language’ (Freire 1973, p. 111). Subsequently, reflection on themselves is praxis. In this instance we are able to see ourselves as ‘being with the world’ through critical engagement and artful practice ‘and not merely adapting to it’ (Freire 1973, p. 111).

In a similar way, Augusto Boal (1995) developed ‘theatre of the oppressed’ with the distinct aim of seeking to sharing stories with others and audiences for social change. Theatre became a powerful mode for highlighting political and emancipatory struggles. The plays show a commitment to shared experiences and implement artful practice and critical process for transformation and empowerment (Balderston & Gonzalez 2004).

ARTFUL PRACTICE REVIEW

Freire argued that all humans are not only in the world, but are with the world; that is, ‘humans exist in relationship with each other and are capable of knowing the world through their social experience’ (Eckersley et al. 2011, p. 74). This vision aligns with this research in that the methodology includes art making in a way that privileges the participant in and on the experience

of research, learning, reflection and reflexivity. Self-expression through artful practice is at the core of the study and directly associated with reflexivity. Expressing is a process of reflecting.

Speaking the word is not a true act if it is not at the same time associated with the right of self-expression and world-expression, of creating and re-creating, of deciding and choosing and ultimately participating in society's historical process. (Freire 1972, p. 30)

Art making is connected to moments of expressions and similarly highlights social processes of knowledge, personal agency and freedom. In order to participate in social processes, it is essential to be able to work among people (Dewey 1938; Freire 1972; Bourdieu 1983). Art making and dialogue are social constructs/activities. They require social processes and a perception and knowledge of ourselves collectively, providing empowerment to embrace self and toward an experience as socio-political agents for social change. Freire and Faundez believe it is,

important for people to understand the view of themselves and have no doubt whatsoever that an understanding of the common sense of the people, how they perceive their role in the world and in history, how they view themselves in their relations with political leaders, a critical understanding of their dreams—all this is indispensable in any struggle for social change. (Freire & Faundez 1989, p. 44)

In a similar way Kincheloe (2003c) suggests, 'that it is in the best interests of society to shake up the guardians of tradition with basic questions concerning art, criticism and social values.' (p. 51). He adds,

In this pursuit, culturalists make use of literature/literary criticism, political analysis, sociology, anthropology, philosophy and history to view art and through art, society in creative new frames. Interestingly, the practice of art is being reconfigured in exciting new ways (pp. 51–52)

One of the challenges was to provide a creative interview space for pursuing the reflective data. Augusto Boal's research titled *The rainbow of desire* (1995) suggests that aesthetic space is not like any other space. It harbours not only the creative process, but an extraordinary transformative setting. He argues that theatre can transform lives by creating a future which can inspire those groups who are disenfranchised and oppressed. Space in this instance is not only the setting, but a sensory consciousness, form of being and observing or 'an imaginary mirror' for observing self (Boal 1995, p. 13). He argues that platforms or objects are not needed, 'All that is required is that, within the bounds of a certain space, spectators and actors designate a more restricted space as "stage": an aesthetic space' (Boal 1995, p. 18). Although Boal is concerned with aesthetic spaces in theatre, he applies the concept to painting. He states, 'When a man hunts a bison, he sees himself in the act of hunting; which is why he can paint a picture of the hunter' ... 'he has seen himself in the act of seeing.' (Boal 1995, p. 13). Practical and theoretical concepts of space (Soja 1996) are strategic for the process and capacity for awareness (magnification) and therefore created for the development of this research.

David Gauntlett's research provides a creative space for people who are 'inexperienced in transferring their thoughts about personal or social matters into the kind of talk that you would share with a researcher' (Gauntlett 2007, p. 182). Using Lego, his participants are able to talk within a reflective space and share their stories while building their identity in a creative process. Often participants find it 'difficult to talk instantly about abstract concepts such as identity or emotion' (Gauntlett 2007, p. 182). When participants spend time in the reflective process of making something, they have time for thoughtful reflection about what is particularly important to them before they are asked to generate speech (Gauntlett 2007). More than creative interviewing, this ideology encourages critical thought (Mason 2012).

This research is committed to dialogue and listening to experiences of preservice teachers to provide new insights and analysis regarding the accomplishments of preservice teachers that goes beyond the objectives of the current processes. The development of and implementation of heuristic devices for measuring standards is a more recent development in teacher education (Montecinos et al. 2010). Efforts are made here through qualitative methodologies to listen to provide a more contextualised and inclusive perspective whereby, preservice teachers were asked to reflect, enabling constructive conversations into their own learning. In this study, conversations enable themes of commitment, cultural understanding, reflectivity, forgiveness and empathy; role models, passion and self-discovery to emerge and appear to represent just some of the concepts, which become increasingly important when exploring what is worthy knowledge for preservice teachers.

A QUALITATIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Michael Apple often asks the question, 'What knowledge is of most worth?' (Apple 2014, pp. 46-47). He reminds us that language and knowledge are not neutral because meaning making is intrinsically connected to the lived experience. I draw attention to this idea in this study for two reasons. Firstly, this qualitative ethnographic research relies on interpretive approaches, where communication about knowledge is gleaned by searching and researching ordinary everyday concepts within these interviews. It is therefore about relational connections, where rich descriptive moments are brought to life (Denzin 2001). Secondly, a research project requires one to look 'relationally' to seek the underpinning power, values, conflict and subtle connections of self and other as they exist within the methodology (Williams 1961; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Apple 2000a). When relationships are at the core, the qualitative research in this instance bears honesty and respect for optimising a collaborative, but critical methodological approach.

In describing the socio-political landscape we need to raise some arguments that exist in the area of education and research. Qualitative research has gained creative possibilities and there is opportunity to confidently approach research and implement an individual style and design. 'Qualitative researchers commonly speak of the importance of the individual researchers' skills and aptitudes' (Richardson & St Pierre, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 960). At a time when education is under systematic reform, so too are forces that underpin research methods where reform is nurtured and collectively transforming the 'state of play'. Individuality is valued in learning and honoured in research. 'Voices' from participants are validated in inquiring and made public. Historically, theories have been guided by scholars and connections have taken a particular intellectual rigour and honesty. This thesis is a result of the political pathway. The existing power structures must be noted and recognised for the intrusiveness and systems they preside over. For researchers, there are challenges of being,

able to bring together both technical, scientific competence, gained in the course of their intellectual experience, and sensitivity to the real world. If they prove capable of making this indissoluble marriage between the most rigorous understanding and that sensitivity without which rigorousness is itself also deficient, then their practical work will be strengthened and grow. What they have to do, therefore, is to expose themselves to cultural values, to forms of resistance, to the ploys used by the people and, as well as intellectually understand them, begin actually to FEEL them. (Freire & Faundez 1989, p. 44)

INTERPRETIVE INTERACTIONISM

Interpretive interactionism is a methodology that forms an important basis of this study when considering the nature of the investigation. For a teacher, performer, social scientist and critical researcher committed to seeking relationships and their actions, this is an approach that provides possibilities to interpret accounts and perspectives from participants.

Interpretive Interactionism attempts to make the meanings that circulate in the world of lived experience ... It endeavours to capture and represent the voices, emotions, and actions of those studied. The focus of interpretive research is on those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences. (Denzin 2001, p. 1)

Interpretive interactionism is associated with the scholarly work of Denzin. He highlights the importance of biographical interpretive narratives of meaningful events from participants and explores these pivotal moments by analysing to understand power, discourse and cultural systems embedded in stories. This methodology draws on many of elements of the method described by

Denzin and the interpretive criteria are explained in the methodology discussion of this thesis and highlight many methodological challenges central to the investigation from the standpoint of revealing how the core elements of professional educational practitioner are attained. Denzin's contributions will be examined in relation to this research, but are not necessarily seen to be mutually dependent. If we imagine conceptual thinking as an interrelating of operations, it is less problematic to generalise on the structure and equivalent systems at work in the 'montage' of learning (Wilks et al. 2004) and 'bricolage' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 4). Denzin and Lincoln note the work of the interpretive bricoleur is 'complex', and requires gathering meaning through 'a reflexive collage or montage—a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting parts to the whole' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 6).

As with all research, there are limitations that must be addressed before interpreting research commences. The intention, albeit to honour the data, analysis and findings, can be compromised by my own cultural values and therefore claim to hijack the process of inquiry. I am bound to my own identity and therefore unapologetically shape the process of epistemology and methodological platforms of unfolding a worldview and values from the inquiry (Aspland 2015). It is neither useful to deny, but rather ask, 'How do my personal experiences influence this positioning?' (Smith 2012, p. 99). Biases and values influence the interpretive process. Recognising that some of the participants are from diverse or similar cultures influences and subsequently highlights the realisation that although objectivity may be assumed, subjectivity shadows the research process and my artful practice.

INTERTEXTUAL PRACTICE

This qualitative research uses intertextual work of conversational narratives, transcribed into written text, and additionally uses art making as a platform and prompt for each participant to tell their story. This weaving of threads of text, image and meaning is characterised by the image of the helix (Figure 2.2)—the image relates to the narratives, related conversations and text which counterpointed, reviewed and analysed with the materialising mindshift being described by the preservice teacher participants in this research. The technique of art making to encourage conversation is implemented for storytelling particularly in Indigenous and feminist socio-cultural groups (Martin & Booth 2006). It provides a catalyst in for foregrounding perceptions of preservice teachers in their teaching and learning experiences through stories and also art images. The images are created in acrylic and at times ink on canvas and express the reflective educational journey. In this study the process of producing visual art images acts as a platform for the participant and creates opportunity and space and situations for retelling the stories and experiences from their life world.

When artful practice is situated as in this research design, it tends to challenge and encompass many actions and when implemented for socio-political change, art can be as a form of critical and emancipatory shift. Commonly focusing on accounting, recording or portraying, art is about articulating ‘about’ the subject. When the focus of the act of artful practice is about interrupting the discourse of research, then it challenges and reconceptualises the purpose and agency of art making (Denzin 2003; Giroux 2003; McLaren 1999; Kincheloe 2003b).

Julianne Moss’ (2011) set out to interrupt the interpretive communicative discourse in her research when she presented a review of school curriculum in Victoria. Her critique argues for a reform of curriculum and research practices that are more inclusive and in communicating so adopts a visual method (Figure 2.2). At a time when social forces pervade the pedagogical landscape, Moss suggests it is time ‘for the understanding of representation and materiality in educational research by creating room for intertextual work.’ (pp. 285–286).



Figure 2.2: The triple helix

The triple helix is a visual means to interpret the three foci of the curriculum in Victoria; each strand representing a different priority and framework of learning and teaching in Victorian schools. Moss, in her role as researcher for the Department of Education and Training project in Victoria, created a visual method that led to a visual interpretation of the curriculum policy ‘blueprint’ presented ‘as a triple helix produced by the state curriculum authority and concentric curriculum icons that attempt to describe the new set of interrelationships for a curriculum suited to the needs of all students in the 21st century.’ (Moss 2011, p. 287). In a similar way, this research ‘opens spaces for agency and professional practice,’ (Moss 2011, p. 286) and validates how visual methods can inform pedagogical research and complement word and narrative inquiry.

When Rudolf Steiner produced a series of what are now known to be the ‘blackboard drawings’ early in the nineteenth century, he brought unrest by producing images to expand the edges of his knowledge and thinking. At this time, he challenged orthodoxy of the time and tension arose among peers and educators surrounding his style, practice and reflexive methodology. The art making characterised by Steiner contained an illuminative form of knowledge and a reflective process. Although some academics were challenged by the ‘blackboard drawings’, Steiner maintained an

approach of using images and experiential art making, which continues today in teaching. Walter Kugler (ed. 2003) suggests that Steiner's art making was more than mere expanding on words.

It would be closer to the truth to say that the picture corrects above all the inadequacy around which the words take shape, being a part of them as of everything else. It is this inadequacy that cannot permit a standstill to be reached. The picture points towards the fact that no guarantee can be given for the completeness of language. It points to a piece of emptiness that belongs to any thinking and any truth. (Kugler 2003, p. 10)

Connecting this work to social theory is 'defined as an act of attempting to make sense of and maybe change for the better the social world around us—to the artistic enterprise exposes assumptions about the ways knowledge and meaning are produced.' (Kincheloe 2003c, p. 52). Research involving biographical experience is located in the social world (Shirato & Webb 2004; Denzin 2001; Mason & Davies 2009) and the process of narrative is a performative event (Denzin 2001).

Karel & Kincheloe (2003) suggest it is important to recognise in the field of artful practice. Following in the tradition of Freire, Karel and Kincheloe think artful practice assists in the bridging of emancipatory pedagogy. In their commentary in *Art, culture, & education: artful teaching in a fractured landscape*, the authors recognise the struggle for critical awareness and suggest a relook at artful practice in terms reconsidering curriculum and social power. Kincheloe 2003 argues 'I want to look at the complex interactions connecting art, culture, politics, cognition and education in relation to the social power of art' (Kincheloe 2003, p. 3). Art has the ability to reveal meaning in the social and the human world. 'As a culturalist, I see human beings as meaning makers who inscribe meaning in everything they do. These meanings are not absolute but contingent on an exceedingly complex network of other socially and historically contextualized meanings and interpretations' (Kincheloe 2003c, p. 51). This current study enhances the metamorphic process for preservice teachers and is located within and is shared in the inquiry model. This model is designed to enhance the participatory process and advance the aims of inclusiveness and social justice.

In the tradition of Freire, Philip Taylor's research in drama recognises the equitable power embedded in 'drama praxis' (Taylor 2000, p. 1). As in this research, the relationship of theory and practice is important and not only intends to reveal genealogical, transferable or political connections, but seeks the important additional intellectual perspectives embedded in the essence of experience. Effective artful practice is able to share social constructs. Taylor suggests that 'praxis' is 'a desire to push us to reflect upon our own practices' while additionally, it 'denotes the action, reflections and transformation of people as they engage with one another' (Taylor 2000, p. 6). In the spirit of Taylor's philosophy, in which the encounter of experience in artful practice or play is a focus, this research implements the mode of visual art as the experiential encounter for this study.

It is the processes of encounter, action, reflection and transformation which provide the foundations for the development of ten key principles (Taylor 2000). These are termed praxis principles and assist in approaching drama experiences for participants. The principles which frame drama processes are categorised as,

Praxis principle 1: Driven by inquiry

Praxis principle 2: Teacher as artist

Praxis principle 3: Promotes yearning for understanding

Praxis principle 4: Well researched

Praxis principle 5: Generates rather than transmits

Praxis principle 6: A tightly balanced yet flexible structure

Praxis principle 7: Pursues engagement and detachment

Praxis principle 8: Powered by risk taking

Praxis principle 9: Logically sequenced

Praxis principle 10: Rich in artistry. (Taylor 2000, p. 18)

The praxis principles outlined are all particularly relevant to this study, which draws on many elements as described by Taylor (2000) in this research. These principles of practice provide a solid and comprehensive inclusive process which informs and connects understanding while developing one's artistry and practice. 'Like all valuable artistic experiences, it momentarily removes students from their actual lives in order to get closer to them. But the artistry of the teacher is powered by an understanding of the human context' (Taylor 2000, p. 18). If this process assists the teacher/researcher/audience to get closer to actual lives and understanding human context in artful practice, then interpretation in this study is possible.

Highlighting and illuminating the artful process shapes the socio-political too, impacting on the democratic context and awareness of knowing ourselves and others. Although similar to performance ethnography, this methodology draws a distinction whereby it is not the sole standpoint epistemology as described by Bryant Alexander (Alexander 2005), who states, 'The moment of performance is both, practical place and the luminal space, a standpoint from which to view culture' (Alexander 2005, p. 417). This study focuses more on performative dialogical stance ethnography, where '[t]he dialogical stance negotiates the borders between identity, difference, detachment, and commitment not only to represent the other but also to represent the other means of continuing a dialogue that seeks understanding' (Alexander 2005, p. 418). Blurring the borders is not a new occurrence in post-modern qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln 2005) and illustration of 'bricolage' (p. 10) that is inherent within the study.

Prosser (2008) argues for a wider knowledge base in methodology and creates discussion to remind the researcher of the importance of misgivings of positioning and compartmentalising methodologies arguing for approaches that borrow and combine if relevant, to reflect a more accurate research outcome. Prosser (2011), using visual images in his methodological approach, presents an interesting issue of word–image interface, stating,

Central to visual studies and the representation of findings where imagery is involved is the relationship between words and images: Is the space taken up with mostly words or images; which is more influential; is it necessary to translate images into words; and is it necessary to produce captions for images? (Prosser 2011, p. 480)

Prosser makes some interesting points that are relevant to the approach taken here. There are distinguishing features in the balance that are considered in this work. The approach taken is one of augmentation, where neither one mode nor the other is rejected or where the purpose of the analysis relies heavily on the written format.

In a study by illustration lecturer Mike McAuley, he asked his students to draw and conceptualise insights from a written text. He found that his students gained from a creative visual perspective of interpretations, inferences and communicative form. He states of the process,

this is a very exciting approach as analogies are inventions, not obvious connections literally embedded in a text. A good illustration based on written text requires novelty, something new ... When it works, meaning and communication is established. Such is the power of analogy. (McAuley 2010, p. 115)

Judith Jester found that there are important links between sensory images in both verbal and visual texts. ‘I now realize the power these approaches hold for each other’ (Jester 2003, p. 33). In her research titled ‘Of paint and poetry: strengthening literacy through art’ she began to free herself of a bias toward print-only learning and found that correlating skills between visual and language arts helped her students generate lively writing and discussion (Jester 2003).

There has been a history of well-informed debate on the field of arts-based methodology. This study is a social epistemological inquiry using an art informed approach and relying on artistry within inquiry (Barone & Eisner 2012); therefore, from a theoretical perspective, it draws on arts-based methods. Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner (2012) have been involved in defining the location of aesthetic methods and process in social research. Knowles and Coles (2008) provide a long list of leaders in arts-based methodology and their contribution to the field of literature is not only well recognised, but has enabled knowledge in the area of creative human experience in research (Denzin & Lincoln 2011).

The paintings incorporated as part of this research have provoked a thoughtful perspective within the methodological space. Qualitative research does implement a variety of empirical

data and in this case draws on interpretive interaction and experimentation for accessing personal experiences, observational and visual text that interconnect, but each gathering information in a 'bricolage'.

The conscious act to include artful practice as an intertextual approach is not new, but the intention here is innovative because of the deliberate desire to create a space for personal expression and interpretive space for the participant. Artful practice has been adopted to engage the participant in a sensory experience and to incorporate inclusive space through which to speak. Bourdieu (1993) calls this act a 'field of cultural production'. Bourdieu recognises 'that art can be understood as comprising a cultural field ... [Bourdieu] 'uses the term 'field' quite specifically here, meaning everything that is done, and everyone involved in doing it, within a discrete area of social practice' (Shirato & Webb 2004, p. 110). Cultural capital as a social practice is associated with tensions and practices with in the field or a group bounded by rites, institutions and other contended personal agencies and social forces (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977).

As teachers, the recognition of social forces and one's own practice and personal agency is encouraged by engagement with the arts. 'An electronic age makes greater demands on teachers to be artful' (Karel 2003, p. 43). By providing narrative which is supported in classrooms by visual and performative text then art making is evident in students.

Pictures or objects enable us to present information, ideas or feelings simultaneously, without the material being forced into an order or a hierarchy. Language may be needed to explain the visuals, but the image remains primary and shows the relationships between parts most effectively. (Gauntlett 2007, p. 183)

Conversations between teacher and student can be rich when engaged in painting. Stories from students enhanced by drawings can become elaborate and richer in content. The short snapshot or case below is an example of a narrative that emerged while I was teaching in primary school many years ago. During an art session, a five- year-old student presented his drawing and offered the story derived from his artwork. Here, the artistic space provides an opportunity and a platform from which to tell a narrative.

SNAPSHOT

TEACHER: You are painting with bright colours.

STUDENT: Yes. I like bright colours.

TEACHER: You are using big brush strokes and lots of lines to make your picture.

STUDENT: Yes, it must be big, because it is a lion. It is a dying lion. The animals have left and there is nothing that they can do. The lion is lying down and he will fall asleep under the sun and on the grass he will die. Then the animals will come back.

During this exchange the student did not gain eye contact with or stop while narrating the painting, and it is equally important to note that this type of imagery and detail would not ordinarily emerge in a story told by the student. The level of language is heightened and captures a more sophisticated thinking than the teacher asking the student to tell a story.

Storytelling can be central to making meaning and understanding. It is a sound research methodology that has important interpretive qualities. It provides context to the research and assists in the interpretive process. Remenyi (2005, p. 135) argues, ‘The complexity of some situations can be more comprehensively described, understood and communicated using metaphors, similes and allegories and other verbal expressions. In short a story or a narrative (or indeed a picture) can sometimes deliver a much better and clearer message than any other form of communication.’

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted between 2007 – 2015 as a qualitative ethnographic study. The thesis proceeds through individual articulated narratives, which are transcribed along with commentary on participants' art work. Attention is also given to the gestures accompanying the conversations. Together the art, conversations and insights from the preservice teachers present as a result of the analysis. The conclusion draws together the main significant emerging themes from art-making conversations.

Ethnography was adopted for this study and as it has been concerned with issues of 'social justice and emancipatory projects' (Yon 2003, p. 425). It has essentially assisted in building a journey; a journey undertaken to different ends by both myself and the preservice teachers; a journey of discovery for me as a teacher and praxiologist, a journey towards vocation and self 'awakenings' for my participants.

Ten preservice teachers from Victoria University in their fourth year of study of the Bachelor of Education (Prep – Year 12) were invited to participate in the research project. All students were from an outer west campus situated at Sunbury. The students were enrolled and studied at the campus, but not all were from a creative arts background. Many of the students from Victoria University are from diverse and lower socio-economic backgrounds. In terms of the recruitment of participants for this study, all of the fourth year students from the campus were invited to participate. The level of potential insights that fourth year preservice teachers could bring after three years of studies in a Bachelor of Education was also a factor that impacted on my decision to choose fourth year preservice teachers. Students self-selected and the group was created by using a randomisation process. The group was formed choosing 10 students and overseen by a supervisor and a colleague to ensure a random selection. Once selected, the participants were briefed individually about the project titled *Tracing the mindshift in preservice teachers: learning landscapes*. When the preservice teachers were informed of the investigation, the process of artful practice methodology, all participants elected to continue. Three had varying degrees of art experiences. Two participants had been enrolled in visual art courses. However, all were enrolled in a Bachelor of Education (Prep – Year 12).

ISSUES OF ETHICS

Professional practice requires that in dealing with the experiences of human beings, the responsible research practitioner should always be mindful of ethical considerations. Dilemmas arise and are often dealt with in ways that apply 'good' ethically based norms. Formal documents nevertheless, safeguard and manage risk in research and I have submitted documents to the appropriate panel for ethics approval at Victoria University and I have been able to comply and remain diligent to the requirements in this study.

The philosopher and ethicist Peter Singer (1979) provides a discussion on practical issues in response to questions posed around ethics. Because his discussion sets boundaries for those considering ideas regarding the concept of ethics, rather than premising a stance on specific ethical issues, he forces attention on the meaningful action of moral codes. His work is also a sensible look at practice and commitment independent of religious convictions. 'Ethics requires us to go beyond our own personal point of view to a standpoint like that of the impartial spectator who takes a universal point of view' (Singer 1979, p. 204). Singer's assumption is that researchers must be interpreters first before they can stand as the impartial spectators. 'Before we resign ourselves to ... [a] conclusion we should attempt to interpret the question so that the mere asking of it does not commit us to any particular point of view' (Singer 1979, p. 204). This tells us of the role for the researcher where ethical attention extends beyond personal judgement. Singer adds that this allows one to 'formulate the question more precisely. It is a question about the ethical point of view, asked from a position outside it' (Singer 1979, p. 204). His argument is valid and reflects the customs of authentic research. To be the researcher is to be the ethicist. In this study ethics are inherently linked to true research and act to closely monitor and confine the circumstances of research work because 'an ethical judgement that is no good in practice must suffer a theoretical defect as well, for the whole point of ethical judgements is to guide practice' (Singer 1979, p. 2). Interestingly, Robert Macklin (2009) draws a distinction between ethics and morality. Ethics, as defined by Macklin, suggests that ethical behaviour and judgements are accepted by a group or community so to distinguish between the norms of what is 'right or wrong' (Heller 1990; Macklin 2009). This assumption is the accepted idea underpinning this research.

So, what is the role of the researcher using visual methods? How does the academic researcher bring about his/her ethical stance in the field? Prosser, Clark and Wiles (2008) argue that visual research ethical issues are at a crossroad. While researchers comply with legal and institutional ethics, these requirements 'should not be the sole determinants when making decisions about ethics but, rather, must be situated within the research context and accommodated in the researcher's individual moral framework' (Prosser, Clark & Wiles 2008, p. 2). They pose the following question to the researcher: 'What is your ethical and moral orientation and how does it impact in the research decision you make?' (Prosser, Clark & Wiles 2008, p. 21). This is the

question I ask myself when considering the permissible and the moral requirements for this study. The challenges of using visual images to elicit responses and facilitate dialogue have implications that question the individual researcher's ability to distinguish what is permissible from what is right. Teaching and researching 'is a moral activity and requires teachers to weigh the ethical implications for their behaviour' (Rogers & Webb 1991, p. 173). Considering this point, important issues of ethical beliefs have been considered and outlined for this study. I have based the ethical rationale on the ethicists noted above in this chapter as I need to consider the impact on each participant's potential emotional, political and socio-cultural sensitivities in the art making and interviews encountered.

This research focuses on preservice teachers in their fourth year of their study. The process included an interview. The method implements a semi-structured interview to gather data. The interviews were recorded and each participant was encouraged to narrate his or her educational journey and pathway to teaching and the Bachelor of Education (Prep – Year 12). In an attempt to clarify elements of mindshift for preservice teachers the following questions were asked:

1. What is your understanding of the notion of mindshift?
2. Can you give an example of a time when this may have happened to you?
3. Could you recall a critical or insightful event that may have underpinned or framed this concept in your teaching and learning journey?
4. Can you list some moments in your teaching journey that have contributed to a sense of the mindshift process as you understand it? In your thinking you may draw on events, exhibitions, people or encounters that you know occasioned the mindshift to come into being.
5. This question is premised on your understanding of praxis inquiry. Using praxis inquiry, can you:
 - Describe one or more of these significant events?
 - Explain one or more of these significant events?
 - Theorise on these moments?
6. What has assisted in your professional transformation into a mindshift?
7. What contributed to you knowing you were moving through a transitional space; from knowing in a new way?
8. What term would *you* use to describe this sense of your mindshift transition?

The interview was also accompanied by the core activity of art making as a platform and prompt for the participant to tell the story. This narrative along with the image was their personal reflection on the educational journey they had taken to becoming a reflective teacher. The art

experience was a half-day workshop. The conversation was recorded and transcribed into written text by the researcher. Art images provided a space for conversation between the researcher and the preservice teacher participant. The use of art making was to encourage conversation and storytelling. In summary, the illuminative data set shines a light on the ‘voices’ of preservice teachers while containing personal philosophies, learning, ethos, energy and the metacognitive their nature of human beings becoming teachers.

For each participant, there was clarification around the research experience. This information was explicit and given to the participant before the interview and art making exercise. The information sheet given to each of the preservice teachers examined questions such as:

What will I gain from participating?

The research will assist the participating preservice teacher to identify features of their own teaching journey and provide opportunity to examine their professional identity. Art work will be a mode of expression and be the property of the creator.

How will the information I give be used?

Ten preservice teacher stories will be included in the study. The sample will be participants who elect to tell their story. In order to gain deeper insights into current thinking and theory-practice debates in the area of preservice teacher education. It aims to contribute to greater knowledge, policy planning and teaching and learning practice in the School of Education at Victoria University.

This research builds on research undertaken by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) which focuses on the power and relevance of mindset in preservice teacher education. This is seen to be important to the role of development, socialisation, and induction of teachers to the world of broad-based and inclusive practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999). Tracing ‘when’ and ‘how’ the transition in teacher learning takes place will build upon this research and will assist in university educational reform, optimising the professional development of preservice teachers.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

The interviews, conversations and workshops have the potential to allow the participant to feel exposed and vulnerable. It is the desire of the researcher to keep the environment secure and safe and ensure the preservice teacher feels comfortable at all times during the research. Questions will be non-intrusive or upsetting. Participants will have opportunity to talk freely, and listen to the recorded data at any time.

A permission form will be issued to the participant for signing before the research begins stating that they may withdraw from the process at any stage.

Data gathered will be kept in a secured area and relevant names will be changed and coded to ensure confidentiality.

How will this project be conducted?

A number of preservice teachers will tell their story of the journey they have experienced in their learning. The narratives provide evidence of learning and by documenting the stories I attempt to make the layers of learning visible.

The participants were assured that one of the aims of the research was to construct and connect a story of relevance to the reader to reveal the valuable experiences that contribute to the tracing of their transformative journey to becoming a teacher. Additionally, the research process sought to gain meaning and to clarify the participants' mindshifts. In an attempt to provide structure for analysis, meaning and new knowledge, the written and visual narrative of the interview was transcribed from audio and visual recordings. By documenting the stories and the layers of meaning, there should appear clear and emergent threads and these themes relating to events, people and circumstances emerge as data collected through conversations, interviews and stories (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The participants were informed that the interviews and conversations should provide a catalyst for the process of understanding.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography requires observing and noting for understanding common experiences and events. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue the use field notes gathered through journals, conversations, letter, stories, photographs and personal artefacts to support the narrative lived experiences. These authors suggest that experience brings narrative and 'narrative is the best way of representing understanding experience.' (p. 18) Clandinin & Connelly (2000) also add that 'narrative is both the phenomenon and the method of the social sciences.' (p. 18). While the literature suggests that there are many styles of narrative inquiry, for the purpose of this thesis it is important to engage in analysis that is relevant to an educational focus. Experience occurs narratively and 'therefore educational experience should be studied narratively' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 19).

Claire Smith compares the 'act' of the interview as a performative experience, where the participant is required to perform (Smith 2012). Smith further writes that, 'performing their stories enables individuals to convey meaning, not just through telling, but meaning can also be observed in how they tell the stories: for example in their actions, their body language, their facial expressions, and how their tone varies through the telling' (Smith 2012, p. 101). Similarly, in this research, interviews are filmed as an additional source of data and both the films and the artful interviews can be considered as 'performance' (Denzin 1997; Riessman 2008; Smith 2012). Film shall be

used to foreground the activity of the participant. Painting, body movement, eye contact and emotions are gestural and can be detected while interviews are taking place. Filming is important to gauge the performative stages of art work and to compare this to what is being articulated. This research design will incorporate qualitative research methods as outlined by Huberman and Miles (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) whereby written narratives provide structure for analysis and orderly meaning. Because ethnographic methodology seeks to understand through the interpretive practice of engaging the *hows* and the *whats* of social reality (Holstein & Gubrium 1994; 2000), the series of interviews and art making processes provide a catalyst for the process of understanding. Audiovisual recordings were made with consent by the participants. While the voices of preservice teachers reflect on learning epiphanies supplemented with painted images, the audio visual recordings also add a layer to the text and may be at times symbolic of identity, personal philosophies, learning, ethos, and energy that exist in each human being. Such an approach is hermeneutical and enables a process of reflection for recognising socio-cultural, cognitive, moral practices, fear, relationships, celebrations and recognising their own learning experiences (Johnson & Golombek eds. 2002).

Bringing the participants' voices forward in the text can be achieved by using James Gee's analytical techniques. Gee (1985) uses a technique of gathering 'stanzas' to provide a narrative analysis. This process has proven effective in ethnographic research and its strength is in the manner in which it is implemented. Gee's data analysis procedure requires small amounts of narrative text for focusing the stanzas and 'telling' when interrogating transcriptions (Riessman 2008). The work for this mindshift study requires a more encompassing model to extract data on broad topics as evidence. Because educational studies form a basis for experience, narrative is a primary way of representing and understanding experience in this study. Gee (1985) too, argues we study experience as a form of narrative and narrative is a 'key way of writing and thinking about it' (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p. 18). The predominant analysis implemented in this study is thematic analysis. Using thematic analysis in this case is to make sense of the stories that are being told and to generate meaning from the themes that evolve.

Riessman (2008) further contends that the thematic analysis should provide a much broader overview of narrative structures. She provides discussion on analytical methods when using larger samples of text. Her discussion on thematic analysis suggests that this kind of coding is more orientated to large samples of transcription and therefore relevant for this research. However, in the context of this research, a thematic research approach is implemented which focuses predominantly on the story and alongside the image to reveal what is 'said'. It is a thematic analysis which looks for themes and patterns that come from the stories.

This form of analysis has been selected as it 'is suited to a wide range of narrative texts; thematic analysis can be applied to stories that develop in interview conversations and group meetings,

and those found in written documents' (Riessman 2008, p. 54). However, thematic analysis in this style creates a methodological challenge. Generally, when implementing such an approach, the focus is of recounts of actions or accounts and explanations. Thematic analysis often takes 'minimal focus on *how* a narrative is spoken (or written), on structures of speech a narrator selects, audience (real or imagined), the local context that generated the narrative, or complexities of transcription' (Riessman 2008, p. 54). The images are the missing link; however, in this instance as the interviews are filmed, the images form the basis of the meditation or contemplation on words. The words and the image are counteractive in their application to the research.

SEEKING A NARRATIVE STYLE

Narrative methods have been well documented in research as an important practitioner tool to gathering knowledge (Labov 1982; Schön 1983; Bruner 1986; Mishler 1986; Shulman 1992; Gee 1991; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Riessman 2008). In research by Wiles, Rosenberg and Kearns (2005), the authors provide important insights into some of the challenges that exist when using narrative as a tool for analysis and suggest, 'Narrative analysis produces strategies to inform the conduct, interpretation and presentation of interview talk, and encourages and enables researchers to take account of research participants' own evaluations' (Wiles, Rosenberg & Kearns 2005, p. 89). However, there are further features and challenges when using narrative inquiry and analysis. Lyons and LaBoskey point out potential problems, including ethical issues, personalistic and confessional discourse, and the context of the epistemologies that define the school, organization or institution (Lyons & LaBoskey eds. 2002). The declarational nature of discourse is also apparent in and through the making of the art. The art and the participants' own evaluations are revelatory. Their spoken words and the painted image and the interview occur concurrently. With these issues in mind, the process and strategies I adhere to in the narrative research methodology remains focused, while giving consideration to the issues outlined above within the parameters of the thesis.

I understand research strategies vary and are customised for the purpose of streamlining inquiries and the methodology. For example in this research I implement semi-structured interviews. This is purposeful and aims to ask questions that are subjective by nature and appeal to emotions, I asked questions such as, "How did that make you feel?" Thus information gained will optimise the accounts and provide richer contextualised data for analysis. Gee (as cited in Riessman 2008) pauses during questioning of participants to observe ways of speaking such as pitch glides, falls, etc. and he argues that stanzas in narrative can be prosodic and rhythmic depending on the culture. Gee adopts too, a reductive and thematic examination of the stanzas (Riessman 2008). Gestures and ways of speaking are valuable at times to this study and are elaborated on and integrated

into the text. This seems appropriate to this methodology, given the aim of questioning in this thesis is to illicit and evidence moments of a sensitive journeys articulated by participants. Each interview relies on observations and questions to enable a valuable path to gaining and optimising the information during the semi-structured interview (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). The advantage of using narrative analysis is to consistently draw and develop conclusions.

Carter and Doyle (1996) outline a framework of narrative research. It is a systematic method and a framework for identifying critical perspective on life stories. The encounters in the studio are also an occasion to identify the political, ideological and personal contexts. Carter & Doyle (1996) identify four approaches to narrative analysis as thematic, structural, dialogic and visual. What is most noteworthy is that more traditional analyses will attend to themes and structural matters. This current study intentionally sets out to also use the dialogic and visual approaches

The scanning of the data and the evidence in terms of these four approaches draws on tone, performance and text to support the overall inquiry. In an attempt to structure the researcher’s analytical process, I have developed an integrated model, after Bruner to consider the cognitive functioning of the 10 participants. This is building on the analysis and discussion raised earlier in Chapter 1. Table 3.1 is an integrated model of the research showing contexts attending to artful practice, verbal responses and gesture. Ultimately these coalesce to bring moments of epiphany.

THEME	ARTFUL PRACTICE	VERBAL RESPONSE	GESTURE	EPIPHANY
Indicated and noted in commentary	Context sensitive and particular—interpretive	Context free and universal—cognate ‘word bound’	Context sensitive and particular—interpretive	Indicated and noted in commentary

Table 3.1: An integrated model for research analysis

Each interview begins by asking the preservice teacher the structured question, “What do you understand by mindshift?” Further into the interview each participant is asked about his or her reasons for wanting to teach. For example I ask, “Why teach?” This is the platform for the narrative. These questions are part of a planned format and part of the methodology procedure. While the researcher and the participant is unsure as to what will emerge from the content of the text, the generative process is deliberate and has validity inherent within the methodology protocol. In designing a procedural analysis there is to some extent are uncharted or hold ‘loss of innocence’ in the narrative, but if I am to take a story and apply a procedure or interpretive methodological tool for analysis, then the interviews, art-making and the encounters take on a life of their own to produce epistemological themes and epiphanic moments from each participant’s dialogue and artwork.

In this study, the interviewer takes care to observe the speaker and critically interpret relevant data while remaining true to events that are being reported. Emphasis on this technique is associated with Labovian theory and form. Labov (1982) gleans information in the interview by approaching phrases such as ‘and then ... and then ... and then ...’, encouraging the evolution of a deeper narrative. In defining narrative practice in this research, I consider implementing this Labovian strategy in an attempt to glean examples from the data thereby, using the protocol of exemplars as a process of validating the research practice. These exemplars are to be seen as trustworthy, a process Mischler (1990) termed *validation*.

Richert (2002) claims telling stories of practice provides teachers with an opportunity to focus on particular instances of teaching enabling those instances to be examined more deeply. The framework Richert uses is a procedural methodology based on three steps,

1. creating and writing the text
2. reading and reflecting on the narrative
3. sharing and discussing the narratives with colleagues.

Although Richert implements a noteworthy and robust method, the approach for this study relies on the dialogical and visual fields arising from the interviews, art and gesture evidenced in each of the participants. The reflective commentary of experiences is undertaken by the researcher focusing on the interplay from the various modes of text and in this case, the day-to-day experiences become accessible for exploring and examining. In a similar fashion, Richert’s style of narrative methodology evidences events and emotions that stem from the enormous demands of teaching too and states,

Teaching is a highly emotional enterprise, but teachers have little opportunity to make note of the emotions much less tell others about them. Since feelings are so much a part of teaching, they are centrally important to the narrative work. (Richert 2002, p. 57)

The narrative methodology approach described above is ideal for creating a rich process for learning about teaching and research of this nature. Johnson and Golombek (2002) write an account of inquiring into teachers’ personal and professional growth through the use of narrative inquiry. ‘We advance a conceptualization of narrative inquiry as systematic exploration that is conducted *by* teachers and *for* teachers through their own stories and language’ (Johnson & Golombek 2002, p. 6 italics in original). This approach tends to create a change agenda where the reflecting on stories from their own development and professional world using of narrative. The approach is based on a socio-cultural and constructed framework and therefore illustrates that ‘teachers not only possess knowledge, they can also be the creators of that knowledge’ (Johnson & Golombek 2002, p. 2). Providing preservice teachers with opportunities to create and re-create their own stories so as to make sense of their life experiences strengthens the argument for implementing narrative inquiry as part of this research.

When establishing a context for the interview it is important to describe the setting in which the story developed (Riessman 2008). I began each interview by asking participants the question, ‘What do you understand by the term “mindshift?”’. This provided an evaluative statement to indicate what the participants’ understood about educational transition and development. The question additionally provided an introduction to the interview and subsequent conversations that led to asking participants, “Now, tell me your story”. There was an enormous amount of trust and friendliness in the interaction. I knew the participants could talk on many pedagogical topics and after the introductory questions, began the open-ended questions to enhance conversation, such as, “Why teach?” I used subtle cues to encourage the interviewee during the interview, implying that ‘I am with you’. Labov believes each story is a unit. The writing of a story is identified by Labov (1982) as a unit for analysis. There are many units which make up each interview in this study. We are groomed from a young age to tell stories, and thinking of story units in this way enabled coding and focus. The protocols for coding the narrative, therefore, are important and are explained under the heading “Reading the interviews”. But there are dualistic roles of the meta-narrative methodology, one being the act or experience itself.

ART-BASED METHODOLOGY: ‘DOING, CREATING AND BEING’

The emerging theoretical perspectives of qualitative art-based research paradigms have produced dynamic epistemological and political debate in creative methods (Martin & Booth 2006; Eisner 2008; Barone & Eisner 2012). Presenting an arts-based methodology within a study addressing cognitive mindshifts also presents the opportunity to engage in broader political tensions and ontological discussion raised as a result of arts-based qualitative research.

In the past there have been challenges facing arts-based methods; however, since the 1980s there has been a significant shift in perspectives and climate associated with scholarship and research into arts-based methods. Elliot Eisner, as a pivotal scholar in this arena, has provided contributions to arts education and advocated for art-based research methods to improve research practice and legitimise the arts-based forms of inquiry. He has consistently argued that ‘to develop an approach to the conduct of the educational research that was rooted in the arts and that used art forms to reveal the features that mattered educationally, was a central ambition’ (Eisner 2008, p. 18). Following in the steps of John Dewey and working closely with Howard Gardner, Eisner advocated for opportunities and consideration for new methods of research. Nevertheless, he recognises that tensions still exist, such as, how does the researcher deal with referentiality and how can these connections be made, or is it necessary? (Eisner 2008). Further critique and questions he raises can be acknowledged as healthy debate. If the purpose of research is to raise new questions and engage in dialogue and public debate, then art-based methods are

well positioned. Elliot Eisner admits that these are tensions that traditional researchers do not encounter, but for the art-based researcher, these are issues that require conviction and courage (Martin & Booth 2003; Eisner 2008).

Eisner emphasises inquiry in the process of art-based methodology and reminds us that research is always an instrument to serve a function ‘whether arts-based or not, that is supposed to contribute to the quality of education students receive and that arts-based research must ultimately be appraised on the extent to which that aim is realised’ (Eisner 2008, p. 23). This study is orientated according to the belief articulated by Eisner. The desire to remain salient to and within teacher education provides firm foundations for this inquiry. Reflecting on artful practice raises the possibility of consciousness and a level of critical self-examination that transforms preservice teachers to develop in them a state of enlightened awareness (Greene 1978; Taylor 2000).

However, it is not the role of this thesis to justify the existence of the arts generally in education. There does exist a healthy environment to experience art-based research in contemporary settings. Maxine Greene’s research on art-based practice is ‘ongoing testament to this endeavour. Greene’s work has influenced a range of writing on art, aesthetics, and education, particularly those associated with the field of ‘curriculum theory’ (Dimitriadis, Cole & Costello 2009, p. 369). More recently, arts-based research has attracted many educational inquirers and methodological developments.

Tom Barone refers to arts-based inquiry as a ‘sway of the political spectacle’ (Barone 2008, p. 35). He argues that arts-based educational research intervenes (or interrupts) the discourse ‘in the current state of educational affairs ... [and] expands the reach of our scholarship because of (*and not despite*) [*italics in original*] the fact that it is profoundly aesthetic, one that *both* finds its inspiration in the arts *and* leads to progressive forms of social awareness’ (Barone 2008, p. 35).

Barone has written extensively on art-based research methods and continues to draw out the characteristics that shift within qualitative paradigm arena. He explores the socio-political perspectives and presents many current projects explored by academics from many fields and who identify themselves as arts-based researchers (Barone & Eisner 2012). He invites others to engage in an arts-based dialogue about the social and educational possibilities for mind change and states, ‘we can never strictly speaking change minds. We must believe that people, within genuine dialogue, change their own minds’ (Barone 2008, p. 44). The purpose of this study is to further promote the participant and researcher conversation for analytical discussion associated with history, power, discourse and existing social constructs that isolate or enable arts-based research/ers.

Artful encounters may be painful, but they can also be wake-up calls that give us new eyes ... Encounters with art promote an interior dialogue and today’s teachers and children desperately need the arts so that they can be alone with their thoughts. (Karel 2003, p. 43)

There are many perspectives on creative methodology. Commonly, at the base of creative method is the notion that the performative/performer exist as part of the knowledge and not merely knowledge creation/creator. Prosser (2011, p. 488) suggests that, '[a]rt-based approaches invoke beyond text sensations employed to access sensory phenomena that are highly meaningful in ways that are ineffable and invisible using conventional text-based methods'.

Jennifer Mason and Katherine Davies (2009) draw on what they term 'sensory' methodology with participants in their research on families. They implement visual methods and creative interviewing to access 'the interplay between tangible and intangible sensory experience, including elements of the sensory that were visible, audible, touchable, etc., in the present as well as those which people conjured in their sensory imaginations and ethereal or mystical ways of resembling' (Mason & Davies 2009, p. 587). I want to translate the interplay of the sensory into a method that may demonstrate a critical methodological practice and as Mason and Davies argue 'that social science research can benefit from a much greater awareness of the senses both in terms of its ontology (what is considered to be "there" to research or to know about), and its epistemology (how it can be known)' (Mason & Davies 2009, p. 587).

The British media theorist David Gauntlett's (2007) research provides insights into creative methods and interviewing through what he terms, Creative Explorations. Here he provides his participants with time for *reflection* during interviews to inquire and 'better understand people's identities and social experiences' (Gauntlett 2007, p. 2). 'Artists' make artworks in order to express, or communicate their lives or experiences. For non-'artists', creative practices might be underpinned by a similar motivation, but are not as highly regarded (Gauntlett 2007). Yet they do provide a powerful means of an expressive approach to experience.

Gauntlett, in his research, does not privilege words only in the responses from participants and implements an approach that embeds a creative art making experience during these interviews. Similarly, in his research, he asks the participant to 'create' an artefact—in his work, building with Lego. The *Creative explorations* is a project that embeds experiences to allow 'time for participants to reflect; which get them doing or making something; and which do not expect that responses to a research topic can necessarily be articulated straight away in language' (Gauntlett 2007, p. 2).

Through the making process, David Gauntlett encouraged his participants 'to reflect upon identities and metaphors, and ultimately asked them to build a metaphorical model of their own identity in Lego' (Gauntlett 2007, p. 12). Here is where the project differs from this research. In this study the product holds the expectation that the participant will express himself/herself during the interview through doing, engaging and being. Time to reflect is the by-product of the approach, but reflection is of great importance. It is the expressive time and space that is vital to the visual textual modes of gesture, art and word. However, as Gauntlett argues, it is vital to understand that '[t]he argument is not that language-based approaches are necessarily redundant or inferior—they

clearly have many positive uses’ (Gauntlett 2007, p. 182); yet, creative interviewing and arts-based methodologies emerge to provide legitimate methods of artful practice as inquiry, and this is central to this current study.

Another British sociologist Anna Bagnoli’s (2009a) research aims to go beyond the standard interview and adopts visual and arts-based methods. She argues, ‘The inclusion of non-linguistic dimensions in research, which rely on other expressive possibilities, may allow us to access and represent different levels of experience’ (Bagnoli 2009a, pp. 547–548). This study is providing a legitimate way of knowing (through the image) with expressive possibilities that evoke new knowledge.

CREATIVE INTERVIEWING

As with Jennifer Mason and Angela Dale (2011), I set out to describe creative interviews as encounters and encourage visual art making as more than a prompt, but use it as they do to gain data and knowledge. To approach the transcripts in a traditional systematic way may not be the ideal way to construct the work and to consider or recognise the intention of the voice of the participant. Moving *in* and *out* of the dialogue/s enables a flexible mode for approaching the work. To acknowledge the authentic narrative by moving in and out text modes, I wanted to acknowledge the transcripts in way that regards the audio (story), visual and gestural equitably to ensure that the content and the discourse are jointly considered. However, creative interviewing (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Bagnoli 2009a) relies on acknowledging modes and hermeneutics. However, the interviewer is not neutral and one should come to respectfully know the respondent in order to best access core knowledge by going ‘beneath their rational facades’ and to ‘reach respondents’ deep well of emotions by engaging them are sharing feelings and thoughts with them’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 717). In doing so, I often engaged with the participant to laugh, empathise and make comment to keep the relationship and narrative alive. It is my role to keep the interview on track, but stopping when appropriate to rest or relate. (See Figure 3.1).

STORYTELLING

The approach to interviewing is flexible analysis tracking back and forth between modes of narrative.

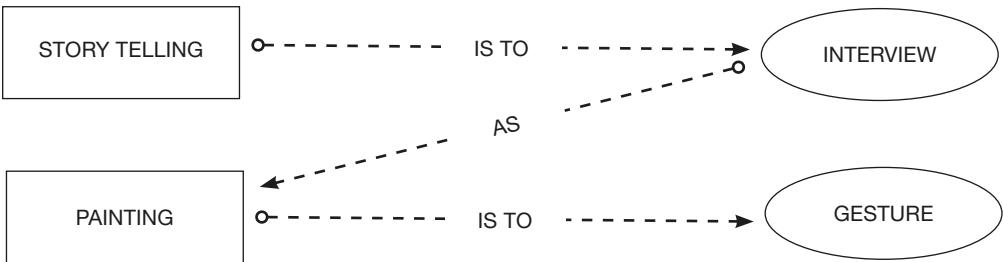


Figure 3.1: Creative interview schema

By using a flexible approach and to move from a traditional to a creative interview along with the use of art making and gesture, it becomes clear that linguistic events provided deep insights that may have been overlooked. Some care was taken to let the story evolve. As the researcher, I move in and out and wave through the discourse to be shifted and guided by the overall hermeneutic and communicative text. The modes of text are very useful, in that they guide in the navigation of the work. However, there are parts of the narrative that are not relevant to the focus of the thesis and additionally some events or parts of the stories that are not ‘value free’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Speech patterns have particular and powerful meta-linguistic process.

At this point I would like to focus on the nuances and the linguistics. There are enormous numbers of speech, art and behavioural patterns and it is not possible to include these given the parameters of the research process. I incorporate and embed the gestures and meta-linguistics where relevant. At first, the nuances and gestures presented challenges; however, these interactions provide a gauge for moods and emotions. For example, laughter could be viewed as an emotion disguising self-deprecation, disempowerment, humility or indeed empowerment. Laughter might also be interpreted as an internal questioning, a claim or an appeal from the participant. If conversations are directed toward ‘knowledge’ there may be reservations by the participant about ‘knowledge’ or *their* ‘knowledge’. Here lie new questions and responses for deeper thinking, for example; how do you *own* your knowledge? What is *your* knowledge? Laughter, along with other emotive gestures, is meaningful, with the potential to be interpreted in many ways. Close monitoring of these nuances is possible, but interpreting all of these subtleties is beyond the scope of this thesis. More important to the interviews was the collection of the themes for analysis, which are more fully discussed in the *Chapter 14*. A selection of themes from each participant and indicated at the conclusive stages of each interview. They are constructed in and selected from the transcripts. The themes are theoretically based, signified and selected on the merit of the research inquiry and provided throughout the text. When implementing arts-based research, Barone and Eisner suggests that ‘theories provide guidance in enabling someone what to look for’ and ‘theoretical knowledge may be better thought of as *thematic*’ (Barone & Eisner 2012, p. 59) to allow the work to cohere as a whole. Subsequently, a final list of the themes from the participant is added at the end of each individual transcript.

Initially, the important themes appear to be family, mentors and friends. At first reading, these thematic concepts appear fundamental, but when analysed further the data produce some very real metaphorical and significant dimensions. It is not only the painting that provides the data but the ability to abstract in terms of biographical mindshifts in learning from each participant. The point to these interviews is to gain understanding about learning *in* and *prior* to preservice teacher education. The aim of the interviews is to provide more inclusive descriptions of practice, theory and knowledge acquisition and emerging ethical ideas (Johnson 2007) that can be examined for and by teacher educators. Adopting a constructivist approach in the ethnographic study as

mentioned in Chapter 1, I am interested in the cultural narratives based on ‘funds of knowledge’ and the operating hegemony and domains existing in this group of 10 preservice teachers. What can they already bring to the role of teacher? What is already embedded and what has shaped emergent social, political and ethical realms? In simple terms this can constitute the concept of constructive learning for preservice teachers.

Implementing a constructivist philosophy (Vygotsky 1978) and pedagogy and notions of critical reflection and metacognition, as articulated by (Schön 1983; Lieberman & Miller 1999; and Senge et al., 2000) should not only increase learning experiences among the participating preservice teachers, but enrich the qualitative data and research within this study. Constructivism implies reflective practice and is enthusiastically invoked for frameworks for teachers to build meaning of their emergent sense of identity. The methodological elements of qualitative research in this instance embrace a philosophy of reflective practice at the heart of the work (Schön 1983). Along with artful practice (Bagnoli 2009a; Gauntlett 2007) and epiphanic events (Mathew McDonald 2005), attention is paid to the participants’ lived experiences (Connelly & Clandinin 2000) using the lens of interpretive interactionism (Denzin 2001) to develop a body of data. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) describe this style of inquiry as ‘*polyphony-driven*’ mode. The ‘*polyphony-driven*’ mode may be distinguished as a multi-modal methodology orientated to form interpretation and reflection. A multiple and varied chain, this evidence included interviews that framed a narrative inquiry. Examining the stories raised questions and momentum in the analysis by giving the ‘sense of a search, a “re-search,” a searching again’ (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p 124) moving through degrees of linguistic and textural modality, to predominantly focus on the thematic analysis.

I concur with David Gauntlett when he states, ‘Although we continue to hear about “fragmented” postmodern identities in academic publications, the view from this research was quite the opposite. I was struck by “the will to coherence”- the desire to assemble a solid and unified view of self-identity’ (Gauntlett 2007, p 195). Similarly, I found that there was a desire by the participant to engage. Additionally, there was an attempt to begin artwork and form an image in a conscious way. This in most cases progressed to an unconscious desire to assemble an image of worth as testament to self-identity.

DATA

Analysis of data identify the relationships between events, people and circumstances (Lincoln & Guba 1985) to emerge as interviews or rather conversations, derived from art making and participant responses. The data from interviews and images will be used to explore the data themes. Each participant is signified in a chapter. Here, parts of the interview or conversations are

selected and included in the chapter. Emerging themes are highlighted and analysis embedded in the text. In keeping with the systematic approach of the chain of evidence technique, the data was transcribed and coded for tabulating and constructing a logical process to reveal emerging themes. Decisions were made on the most appropriate data gathering techniques during the research timeframe, and many strategies were carried out to provide the opportunity for a rich data gathering base.

Data collected around the context of stories and visual art was used to narrate the transitional points in teaching practice of prior experiences, self-reflection, personality and identity constructs. The data is collected by recording the narratives that emerge through the method and privileging of reflective space. Writing as well as visual art (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Richardson 1994) forms the basis data for the thesis. A systematic analysis of data identifies the layers of learning and trace the moment of the mindshift. A systematic and robust examination of the layers established above will require rigorous inquiry.

In this final chart after the methodological deliberations, I have captured some core emerging themes (Table 3.2) that each participant reflected in their narratives for the reader at this stage. While only some examples of emerging themes are provided in the table below, there is a sense of where the thesis will take the reader within the discussion section that follows.

CODING

Coding themes included working with coloured pencils to highlight, matrix creating, numbering to signify themes such as, community, isolation, loss, or terms that are relevant can be identified during transcribing to support the analysis. During the data gathering there was opportunity to indicate early themes. During the interpretive thematic analysis, a number was placed at times on the text responses in the transcript to make it easier to locate themes or other elements of narrative.

Important in the analysis are the questions ‘What is it in the meta-narrative that stands out?’ and ‘What is reported?’ Speech, characterisation and classic narrative devices were recorded and the researcher created a table for recording these particular elements of the narrative. Richert (2002) suggests, developing a method which suits and supports the process for identifying the narrative thematic threads from the text in preparation for more formal analysis. This had the effect of reducing the characteristics of the data to a manageable format. It aimed to summarise, but honour the speech while simultaneously recording and coding the themes in a table. However, thematic analysis is determined in the broader production of text and requires therefore a visual, sensory

	MAJOR THEMES				
ABDUL 	Inspiring teachers / facilitators	Life and cultural experience in developing cultural values	Action and integrity	Childhood play	Authentic praxis and critical reflection
CARL 	Travel / journeys of self-directed learning and discovery	Risk	Expectations	Self-doubt	Responsibility
MEREDITH 	Social justice through examples of diversity	Family values	Models	Passions	
ANNA 	Knowing students	Self-talk for emergent identity	Secure environment	Positivity	
LISA 	Persistence	Sense of activism and an interest in change	Social-political shift	Mentors / elders	Wellbeing and holistic approach
DAVID 	Prior work experiences and learning	Expertise in discipline	Family expectations	Connecting with 'other'	Responsibility for others less fortunate
IVAN 	Positive and negative experiences shape narrative and learning	Experimenting in the field	Disposition of teachers	Knowing students and their culture	To trust in the learning even if it seems irrelevant at the time
REBECCA 	Self-critique and critical practice	Secure environment for teachers	Constructivism	Success	Aspirations
ANNE 	Placement experience	Passion	Questioning to find meaning about who you are and what sort of teacher you are	Relationships to enhance understanding self	'Being'
SUE 	Persistence	Parents are teachers	Stepping up / self-efficacy	Cultural 'norms' habitus	Monitored risk taking and reflecting after feedback

Table 3.2: Core emerging themes

and textual interpretive logic to determine the focus. Selection is governed by sense-making and often in this instance, be reduced to linguistic characteristics. The challenge often here is to ascribe to the perceptive rather than the structure and vocabulary. This is not to say that socio-structural elements and intonation are unreliable. Coding is undertaken and care is given to note the features. This is important in preparation of the thematic analysis when identifying and interpreting connections from practice and epiphanies.

INTERPRETIVE PRACTICE AND EPIPHANIES

Interpretive interactionism is biographical and meaningful (Denzin 2001). This inquiry uses an interpretive approach which serves to explore learning experiences. The exploration of related themes and epiphanies contributes to interpreting through a thematic analysis approach. Denzin states, ‘The interpretive interactionist seeks out subjects who have experienced epiphanies’ (Denzin 2001, p. 143). According to Denzin, the interpretive method aims to understand human experience. Denzin’s method endeavours to explore and explain ‘knowledge and control structures that lie behind these meaningful experiences’ (2001, p. 47) through capturing visible moments of human experience (Denzin 2001). I have attempted to perform these steps to a moderate extent, but choose to focus on the themes emerging to explain and extract the interpretive human experience. This process is important for the reader to observe and engage in too, as the interplay and connections invite interpretive process. I take from Denzin a proven model in qualitative method. I refer for this point and adopt the general description he provides whereby, ‘Meaningful biographical experience occurs during turning-point interactional episodes. In these existentially problematic moments, human character is revealed and human lives are shaped, sometimes irrevocably’ (Denzin 2001, p. 145). As noted earlier in the literature review Denzin devised four types of ‘existentially problematic moments, or epiphanies, in the lives of individuals’ (Denzin 2001, p. 145) and he identifies them as,

1. the major epiphany
2. the cumulative epiphany
3. the illuminative, minor epiphany and
4. the relived epiphany (Denzin 2001, pp. 145–146).

By documenting the stories and identifying and coding the problematic moments, the layers of meaning should appear clear and emergent threads that are significant to the research and subsequent findings. Preservice teacher stories of their epiphanies however, are the central element to this study.

THE EPIPHANIC MOMENT

Characterised by common critical moments, ‘Epiphanies represent ruptures in the structure of daily life’ (Denzin 2001, p. 38). It can be argued too, that these events bring about deep reflection for each participant, and these have the potential to signify emotional moments where experiences have been surrounded by a context, culture or historical setting. For each story constructed there is a connection for the teller and the emotional consequence varies with each example. For some, the demand of the narratives are sufficient to reveal a deep problem, while some narratives are distinctly told for the debate it may bring or generate in our interactive discussion. The aim is not about the measuring of the emotional experience or categorising the types of epiphanies that are generated. The focus of the interaction is connected to critiquing learning and the epiphany (as a stimulus or tool) is concerned change in relation to the shaping of mindshift. Each narrative, after reflection, resolves and settles. When a new story begins, it is with a new familiarity and belief. The stories give way to new stories and topics are not measured by the seriousness or problematic issues associated; it is the relational subject matter that is of interest. However, this methodological technique has the potential to illuminate social construction of topics such as gender, power, knowledge, history and emotion (Denzin 2001).

Matthew McDonald concludes that existential theory of knowledge provides understanding of human experience and his findings indicate,

that epiphanies are the result of an accumulation of personal processes that take place outside the conscious knowing, that suddenly and abruptly burst into awareness, and which are appropriated as a life changing event by the individuals courageous leap toward a new and more authentic self-identity; therefore only they can choose to make this monumental leap in their life and remain resolute in retaining the insight and change the perspective it brings. (McDonald 2005, p. 138)

Researchers do not need to be artists when producing or implementing arts-based research (Barone & Eisner 2012). Anna Bagnoli’s (2009a) research involves drawing. Participants of all abilities were asked to draw with the assumption that it may assist them to express themselves rather than relying on verbal modes of communication. Bagnoli was ‘not interested in people’s drawing abilities, or in evaluating the formal aspects of their drawings’ (Bagnoli 2009a, p. 549). Her focus was on visual methods in interviews to enhance ‘participants’ reflexivity and to gather a holistic picture of the topics under investigation that could take into account also their different needs and expressive styles’ (Bagnoli 2009a, p. 549).

SUMMARY

To conclude, stories and narrative often feature in social research. Jennifer Mason and Angela Dale take this a step further and draw attention to the ontological role of stories and histories ‘where the social world itself is seen as a storied entity, in the sense that stories, involving some kind of sentient composition—where people “make” and “tell” stories, rather than just acting a part in them—are part of its very fabric’ (Mason & Dale 2011, p. 4). However, a major focus of this study is the art process and its capacity and contribution to recount the exploration of transitional space and social processes. Art is at the heart of the work. By defining pinnacle moments, transitions and artful practice I may foreground the continuous changing landscape of learning for these 10 preservice teachers’. Identifying the ontological connections is crucial in terms of method for knowledge building (Mason & Dale 2011). Art work, gesture and stories are the elements and inherent strength of the thesis, and the following *Chapters, 4–13*, indicate that the data acquired rely on appropriate integrated systematic chain of evidence, driven by a recurring and consistent interpretive process focusing on the voices and the artworks of the participating preservice teachers.

READING THE INTERVIEWS

The researcher has chosen the 10 following interviews which have been constructed to free flow and take the reader through an insightful journey of each participating preservice teacher, in an attempt to replicate the quality of the moments and the appropriated art-making. During the course of each interview the reader will find small annotations of analysis from relevant remarks and connections from the narrative.

Themes are identified within the commentary in the interviews. This is indicated for the reader to establish what the emerging themes are and how they were derived. Themes and epiphanies are embedded in the text for the reader. A summary of these overarching themes from the interviews is tabulated as Appendices 1 and 2. The reason for this is to support the flow of the interviews and this has been done deliberately so as to create that space of reflexivity for the reader. The presentation is deliberate and designed this way with the intention to take the lived experiences of preservice teachers and bring these forward without interruption. The synthesis that occurs in Appendices 3 and 4 further provides the researcher’s insights during studio praxis and the original encounter between the researcher and participants. The results of which identify the five key themes discussed in the summary in Chapter 14.

Reviewing transcription and establishing the subsequent coding provided refined data for analysis and synthesis and appear in summary in Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4. Norton (2009) describes the

stage of this style of thematic analysis and states it is a process of emersion, generating and linking themes. Interviews and artworks are synthesised using a thematic exploration because of the need for depth in this work; a longing for ‘a richer understanding’ of the topic and bringing the research to the reader from ‘participants’ point of view’ (Norton 2009). As the researcher, I have applied seven stages (read, link, reread, review, delete, categorise and identify) to carry out the synthesis. The work of making meaning is co-creative as I have considered, as both a participant and researcher, there is an engagement which is immersive, which generated the process of merging and linking meaning. These 10 interviews are presented as 10 chapters and are endeavours of recognising the conception of stages and to show the complexities of this process.

In Chapter 14, following the interviews, I have chosen to identify the overarching themes deliberately as a way of considerably pulling together all the emerging themes. So, we leave the synthesis, discussion, unpacking and de-contextualising of the themes to an appropriate part of this story and thesis, so as not to include these technical elements in the artful space of the interviews. This is organised so as to not disrupt the chronological encounters, enabling the reader to enter an empathic space and vision and to appreciate the meaning making process. I appreciate the act of co-opting the reader as part of an envisioning space; as for the participants who occupy an artful space—they can never be the same again. It is respectful in content and framing of the method. The interviews evoke a sense of self in preservice teachers and present in an authentic and trustful way. These occasions create space and time and, with this in mind, the interview is structured which is not lineal, nor hierarchical, but rather free flowing and evolutionary praxis in action.

There is a premise that we need these occasions for preservice teachers as praxis for revelations from stories which emerge from the studio without interruption. So the text is written to wander through the mind(ful) and shift(ing) sense of the preservice teachers.

There are complex shifts and processes for the preservice teacher when looking at relationships. The connections which are made by preservice teachers are often connected to moments of tension and spontaneity as theorised by Abad Molina (2009) to the new way of knowing. Art making is for unleashing and to honour the process of revealing the epiphanic, unconscious truth. It is honoured through revealing the story and privileged language. Additionally, it can support and justify why the interviews are as they are; becoming something of a quest through a visual snapshot of what ‘happened’ which by other means cannot be captured.

Transcription is stylised for the reader and additional analysis and synthesis and details of coding of data are contained in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The main questions of the thesis are accessible in the final chapter where they are reviewed and discussed. In most research, interviews are typically recorded and transcribed. Meaning is reliant on the text and key linguistic features. My intention was to take this process further and include modes of data which are drawn from

filming the participants (which incorporates such communicative language features gesture, body movement, eye contact and manipulation of materials etc.) audio and linguistic elements along with the art-making process and the artefact as a product.

Reading the interviews therefore requires some explanation for the reader. Each interview stands alone and is presented individually and foregrounded by a short description of the preservice teacher, the themes derived during the interview and an image of their artwork completed during the interview. Each interview provides the transcript voiced by both interviewer and preservice teacher. I present an additional voice embedded in the text, which serves to describe the immediate events and relevant context for the reader. The artwork presented at the conclusion of each interview is the image completed by me as a participant researcher. Each interview therefore brings a visual artefact and perspective to the topic of professional mindshift and thesis and contains,

- a cover page which presents the preservice teacher (with a pseudonym to de-identify) and a short description of the participating preservice teacher
- a summary of the emerging themes from the participant
- the art work produced by the preservice teacher
- a preamble to describe a main or important thread which flows in or from the interview
- transcribed text from preservice teacher is indicated in italics and the two voices and actions are set out as in a play script
- the art work produced by the interviewer (researcher)
- the emerging themes and epiphanies (using criteria developed by Denzin 2001) are noted in the commentary as they appear and are derived from the appropriate narrative
- a closing statement, usually linking or connecting back to the preamble or general context of the interview is located at the conclusion of the text—the short closing statement assists in contextualising the content, context or a prevailing mood of the interview
- an artful and reflective response from the researcher is located at the end of each interview
- an account of the number and types of themes and epiphanies from each interview is located in the Appendices.

In the personal accounts during the interviews, dispositions are demonstrated and values can be traced to determine ‘how’ and ‘what’ shaped the participants’ thinking. The analysis within

the interviews also considers and documents the context of the experience that underpins the learning. In the tradition of Raymond, Butt and Townsend (1992), who draw on case studies to illustrate teachers' stories, note too these stories are powerful and argue, 'Teachers' stories clearly illuminate the way in which teachers' early experiences and personal development have a profound influence on who they are and who they become as teachers' (Raymond, Butt & Townsend 1992, p. 159). Here, by contrast to autoethnography, there are short rare accounts by preservice teachers that retell of significant moments from their lifespan. In a similar *The courage to teach* (Palmer 1998) provide illumination through the voices of preservice teachers assists us to understand the empirical meanings for beginning to know what it is to teach well. The word 'courage' refers to what may hold greater meaning than the ordinary. 'Courage' requires more than assisting students in the teaching and learning process, but building the cultural and educational experience where building and constructing requires energy from the teacher. 'Courage' requires hegemony and power that is driven by daring and valour. When and where does the bravery begin? The following interviews enunciate the voice of the preservice teachers and proclaim in similar utterance in the following chapters.

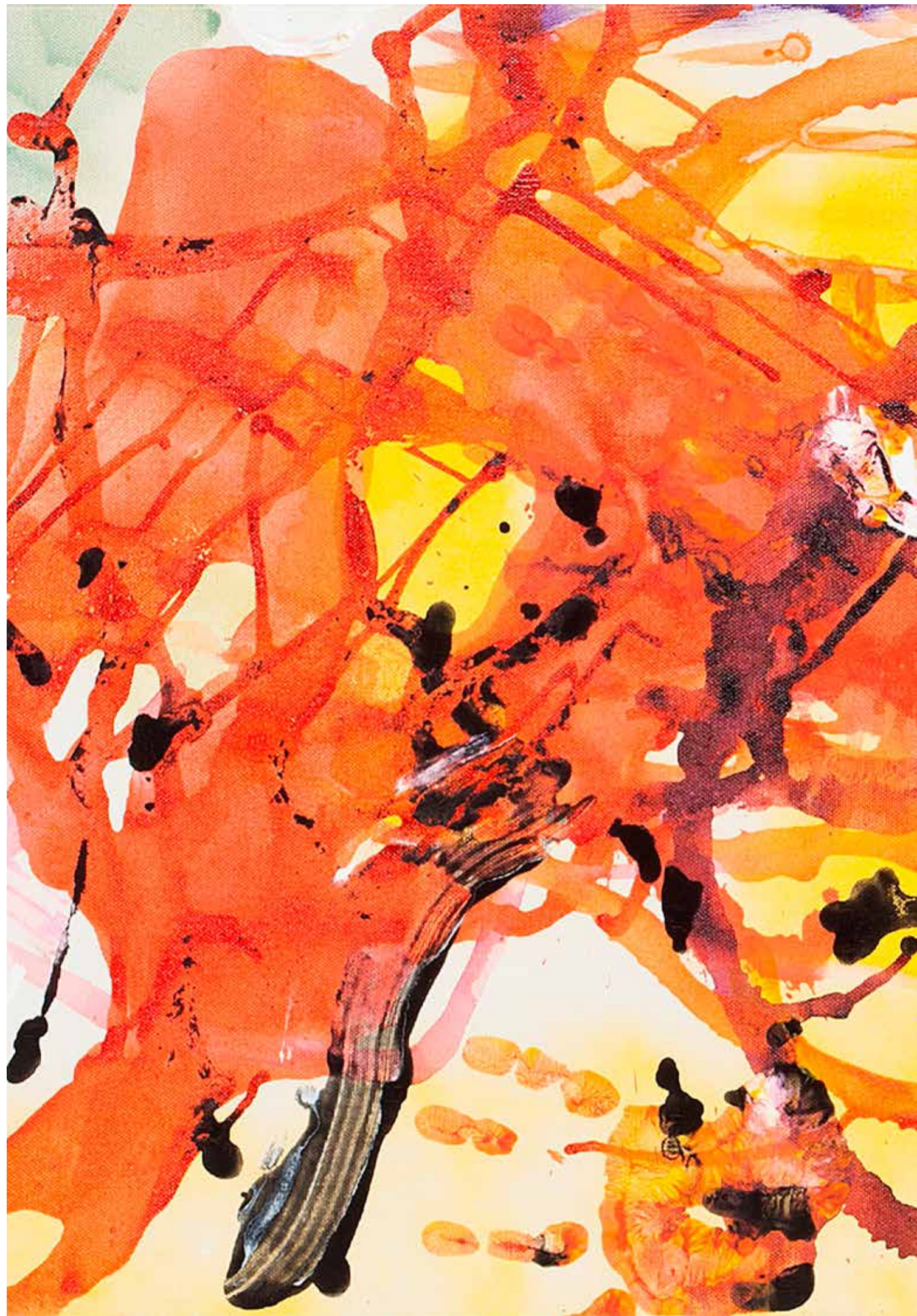
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CHAPTER 4

Abdul is of Arabic descent. He is approximately 30 years of age and is from the west of Melbourne. He has a very gentle nature and an empathetic personality. He travels a distance to the campus by car each day. He enjoys the campus environment and is developing good friendship others in the course. A striking and compassionate encounter was noted from the outset of our time together. Abdul has a large stature and is an imposing figure in the studio space. He takes the artmaking space up with assuredness and an air of confidence. Unlike some of the other preservice teachers Abdul has no hesitancy about being present to the space, though he has never done 'art'. He speaks quickly and enthusiastically about personal and professional topics. It is an easy transition for us into the encounter using the art media.

Abdul has generated insights that reflect his life world through the interview and art work. He had a sense of connectedness that he commented on as he made the art and spoke thoughts aloud. The thoughts were passionate and 'loaded' but were purposeful and deeply reflective.

.....



The background is an abstract painting with vibrant, warm colors like red, orange, and yellow, interspersed with dark, expressive brushstrokes in black and deep red. A semi-transparent dark rectangle is centered over the image, containing a list of text items in white.

Abdul

A journey

Inspiring teachers and influences that affect aspirations

Opportunities/challenges for students of diverse backgrounds

Cognitive and affective learning

Reflexivity

Life and cultural experience in developing values, action

Social justice

Positive school experiences

Cultural capital and language barrier

Teachers are mentors

Respect for teachers

Critical thinking

Positioning of power

Reflecting on and in practice

Developing consciousness toward identity

Responsibility of morals and judgement

Family

Childhood play

Teachers as collaborators and learners

Feedback, support and networking with others

Ontological and epistemological connections in learning

Authentic praxis in school placement partnerships

Critical reflection



Figure 4.1: *From one state to another*, Abdul, acrylic and ink on canvas

Peter Goldsworthy (1989) in his book *Maestro*, opens by stating ‘First impressions? Misleading, of course’ (Goldsworthy 1989, p. 3). The author begins his tale about a complex and unusual character in Herr Eduard Keller. Keller, the ‘Maestro’ is a piano teacher and by his own making, appears to be an outsider; however, a young piano student begins a quest to discover more about the piano teacher and eventually gains a great understanding and yet compassionate regard for the ‘Maestro’. But it is only after the conversations within the piano lessons that he can begin to study and know who Keller really is, and so begin the encounters of the music lessons that provide an opportunity for hearing rich stories from Keller. It is engaging in the dialogue through music lessons that provides the space for the student’s inquiry on the quest to find the true Keller. Consequently, the encounters provide opportunity for exploration and with a collection of insights (collected data) he constructs meaning on which to analyse, reflect, construct and trace a profile of Keller. While Goldsworthy’s character uses the music lessons, this research will use art-making sessions to accomplish the task of relinquishing the richest stories.

.....

In the following interview with Abdul the commentary is laden with rich stories and a sense of compassion. The transcript describes relinquishing of context and reflections enabled in the methodology, which is not only narrative and voiced through conversation, but expressed through art and image. I began the interview by asking, ‘What were the triggers that you can identify that have sent you on this journey to teacher and what do you understand, Abdul, by “mindshift”?’

The interview begins.

ABDUL: *I think the word itself ... You know; the mind shifting and its influence from one state to another.*

JULIE: *Some educationalists in the past have used all sorts of terms. Some have used the word ‘mindshift’, ‘enlightenment’, some might call it ‘epiphany’, ‘threshold concepts’ and all sort of terms to describe mindshift.*

Abdul begins to roll orange ink on the canvas. Although difficult to see from the final art work, Figure 4.2 indicates part of the line he makes. The orange line flows down the canvas and has a life of its own. The orange ink takes pathway slowly and sometimes quickly as Abdul lifts the canvas at times to create the uncharted marks the ink leaves.

.....



Figure 4.2: Flow of orange ink

Abdul points to the line he has created to highlight the next statement.

ABDUL: *It's like you're on a long journey and it goes onto different paths. But look, honestly, I believe that the reason that I guess this journey that I've been on, is because of the teachers themselves ... it's because my teachers were my inspiration and I believe that they were who I aspire to be and I honestly believe that [therefore] this society has made me who I am today. You know, and some of my friends have said, 'You have opportunity and (now) you have the responsibility.' So with opportunity comes responsibility, and I honestly believe that this is something that has helped me to get to where I am today. I've always wanted to do teaching; I've just never had the opportunity to get into it any earlier.*

There are a number of themes that arise in this section. Abdul articulates a sense of journey to illustrate his point above. The term ‘journey’ as Abdul points out in his circumstances is used to describe a long journey that may go in different paths is not only articulated but reinforced by the kinaesthetic response. Using a broader notion, Abdul may want to adhere to a description to that of a passage, where the search for destination or meaning may be influenced along with the

many factors within the terrain. It is a strong theme and I note it along with emerging themes of inspiring teachers and facilitators and the opportunities and challenges of access and success for students of diverse backgrounds. These are impressive thematic response from Abdul and contribute to his learning and aspirations.

.....

ABDUL: *I finished my degree in nursing, you know.*

JULIE: *So why teaching? What was the pivotal force for change?*

ABDUL: *Honestly, I think it's because I just knew that nursing would not have been for me. I couldn't, I just don't think I could've actually done it.*

JULIE: *What changed your mind?*

ABDUL: *I think you know the reality of nursing, of ... you know ... going in to a hospital and [seeing] people dying and I just couldn't cope with that. And the whole concept of a nursing home, it's not something that I have in my culture, you know. I am from an Arabic background, so we you know don't have nursing homes. And to see these people just lumped in there together was very shocking and I just couldn't see [why] that [was] happening and so I didn't want to do it.*

A shift in career is important for Abdul and is guided by learning and is a trigger to tracing the values and trajectory and a result of a cumulative epiphany. The contextualised learning presents emotional and cognitive connections and are themes which appear to present a shift in Abdul's thinking indicated by the critique on his professional practice. Additionally, reflecting on praxis reveals a level of reflexivity and is considered an emerging theme for this study.

.....

JULIE: *So why education?*

ABDUL: *Because it has been something that I have always wanted to do. But at the same time I wanted to be able ... [he thinks deeply for some time here]. I don't know. I just think that ... it's a passion I have ...*

JULIE: *So, you had a response 'knowing' that you didn't want to do nursing.*

ABDUL: *Yes, of course there was.* [Abdul gains eye contact. He uses this gesture to appeal for my attention. He also stops painting. This is has been a particularly emotional commentary.]

JULIE: *So, that obviously was a significant moment.*

ABDUL: *Yes, yes. I think it was the way that nursing homes are like a production belt. The residents get up at nine o'clock, you take them all to shower, get 'em dressed, feed them by 10 and then do the same thing again at 12, and you put 'em back to bed again. And that's just all it is and you think there's got to be more than that, you've got to be able to do more than that.*

JULIE: *So, what are you saying? What is more than that?*

ABDUL: *You know, they're human beings and they also have their needs and they actually have their ... they have their needs. [A little frustrated, he picks up spray and begins shaking the can vigorously.] You have to respect them for who they are and at the same time you know ... how would you like to be treated yourself? [Abdul sustains eye contact as if appealing.] And that's something that I want to want to bring into education ... I think I relate to children ... because I am the oldest in the family and that's something that I've always had to do—help and assist members of the family.*

Abdul walks to collect a spray paint container and begins shaking it vigorously. Abdul begins to paint while talking and sprays at the top of the canvas. He leans forward over the canvas as if taking command of the painting. He stops to observe his painting. He smiles now and laughs and states, 'That's a terrible colour ...' The emotional state during his conversation had not allowed him to notice that he applied a colour he was clearly unhappy with ... Abdul smiles and relaxes.

JULIE: *So, why education?*

ABDUL: *I wanted to get into education I guess ... I think I relate to children ... because I am the oldest in the family and that's something that I've always had to do; that is help and assist members of the family. [Abdul looks around the table where the large collections of paints are placed on the table. He is smiling and without lifting his head he states] I'm just thinking of what I'm going to throw here; there are just so many colours.*

JULIE: *Ah, so the moment of epiphany. How did you know teaching was for you? What triggered it?*

Abdul looks at his hands and notices he has paint on each hand. He looks quickly for a cloth to wipe it off, but continues talking and soon appears to not notice the paint on his hands and continues the story unperturbed.

ABDUL: *I am just trying to think, what would it have been? Ummm. Yes, there is, well, one thing actually.*

Abdul has stopped painting and has his arms slightly spread as if appealing through the following sentences. These are important points he wants to make about cultural barriers he has experienced. This point is made again later in the interview.

.....

ABDUL: *When I was growing up you know ... my teachers were everything ... because there was a first language barrier between my parents, and I, and the school, so it was very hard for me to get along with my parents on that same level as I could with my teachers. But, my teachers were always there for me and so when I went to school it was who I was. At same time uhhhm, I feel that ... that to be able to come here [university], and to be a teacher, is to be able to sort of, to relate to as a student, and at the same time it's something that I find it's enjoyable ... It's not because of the power, I don't think it's anything to do with that. It's because, for my whole life, I've had people to look up to and at the same time I think, 'Okay maybe I could set an example?' And as I was saying, it's that whole concept of opportunity and responsibility. I genuinely believe that I think I can give something back to society who made me who I am today. I think, so yeah ... does that kind of ...?* [He appeals to me for agreement.]

Abdul is articulating relived experience resulting in, as I term, a relived epiphany, as Norman Denzin's (2001) criteria suggest. Themes of life and cultural experience it seems have been determinants in developing Abdul's values, action and integrity. These are emerging themes which link closely to ideas of social justice. These ideas and learning have been positive leading him to university and teacher education. Abdul picks up a small stick and a pot of purple ink and daubs the ink onto the canvas (Figure 4.3). He begins to apply the paint slowly and then quickens his action as if trying to speed up the end of the sentence that he has begun.



Figure 4.3: Daubs of purple ink

Abdul makes clear the respect he holds for teachers. Teachers as mentors is a theme emerging from his commentary. The respect for teachers is underpinned for Abdul by knowing they were an important link in his 'life world' of existing cultures and languages.

JULIE: *Why do you have that urge to do that?*

ABDUL: *Because of [my] success, I honestly believe in the education system and it was able to give me that message.*

JULIE: *Where did you get that message?*

ABDUL: *It could've been in high school, even maybe in primary school, 'cause in primary school I was always the one that you know, told my parents, 'we've got to recycle paper or ...' 'cause I learnt it, and took it home with me. So, it is quite important that your parents, [as] they can actually be quite a significant force in your life. But at the same time the school has such an important and that ... at school they [teachers] do actually have an effect on you and just really change the way you think about things.*

Abdul hesitates many times in the dialogue and minor epiphany above. The experience is illuminative and he struggles to find words and similarly apply paint, ink and materials. When explaining examples of experiences he becomes more confident—he seems an expert at interpreting these simple important moments. Abdul demonstrates critique on the topic of family and school. The ability to think critically is noted and so too is the issue of family as a significant contributor to mindshift. Once the conclusive phrase has been stated, he selects the orange ink and pours it directly from the large bottle. The orange mixes with the purple and makes a large circular image on the canvas.

The movement is fluid and bold he looks surprised to see the result (Figure 4.4). He then places his hands on the table to support him and observes the image on the canvas.



Figure 4.4: Circle of orange ink

JULIE: *Can you think of any moment—that's a critical moment where it's changed the way you think and your mindshift in some way that was the very, very first seed perhaps, for you becoming a teacher?*

ABDUL: *I think that the pivotal moment probably was when I was in the classroom; when we were there in schools during first semester. It was the fact that we had a very powerful*

position and you don't understand that until you actually get out there and deal with the students and actually in the classroom with them. I think that's a pivotal moment to say this is 'okay'. 'Now you are realising you are becoming a teacher.' So, yes, it wouldn't have been something that I would have automatically have realised myself. It is when someone says something or identifies something. It's there subconsciously, but you can't actually explain it yourself until that moment ... until you say, 'Okay! I think that makes me a teacher.'

In the commentary above, Abdul appears to be reflecting on his practice, which is an important theme for the ability to shift and think deeply about teacher identity. Although he struggles to articulate clearly, Abdul states, 'So, yes, it wouldn't have been something that I would have automatically have realised myself.' We can acknowledge that the development of teacher consciousness is an important emerging theme and at the heart of what I have deemed a cumulative epiphany. Additionally, the concept and positioning of power in the classroom is considered. He acknowledges this and focuses on the current way in which he is challenged by what seems normal practice. In Abdul's story it was an insight, a new awareness to reveal a mindshift through reflection on praxis. Interestingly, during this conversation Abdul has picked up a large bottle of purple ink. He has unscrewed the cap and vigorously poured it on to the canvas. While still speaking, he poured the ink without knowing where it may flow. Now silent, he moves his body closer to focus on what is taking place on the canvas and marvels at the ink running and merging together on the canvas.

Abdul holds the two sides of the canvas and begins to take control of the ink. He rolls the ink about freely (Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5: A flow of ink spreads over the canvas

JULIE: *What is it to think like a teacher?*

ABDUL: *Be conscious of maybe the people around you and the world. And I think you have a responsibility. I honestly believe a teacher is someone who could have the morals and the judgements of someone who's been given this gift. But at the same time not all teachers are the same and some think differently.*

Abdul speaks slower now and is looking at the painting. Responsibility and moral judgement can be drawn as themes as his calm voice finds an important topic and his response is truly heartfelt. The notion of a 'gift' is illuminative for me and termed here a minor epiphanic moment. Abdul tilts the top left of the art work to allow the ink to fall across the canvas. His movements are slow, considered and sensitive to the medium. It appears his gentle movement and flow assist him to describe the point he is making.

JULIE: *What about early moments? There must have been times for you when you said, 'Ah ha! I get it! I now think perhaps this is crucial to the way I think.' Who told you, you could be a teacher?*

Unfortunately, I have asked too many questions in this part of the conversation, but Abdul responds to the questions, beginning with family events. He pauses and rests on his hands. But before explaining about his early family life, Abdul then holds the back of his hand to his lips. It may be that he is afraid of what may come from his mouth. He pauses and holds eye contact. He has reflected and more confidently now begins the story above.

ABDUL: *Good question. [Abdul is thinking deeply and his concentration is both fixed on reflecting on this point and to looking at art work.] Never by the teachers themselves, but we used to play teachers at home with my brother and I and my sister. I think it was when I first toyed with the idea in my first year of university because I never thought of teaching when I was in high school. I never thought of that, even when my teachers commented on my quality of work and my commitment to actually learning. I never actually thought about it then. For me to go on to university and start toying with the idea was when my friends said to me. My friends would say to me ... and I would say to them, 'You know I think teaching is ...' And I also think it's because I have respect for teachers and all educators, I guess.*

The themes of family and childhood resonate. Reflecting on the past is easy for Abdul. He is thoughtful and he admits, he 'never actually thought about it then'. Thinking about it now is illuminative for Abdul, and I suggest a minor epiphany for him. At this point, his approach to painting is different now too. He selects a pot of paint and a small scraping tool. His approach is quite playful and he paints with short rhythmical movements, applying the paint swinging the spatula to and fro with ease on each application.

Abdul continues to be very animated while reflecting and rolls the ink about the canvas and over areas he has been previously painted (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6: Paint is added with a spatula using a swinging action

JULIE: *Are there any more [significant] moments?*

ABDUL: *During a teaching session when planning lessons for students with other preservice teachers. It took 10 minutes [talking with others] to actually to understand everything I needed to do. It took 10 minutes for me to say, ‘Okay, what I was doing was incorrect’. Well, team teaching is actually [about] gaining other skills from others or group members and then being able to use that to apply into my further teaching and that’s what I did when we did team teaching and I thought that was really pivotal to know to be able to do that—to know that teachers aren’t just independent little bodies [Abdul moves his arms to assist in providing a description] and they are connected together one way or another. I believe that teachers don’t have all the ideas themselves and so you ... use that network ... it’s a network and asking what works well and what doesn’t. ‘Can you help me with this, and what do you think I can do in relation to that?’ Teachers are open to new things. They should be open to new things and be able to adapt; we’re supposed to be able to do that. That’s what makes teachers stand out from other professions—to be able to do that. I think they see society in its most [he slows at this point and makes eye contact] raw form because schools are the first point in what makes a child who they are in the future, and at the same time follow the changes that are happening in society, and they make it relevant to the [student] and [consequently] the rest of the people who live in that society.*

During this account, Abdul establishes that teachers are not the ‘holders of knowledge’, but are collaborators and learners. It is a strong point and as he suggests it is ‘pivotal’ from his critical account. Feedback, support and networking with others are also strong points, distinguishing teachers and other professionals. While making this important point he moves from speaking directly facing me to reaching for a small stick and scraping on small amounts of black paint to make small deliberate markings. This technique has the effect of creating depth to the image he has created on the canvas. The marks are scratched on but reveal detail and constraint as reflected in the verbal account of teachers and what they provide to students and subsequently society. There is an underlying tension from listening to the account and leads me to understand a minor epiphany illuminating may have occurred evidenced through the art and the story.

The considered deliberations are matched by the restrained, but important etchings on the canvas (Figure 4.7).’



Figure 4.7: Small black markings

JULIE: *Any other ‘aha’ moments when you think, ‘Well, I now know that I am a teacher and this is because ...’*

ABDUL: *Well I think influencing someone.*

He moves and picks up a spray can and begins to shake it vigorously. He begins to spray the paint onto the canvas. He uses large sweeps to shake the can and apply the spray. He then stops and continues the topic using larger hand gestures to emphasise his comments here.

ABDUL: *I had a student who had behavioural problems and he spoke Arabic, and so he would swear in Arabic too and no one else understood apart from myself. He thought I didn’t understand Arabic and when [he realised that] I did it put me in a position where I could say, ‘Yes I do understand and I know what you’re saying and it’s got to stop’ and at the same time—because I was able to create this relationship with the student on this level, I understood him and I could maybe relate to him. He had anger management issues, so we spoke about ‘why’ he was getting into trouble. I think that’s probably one of the moments ... I think that it’s the simple things—like a student handing in a note saying ‘Dear Mr ..., My daughter hasn’t been able to hand in her homework because she was ill’. Also marking work and taking responsibility for the students’ work [results].*

JULIE: *You were talking about playing teachers with your brothers and sisters. What happened? Where did you do that?*

While I ask about the topic of play Abdul uses a sponge to spread the paint that is on the canvas. He makes large smooth sweeps across the centre of the canvas. The moves are rhythmical and wistful. Remembering his childhood he begins the next account below.

ABDUL: *In our bedroom ... because my parents ... well they’re smokers. And they would sit around in the lounge room watching pre-recorded Arabic TV shows and Spanish shows*

and we did not want to sit in front of them, so we would sit in our rooms and play teachers. We would get a book and we would mark the roll and we would say, 'We are doing maths today'. It was just interesting to be able to do that. At the same time we used to play I spy with my little eye, and so I think that's why—it was an interest to learn new things, I guess.

There have been two stories presented above and forged through lived experience. Reflecting on these stories enables a reliving of experience for Abdul and may be termed a 'relived' epiphany in this instance. Abdul also introduced the theme of early play and when describing the setting, builds a picture for me. It is evocative and reveals a fragment of the life world which formed and nurtured his interest in teaching. Now, with a bolder and stronger approach, Abdul uses red once again. He paints with a larger brush and with a new artful awareness and voiced certainty he paints leaving thick brush marks in the corner of the canvas. It surprises me that he has not added the paint to a more centred location on the canvas. The use of red paint and a new technique located at the corner of the canvas may be prompted partly by the statement in his conclusive remarks (Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.8: Red paint added to right hand corner

ABDUL: I found that all learning, as simple as it might be seem, is actually really important and can actually be used for teaching and helping other people to find their own understanding and knowledge that they find. So, that is something I believe; it's not just a matter of reading a book and that's it. You could be watching something; it could be going to an art gallery, or to a festival celebrating Chinese New Year.

Abdul acknowledges a series of events as contributing to learning and his mindshift process, which can be catergorised as a cumulative epiphany and drawing on epistemological connections in learning as the basis of his claim. Abdul begins to flow the ink over the canvas by tipping it to one side and then the other, and appearing to balance the art and the claim through both modes of communication.

JULIE: Can you explain a situation or describe a moment where you thought, 'Ah ha! Now ... I am a teacher.'

ABDUL: *I think being in a class for the first time where you are in control. You know you can think of it as in the physical sense—it is the actual practicality of it. You might be ready mentally, about being a teacher because you can, for example, analyse things and try to get information from that, but it's not until the day that you're experiencing in your actual placements that you know that you can actually become a teacher.*

JULIE: *How do you know?*

ABDUL: *So many things can communicate the idea that you can be the teacher. For example, why don't you talk to the students? When you communicate with them in the classroom—what you want is a deeper notion of how this could be the case. Then you just know it.*

Abdul emphasises this point with a predictable firmness and tension. The statement is reflective of a minor/illuminative epiphanic moment, particularly when focusing on the authentic practice or praxis which exists while in school placement.

JULIE: *That's what I am particularly interested in finding out. I'm not sure I have that answer either of course. But, I can see it, all of a sudden—I can see it too. I see preservice teachers all of a sudden just 'get it', and that's what I am amazed by. I'd like to know how that happens.*

ABDUL: *Maybe I think it's when the student turns around and says, [pause] 'Thank you'. When they indicate they actually appreciate what you're trying to do for them. So, I think that might be something that tells preservice teachers that they are teachers; that they could be teachers and very good teachers. I think that it could be as simple as that.*

This is a minor/illuminative epiphany for me as well as Abdul. I reflect on this point that identity is primarily generated by others (in Abdul's case from the students' responses). Subjective clarifying and constructing identity can be crafted by reaction from others in mutual engagement. Providing opportunities for preservice teachers in school is desirable for pedagogical development, but has considerable merit in the self-monitoring and interpreting identity.

ABDUL: *You know, just talking to a student and realising, 'Look they are bored so let's just think how I am going to engage them more.' What am I going to set for them to do that's going to excite them and make them want to come every day and learn something? So, I think it is just small things like that, that you can pick up on the way.*

Abdul reaches for the black paint across the table before articulating the following story of a darker moment. During the following story his tone is quieter and slightly foreboding and reveals a major epiphanic moment.

ABDUL: *There are dark moments—because they do happen, but they happen at different times. So during the journey they do come along the way and you know, they do affect the way that you do things. Sometimes dark moments lead to lightness and I think that’s why I have put in the yellow [pointing to art work]. I think one of the dark moments in teaching; it was something in this course that didn’t actually prepare me for teaching was behaviour management; just the simple thing like walking into a class and not being able to gain students’ attention. And so, that was something really where I thought, ‘What do I do?’ in that certain case. What do I do with a student who’s not listening or is not co-operative or I don’t have the power myself to help them? So, I think that’s one of the dark moments and at other times—it’s the fact that you fail in your role as a teacher, I think. As an example, I was teaching a class and my mentor [teacher] was there and I completely just shut down and did everything that I wouldn’t have done. He was an English teacher. It was really hard and I was scared of him. He was very critical of the way I undertook the lesson. But because he was critical, I think I learnt a lot. So, that was something I was able to use to my advantage because at the end of the day, I’m there to learn and basically to satisfy the request that the government (VIT)¹ that has the authority to enable me to be a teacher and be competent in class. So I used that learning as a learning curve for me.*

Abdul states, ‘Sometimes dark moments lead to lightness and I think that’s why I have put in the yellow’ and points to his art work (Figure 4.9).



Figure 4.9: Areas of yellow

JULIE: *So, given that experienc, why is it the learning curve?*

ABDUL: *Well, because from what we’ve learnt in this course is to be able to critically reflect and to actually reflect on experiences. And by reflecting on experiences, and it’s true, and it sounds like a cliché, but honestly, if you don’t reflect, you don’t get anywhere and so you need to have the capacity to say, ‘Okay, what went wrong there? Why? What can I do?’—to be able to say, ‘Why, why, why and how am I actually going to be able to improve?’ I believe that. What do you think of that yourself?*

JULIE: *I like the idea of asking 'Why, why, why?' By asking why, can eventually reveal new understandings. So, basically we are starting to theorise about this, so I want to ask you again about your general philosophy?*

ABDUL: *My philosophy? If you can't critically reflect you won't be open to new ideas and you won't be able to, I think, progress as a competent teacher. That's critical—a teacher's not there just to teach. I think there's so much more to a teacher than meets the eye, I guess. I don't know if I want to answer because I don't think that there can be a possible answer all the time. It just depends I guess on the situation and what you can do to change things, 'cause teaching's not just something that is stagnant and just stays like that. It is actually something that evolves and teaching is always evolving so what worked yesterday does not work today.*

This commentary by Abdul has been an important insight regarding critical practice as a significant statement and theme. I feel this is a highly theoretical point and a minor/illuminative epiphanic moment Abdul has reached. I think he too has recognised that this story has lead to an impressive moment about his shift encompassing his movement to professional practitioner. There is a new knowledge and level of understanding and it is reflected in his next move when he approaches his art making.

ABDUL: *I'm going to be really weird here, but I'm actually going to paint my fingers.*

Abdul begins to cover his fingers with a brush dripped in red paint. He presses his hand carefully on to the canvas.

Figure 4.10 depicts the mark of what in ancient times indicated a symbol of pride and primal ownership and distinguishing it from all others.



Figure 4.10: Hand print

ABDUL: *A principal was asked once, why the parents didn't become involved in the school. He stopped them and said, 'No, it's not that they don't want to; it's just that they don't know how to go about it'. So, that's something I believe affected me [once again, printing his*

hand on the canvas]. *My parents came from overseas and they came during war and they had no formal education and when they came here they worked in you know, uhmm ... in factories. But you know, they really wanted education for us, but they honestly did not know, for example, how to go about helping us any further. They would say, 'Look, you know we can try to support you financially, but we don't know it's just a basic concept [education], but we don't actually know how to help you with that'. That's why I keep saying, you know, my teachers were my inspiration, because I turned to them because that's what teachers are there for.* [He stamps and prints his hand on the canvas again this time more firmly.]

There are times when the interplay of 'gesture' and 'meaning' are illuminated in the conversational exchange. From my perspective, gestures can be interpreted and add meaning to the 'spoken'. The commentary above has been delivered by Abdul with a serious tone and the gestural features are a consequence of the 'emotions' contained in Abdul's dialogue and the gestures, a tool or 'driver' to extend the meaning. For this reason, I want to categorise the learning moment as a major epiphany given the strong tone and gestures. For example, there were some common gestures which act as appeals for approval. Abdul stopped a number of times to gain eye contact and subsequently observed my reaction. There were instances when emotion triggered a power exchange and at one point he stood upright and spreads his arms toward me when speaking. At times, power and emotion permeate levels of interpretive research (Denzin 2001).

Abdul asked occasionally if the information he was giving was relevant. For example, he stated, 'Is this what you are referring to?' and 'I'm not sure if you agree with this but ...' and at one stage asked, 'What do you think of that yourself?' One of the primary concerns facing me as the researcher was to monitor and resist the behaviour of the teacher. Teachers are often central dominating figures (Carew & Lightfoot 1979) and as a researcher I felt this should not affect interpersonal power perceptions that may jeopardise the validation of the unique personal accounts given by Abdul. Researchers have an impact on the people they observe and encounter (Carew & Lightfoot 1979) and hold theories and values. It was important to attempt not reveal strong views or judgements that may impact or influence the personal accounts. It is not possible to exclude all values from view or the space. It but it is possible to not draw attention to many obvious internal and external aspects of ideologies and perspectives from the researcher.

Abdul looks at each piece of art work carefully. He points to my painting unexpectedly and begins to interpret it from his perspective.

ABDUL: *Your art work is one of those landscape paintings. You know you have the mountains and this could be the shoreline here [pointing] and that could be the beach or something or it could be a lake and here [pointing to a part of the picture] you're looking out to that.*

It's like this journey that you take. Education is a journey. In fact, being a teacher or an educator is a constant journey.

JULIE: *So, it could be a cognitive landscape?*

ABDUL: *Yes. You're exactly right.*

Once the interview, conversation and art making are completed, I clean the room and reflect on the experience. What have I missed? What data have not been revealed? How can I recall the important moments and what will I be able to give to the record? I pack the camera away and label the film for reviewing and transcribing. As I wash the brushes and put things put back in the store rooms nearby, I turn back to look at the room. And what of the space? The two paintings are left in the room to dry and remain as a testament to the encounter.

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My art work in response to Abdul



Figure 4.11: *Cognitive landscape*, Julie, acrylic and ink on canvas

Abdul's encounter is characterised by passion and empathy. Rich in detail, his exploration of experiences are heartfelt. Ideas merge and I am able to glean insights through a dialogue, art and space and we are able to gain some understanding of complex environments and challenges too which have paved the way for mindshift of the emergent teacher. The art work I have presented above (Figure 4.11) is testimony to the complex nature of his emergent themes. Messy and entangled, the ideas blend to present a cognitive landscape of learning.

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CHAPTER 5

A young woman with long dark hair and large dark eyes enters the studio slowly and smiles. Meredith is a preservice teacher and I know her. She was a student in my class some years ago. She is in her fourth year of teacher education now and has an interest in visual art. In the following interview I will begin to learn more about her as she shares many recollections from her life. The stories entwine life stories, learning and critical narrative. For the moment she stands and smiles at the canvas and the paint pots spread before her; she is smiling. She puts on her protective coat and spends some time observing the room and comprehending the task that has been explained. Meredith selects a piece of chalk and commences creating a picture before the questions begin. The stage is set for the story she will tell.

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The background is a complex abstract composition. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle occupies the center. Overlaid on this and the surrounding area are numerous brushstrokes in various colors, including purple, pink, yellow, and blue, creating a textured, painterly effect. The text is centered within the teal rectangle.

Meredith

Being

Being comfortable with self

Recognising prior learning

Passion

Proficiency

Diverse ethnic background

Teacher as facilitator

Rich early educational experiences

Nurture and care



Figure 5.1: *A kind of knowing*, Meredith, acrylic and chalk on canvas

The key to understanding the individual and collective world views of a group of students and their learning is their experience, or, rather, their interpretations of that experience, [i.e., the 'stories' they tell]. The learning moment: a stepping stone between experience and possibility.

(Juliana Prpic 2003)

The interview begins.

JULIE: *I'm going to ask you some questions. I am interested in the term 'mindshift' ...*

MEREDITH: *Probably, from being a preservice teacher to a teacher mind, rather than thinking 'I'm learning' ... learning in to a kind of knowing; as you go through to be a teacher and learning things and actually getting to know your students as a teacher.*

Meredith responded to the first question quickly and defined 'mindshift' as 'a kind of knowing'.

JULIE: *Can you think of anything that may have happened, when you started thinking like a teacher?*

MEREDITH: *Ahhh, I think it has a lot to do with what your placement is like¹ and how comfortable you are. Maybe, ... [for example] like last year; I didn't really feel like a teacher last year, but this year I'm much more comfortable in my partnership school. I've been given the freedom I guess, to be more 'like' a teacher. My mentor teacher, she's been great. She allowed me to take over the classroom. When you're given the freedom and control then I guess that's when you start to think like a teacher. Because if you don't have control, you're always looking over at your mentor and asking, 'Am I doing this right or am I doing that right?' When the mentor teacher has the confidence in you, then you have that confidence. You just do what you want to do because they have guided you properly and this year in the classroom I've had the biggest mindshift.*

As Meredith spoke of her experience I could almost see her reliving her time in the classroom—in her voice a sense of reliving; of feeling, hearing, doing and being in the transitional moment.

JULIE: *In class?*

MEREDITH: *In placement, when the teacher left me to take the class, it was interesting to see the dynamics of the class. I was really nervous because she [the mentor teacher] wasn't actually near me, and the dynamics of the class ... and well ... they were actually quieter for me. So, that was interesting. I try not to work myself up about it because I usually get nervous, but it was alright.*

JULIE: *Well. Are there important times or learning moments?*

1

School practicum placement.

Meredith moved back to the canvas. Relaxed and settled began painting on to the canvas. She placed some paint on with ease. Feeling comfortable with her story and self upon the words ‘but it was alright’. Here presents a theme of the importance of being comfortable with self for the preservice teacher. With a convincing sense of promise and reassurance for her future teaching and learning, I am aware of this relived epiphanic moment.

She uses short but smooth strokes to create a linear image. Paint is thin when applied and the canvas shows through. Her head moves rhythmically on each stroke before selecting some events she may want to share (Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2: Rhythmic lines

From the short deliberate lines which merge together, Meredith forms a longer continuous line. It is interesting to examine the relational position of short lines at this point, in terms of the question asked. The short lineal features resemble features of a map which she develops into a much larger lineal image. As with the short images so are the stories she narrates. The challenge for Meredith here is to determine which small story she will share next.

.....

MEREDITH: *Ahhh ... I guess a lot of things were important. Realising that I probably could become an artist and that was realised in my [previous] uni course. After that, I decided that I probably could become a teacher. I think just maturing enables a big transition; going from 18 in your first year of uni to 22 in the last year of uni. But I also did an art course after high school and that's probably ... you know when I fell in love with art; because I understood it more, that's when I fell in love with art.*

In high school I surprisingly, loved art history, because every week we would learn about modernism ... post-modernism or pop art. Every week we learnt about a different movement and I felt like I actually knew something, because I knew the genres and where the different movements came from and why the painters painted what they did and everything. I think that was a big transition for me, because you have to have a passion for something if you want to teach. That's why I don't understand generalist teachers because I don't know where the passion is ... I don't

really understand where the passion would be. You really have to have a passion for teaching. But I think when you have a genre, or a subject that you like to teach, you would give that 100 per cent.

Previous learning and passion resonate as emerging themes from Meredith's commentary. The experiences she points out have developed from a number of cumulative experiences and therefore mindshift here can be noted as a product of cumulative epiphanic awareness.

Meredith extends her movement over the canvas. She loads up the brush with paint and mixes additional colour, mixing until she is happy with a particular colour (Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3: Colour adding layers to existing lines

Meredith's brush is heavy with paint and she reaches and paints the colourful torso of a bird. Time after time she gathers paint, mixes and then applies broad and bold colours to the body of the large bird that fills the canvas. She finds strength and confidence in her story telling. Confident and focused in the topic, she generates a longer story. Although the reading or interpretation of art work may be polysemic (Prosser 2006), the real story here is of the epistemological learning and inquiry in visual art. I perceive now a focused observation in her story describing her growth in the field. She is reflective and progressively clear about her passion and the professional level of practice she will bring to the classroom. The strength is shared in the art and the telling as she adds,

MEREDITH: *Then there was the experience in secondary school; I really loved the secondary placement and I think this was because I had the whole art room to myself [with mentor teacher supervision]. I loved the kids; they were 'rowdy' and everything, but to see their art show at the end of the year. They all left class to come up to say 'Hello' to me and everything—and that was nice. [She paints now with big, broad strokes and pours out more paint into the container.] And they asked me when will I go back and teach them. I never thought I'd like high school. I thought I'd be a primary school teacher but then as soon as I had left secondary and began my placement in primary school and had all these little kids around me [smiling at this statement], I missed the independence of the year 10s. You know, I guess they can cause you grief, but ...*

Proficiency from experience has strengthened her approach to the classroom. This theme has emerged by her disclosing information about the approach she has developed the students in the classroom and the independence she has gained. It is illuminative and considered to be a minor/illuminative epiphany. Meredith paints now with big, broad strokes and pours out more paint into the container.

JULIE: *That was an interesting transition.*

MEREDITH: [Eye contact is made at this point] *Yeah!*

JULIE: *But, how did you know that?*

MEREDITH: *Because, you don't know what you've got until it's gone. Let me explain; I wasn't in a high school placement anymore and I missed the high school environment. I was in a primary and I really like teaching what I like to do. In primary school it was hard, because you really can't teach [as a generalist teacher] what you like to do. I don't really like to clag everything together. [She laughs gently.] I like to make animations and have the freedom to be able to choose [offer] art as an elective for those who obviously have some kind of interest in it. Yeah ... a passion ...*

Meredith now sounds distant and speaks the last few words in a quiet and wistful tone. She trails off from the words as if considering the phrase in a distant way.

Using minimal movement, she quietly and almost whimsically applies wavy lines to the painting. It becomes rhythmical. For the observer, it might look as though the paint brush is leading, and her gentle hand grip follows obediently (Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.4: Blue short wavy lines added

JULIE: *What turned you to teaching? How did you get here?*

MEREDITH: *I took to teaching. During my previous course, I loved doing fashion. That was an elective. I was very interested in fashion and illustration. I had a teacher named Sue, and she actually reminds me of you ... and she told me I should try and do fashion illustration, but there wasn't a lot of courses that were offered and a lot them were*

TAFE² courses. And, so I planned it then actually. I planned that I would do my two years of CMA³ and then an accelerated (BEd⁴) course.

My niece had a lot to do with why I wanted to teach. My niece was born when I was very young, when I was 13. I was quite young and I was her godmother as well and I was quite young to be a godmother. And I ... I ... I don't know, I umm ... really wasn't interested in children or anything like that but as I got older, being able to see someone grow up impacted on me and I thought, the way the world is—'cause we see so much nastiness, like racism and prejudice—my mum's Indian and my boyfriend's African so I see things in that sense. I thought where does that all come from as you grow up. So if you impact on the child's life enough and you are where it begins, and you can teach them what's right and wrong, and then that's probably the only way you can change—change the way the world thinks.

Here, Meredith acknowledges the importance impact of ethnicity and this is further evident as the interview progresses. An emerging theme, the legacy of recent migrant parentage, resonates with pride and acknowledges Meredith's substantial success in the shared reflections. She is honest and emphasises the difficulties, challenges, choices and celebrations that frame her ability to understand her narrative and knowing. The role of migration and diverse backgrounds underpin many of the interviews. It recurs in the accounts of life story, defining and illuminating values of participants in the study. Often, it becomes clear that when a sense of divide is referred to by the participant, their cultural background is perceived as an immense contributor, but is somehow seen as an external factor to their subsequent success. A major epiphanic life experience, this has lead Meredith to an awareness of cultural background which is 'embedded' and cannot be set apart from identify formation.

Lines float around the bird to create a cascade effect of ribbon streamers. Images explode in the air unhinged may celebrate a successful flight (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5: Floating blue lines

2 Technical and Further Education.

3 Computer Mediated Art degree.

4 Bachelor of Education (Prep – Year 12) Accelerated Program credits students with a prior degree enabling them to complete a BEd over a two-year period rather than four years.

JULIE: *So given that, what is your role?*

MEREDITH: *My role is now to guide children in their lives to teach them what is right and what is wrong, but allowing them to make their own [decisions] mistakes. I still want them to deal with the repercussions; if they are nasty or do something wrong they should be able to deal with the consequences. You give children the tools to actually identify where they went wrong so they don't do it again. I believe, like in my philosophy [developed and written by Meredith] that I did last year—children are a blank canvas and we give them the tools, like the paint brush and the paint, to paint their own life and to grow in knowledge. We're just there as a guide really; we're there to correct their spelling ... [by way of example] and point them in the right direction, but in the end, they're the ones that make the decision to know what colours they use to paint their life; they can be bright and happy or they can be dull ... and dark.*

The role of the teacher as facilitator is an indicator of a mindshift and an emerging theme. Learning about the role of the teacher has been gain from experiences from the classroom and reflecting on the learning about teaching. Cumulative epiphanies such as these can develop over time and hold moments which often can surprisingly bring about mindshift.

.....

JULIE: *What about when you were little?*

MEREDITH: *When I was little ... ?*

JULIE: *Like your niece's age.*

MEREDITH: *She's five now. [Meredith begins to speak slowly and thinks deeply.] When I was my niece's age I ... I always loved art. My teacher in primary school, Mrs Osborne, she told me I should be an artist and I think that's why I was so into art. I remember in a parent-teacher interview I had a painting like of a park. I had gone to a gallery ... at the Melbourne gallery. I went to the gallery and I had seen a painting. It was a Monet and it was a walkway with cherry blossoms, and a park bench and I thought, 'I am going to paint that in my art class', and that's what I did; I painted it in my next art class and the teacher said 'Oh, she should be an artist' and I just thought, 'Oh, you don't know that I copied that.'* [Meredith, while reflecting, laughs at this previous experience.]

And, my niece at this age—she is the 'spitting image' of me. She's gorgeous, and she makes me want to teach children.

Themes arising of rich educational experiences and the nurturers (or care givers) are buried in the stories above. These are relevant to Meredith's developing professional mindshift.

.....

JULIE: *Now, is there anything or anyone else in your life you would like to acknowledge in your learning?*

MEREDITH: *Well there's my mum, she's very 'arty'. The family my mum comes from; she is so different from all of the others in the family. She's so accepting of so many things. Willing to ... give somebody [a chance] ... and I got this from her definitely; I am willing to give somebody a million chances because I trust [others] so much. I just think you should be willing to give chance after chance, because you can't judge if they will change.*

As a child, like I didn't have ... my dad. He was only around until I was six. It was just my mum; but she's always been there to protect me and I haven't noticed at all that my dad wasn't around—at all; because she's done such a good job. She's definitely someone I want to make proud. [Meredith's movements while painting slow and her eyes are down.] She's very proud of me at the moment with me teaching. I'm the only one that's finished high school and gone straight to uni.

Meredith notes the importance of family and in particular being first in the family to attend university. The pride she shares with her mother is evident and these issues emerge as themes from her relived narrative. However, the challenges which she may have experienced (Bradley et al. 2008; Priest 2009) are not revealed.

Victoria University⁵ has an inclusive program which focuses on access and educational success to students from diverse and low-socioeconomic community groups and often attracts students who are termed 'first in family' to attend university. Meredith is one of many students in teacher education who apply and are successful in higher education.

.....

MEREDITH: *My brother's doing a Bachelor in music. He's going to do teaching as well, but he's 32; there's a big difference between us. [Meredith uses big bold movements here while telling this particular story about her family.] My mum, my uncle and my brother have always been there for me. I think when you have a very close family, you'll always want to inspire the family around you, and you'll always want them to be proud of you and to say 'Well done'—like a child. I've got preps right now and they just want you to tell them that they're going okay and they're doing the right thing in life.*

5

Adapted from the Victoria University School of Education 'Pillars' strategic plan statement 2010.

Meredith continues to discuss personal family issues and I note that family is associated with a positive and empathetic framing from which she theorises. Her awareness of reinforcing using positive ‘talk’ is ideal for teaching. She draws from a simple and familiar occurrence from her past. This mindshift is inspiring as her learning and understanding are evidenced in the following response. The encounter has transpired from a cumulative epiphany stemming from a set of circumstances and events within the family.

JULIE: *... And how are the preps in your classroom?*

MEREDITH: *They just want that assurance. I just want to be there for children and say, ‘Good, you are doing the right thing’, and you know, the children that don’t have good homes—just to let them know that they’re worth something; that they have meaning in life.*

JULIE: *How can you do that?*

MEREDITH: *When I teach ... I guess through ... recognition ... through ... praise and ... rewarding. I guess it’s the only way. Teachers and parents are a big thing in children’s life, and letting someone’s parent know that they’re doing well, so then the child can walk out with his head held high. They want to just to be doing well, and if you’re letting the parents know that their child is asking questions or getting them to be the classroom helper, or doing ‘show and tell’. They then have someone they really look up to—their teachers. They want a role model and someone to recognise what they’re doing.*
[Meredith is now focusing on details in the painting.]

The tone of Meredith’s voice rises here. She becomes focused on details of her painting. For Meredith and her circumstances stemming from a classroom experience, I assume, there have been some challenging moments for her students. The position she takes of teacher as a primary role model is firm and an emerging theme from her. Her tone is strong and prompted by tension from her classroom experience—an epiphanic moment which for her, may have been illuminative on this pedagogical topic.

JULIE: *What do you remember from your school?*

MEREDITH: *From my primary school? I remember, umm ... well that teacher, Mrs Osborne, I remember her. I remember I always had nice teachers—always very nice.*

The one I remember the most was my year 12 art teacher. I think he was there for the first term and he had to leave, and it left everyone thinking, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m in

year 12, and I don't have an art teacher', and he was just such an awesome teacher. He was just ... like, without saying a word, he would command your presence and when he walked in, you had so much respect for him; he didn't raise his voice, he didn't yell at you, he didn't put you down, ever. I never remember him having to send anyone out, or talk to anyone, he umm ... he just ... you just wanted to know what he was going to say to you, and he made me fall in love with George Gittoes. I love his artwork. Everything ties into everything, because George Gittoes travelled a lot and he painted different portraits of ... massacres and bombings and so on. There are just so many paintings and art works that he did that show exactly what's happening on the other side of the world. That's when I thought, 'You can teach so many people so many things just from [she sighs] ...' He wanted to go with the army so he could really capture it.

I actually went to a conference at the art centre, when I was in the course in 2005. George Gittoes was supposed to appear, but he couldn't make it because he was over on the other side of the world; but he could use a satellite link and so, he spoke to us about a new movie he was making with people living on the street. It was just like being there. I was not really aware of what was going on in the world. We are sheltered and the news doesn't show everything now. They [news broadcasters] don't really show what's happening; they don't really show everything that's happening around the world. So, that's why I don't think we have much sympathy for the other side of the world because we [Australians] don't know. You have to, kind of educate yourself and George Gittoes does through bringing back images of war ... these raw ... rich ... painted images that were beautiful ... that were painted beautifully and used luscious acrylics and oils ... but ... the scene in the actual subject of the pictures are terrible you know.

Role models are identified by Meredith, both in and out of the classroom. As an emerging theme the presence of role models contribute to Meredith's mindshift. Her ability to recall and describe with such fervour brings the story to life. Meredith's description here leads to an interest beyond everyday events and for this reason I have termed the learning moment as a minor epiphany and illuminative.

.....

JULIE: *Are there any other role models?*

MEREDITH: *Probably not [smiling]—just those two art teachers. I love my mentor though and she was a pretty good role model. She is only two years older than me and she's really great and she helped me become more confident. Being, you know ... strong*

mind, I need to do what I want to do, not what others want me to do. But I when I was in Hamford Primary I was never the same as everybody else. I was never always happy. I was never, you know, what you would always expect from a prep teacher. This was the case especially last year; my mentor Alison, she was very much like that. She was always 'happy go lucky' and I thought what's wrong with me? Why can't I be happy all the time? But this teacher has really taught me that I don't [have to be], that's not what being a teacher is about; you're not there to be an entertainer or anything, you're to ... you're just there to teach and if someone is doing something they shouldn't, you should correct them.

There's no need to yell and scream at them, but you let them know they're not doing the right thing. And so in that sense I've built a lot in my classroom management especially because I'm not worried about saying, 'Hey, don't kick others' or 'Don't talk over me; that's not very nice'. Even if you are five years old, you have to learn that's what you do at school. Even in a lecture, we were talking about how much more responsibility is given to teachers now because little has been taught at home and then parents are actually coming up to teachers and saying, 'You should be teaching this, you should be teaching that.' Sometimes it's really things like manners, which should really start at home. But um, I mean, if they want us to teach that then we can do that by being direct.

Expectations of students in the classroom are noted by Meredith. This is an emerging theme that is common from the interviewees.

JULIE: *That's right.*

MEREDITH: *Yeah, you feel like a parent. I worry like a parent. If a parent ... the child's parents come and pick them up and they've gone missing, I worry about where they are. We had that happen the other day and the teacher next door ran around looking for the little boy. But I mean, I guess nothing can be what you want it to be. I'd like to walk into a classroom and it be all ... 'bunny rabbits' and 'clouds'. But that's not reality!*

JULIE: *So, how do you know reality?*

MEREDITH: *Umm, I know reality because I've been through a lot.*

Meredith moves around the table approaching the canvas from the side and moving closer to the section she is painting. The transition is smooth. She is adding to the painting with ease, playing with colours and tones, mixing colours on a palette and placing one colour over the top of others on the canvas (Figure 5.6).



Figure 5.6: Further layers of colours are added to wings and body

MEREDITH: *A lot of things that made me grow up really quickly. My mum made me very independent, ah, but not in a bad way, in a good way, She taught me how to be or not to need a ‘man’ [Meredith giggles], you know; I’ve been in my relationship for six years. My mum taught me ‘you can buy something from a furniture shop, you can put [assemble] it together yourself, you don’t need anyone to help you do that’ and um ... and other things like my dad not being around is a reality. My brother has a disability, that’s very much a reality and we have to deal with him. Ah! He’s not the easiest person to deal with and so that’s taught me heaps.*

Meredith indicates some examples from her life experience, which she terms ‘reality’ to illustrate her sense of real-life challenges that build and are features of her socio-cultural and political knowledge. Bourdieu terms this ‘funds of knowledge’ that pertain to particular experiences, fields and beliefs. Some points made below may assist in identifying some of the collective relived experiences which form the epiphanic narrative in which she states:

- My mum made me very independent.
- She taught me how to be or not to need a ‘man’ although ...
- I’ve been in my relationship for six years.
- [I] can build ... or put ... [furniture and other items] together.
- [I] don’t need anyone to help do [things like] that.
- My brother has a disability and we deal with the challenges this presents.

The points above are related as facts. However, at the centre of Meredith’s interpretation there is a tension. When Meredith refers to the term ‘reality’, she often assumes ‘reality’ to be a negative experience, shaped by cultural ‘messiness’ linked to historical, social and feminist interpretations of experience. Meredith may also consider these experiences as a ‘reality check’, whereby noting the oppressive or problematic issues rather than seeing these events as positive learning experiences and achievements.

MEREDITH: *Uh um and that really helps me because as I was growing up I always thought that he [disabled brother] was spoilt. He always got what he wanted. Even though I was*

pretty small as well, I always thought, ‘No he’s just getting it because he’s disabled’. But now, after seeing a little boy who had autism last year at a school, I sympathise with him and it makes me think on the other side—as the teacher that had my brother. It makes me think—because as a sister I saw a totally different side. What would his parents think is being done? Why does his teacher let him walk off when everyone else has to listen? You know what I mean? [Meredith slows and hesitates and begins a style of and a kind of ‘self-talk’.] And yeah ... it makes me think, you know I ... I, from that ... from that experience I backed off in a sense from my brother. In the end, it’s my mum’s decision, how she deals with his disability and all I can do is be a support for her. I think that’s exactly what teachers are; they’re a support system. They’re there to just catch you and be there for you, talk to you and give confidence. Obviously teaching the curriculum, but teaching in ways that support the child in being confident to learn.

From this highly reflective part of the narrative we can get a sense of the depths of learning that have occurred for Meredith. Considered a major epiphanic moment in the interview, articulating this story concerning inclusiveness is an emergent theme. For Meredith it has been traumatic, but also a trajectory for teaching and learning, philosophy and—for mindshift.

JULIE: *This is beautiful* [referring to Meredith’s art work]. *What is it?*

MEREDITH: *It’s a bird.*

JULIE: [We both laugh and smiling I ask her] *‘Who is it?’*

MEREDITH: *I don’t know. It’s my students, they’re flying free. And they’re colourful. Nothing can be how you want it to be—clouds, but that’s reality.*

JULIE: *So, how do you know what reality is?* [I ask this question again, given the preceding information.]

MEREDITH: *I know. I’ve been through things that made me grow up very quickly.*

The interview finishes and the narratives have presented pictures from childhood, family, classroom experience and contain epiphanic moments, which are indicated in the text. Donna Raines (2004) uses the term, ‘biographical sketches’ of critical and epiphanic moments. She describes the use of text to create a biographical sketch as a process of gathering portraits of rich stories, and in her findings she states, ‘Critical incidents were shared from individual participants representing catalysts for momentous change; themes of personal realizations, barriers to effectiveness, and challenges in the career of an administrator also contributed as dominant elements of the final work.’ (Raines, p. 2). Similarly, Meredith’s interview draws these moments together to reflect using the artwork and by doing so, contributes to reflexive moments as realisations of learning.

My art work in response to Meredith



Figure 5.7: *Transition*, Julie, acrylic and ink on canvas

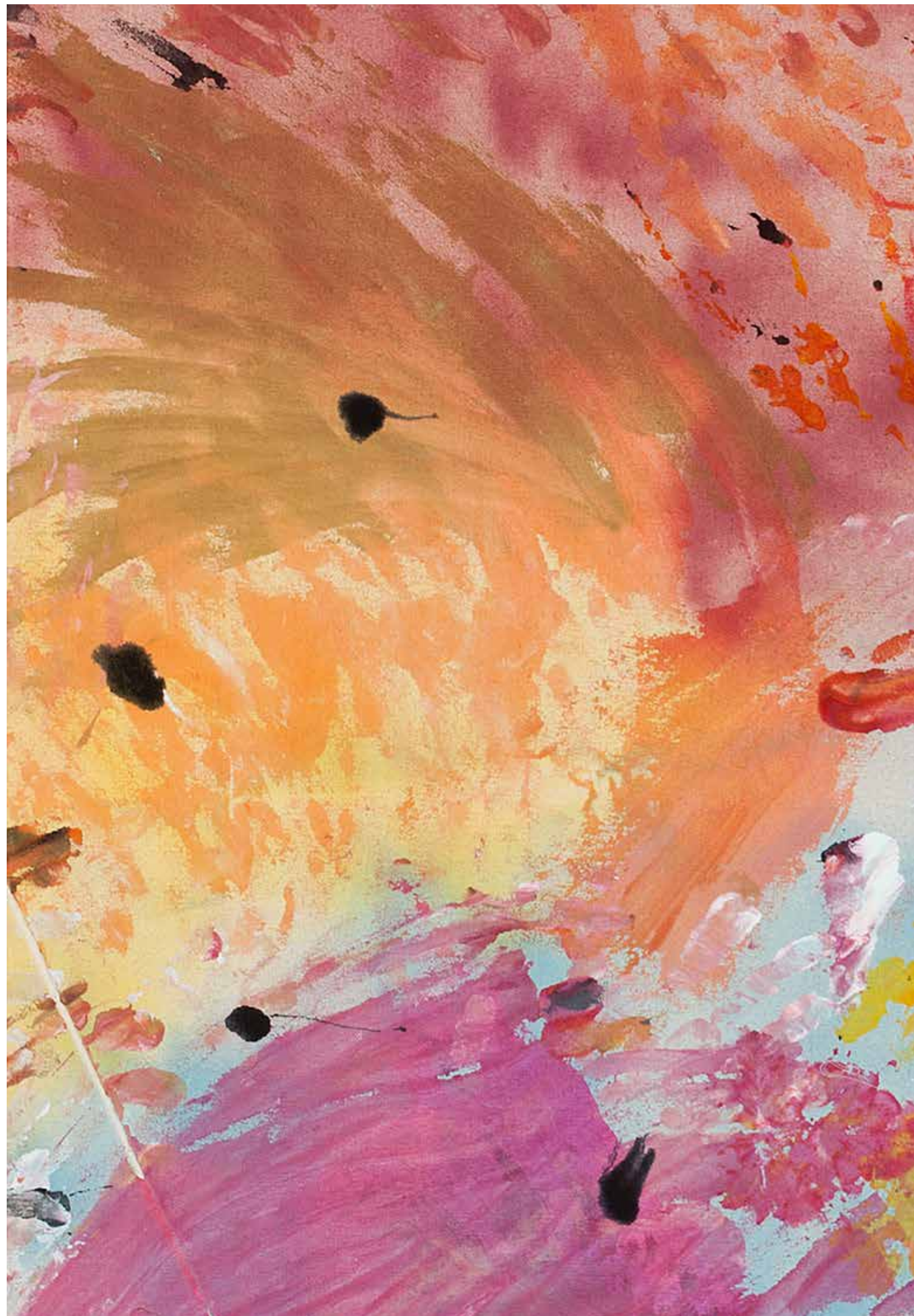
While debating and engaging in particular pedagogical scholarship and practice in teacher education with participants, I can gauge and reflect on the multiple approaches and critical transitions in preservice teacher philosophies. The ideologies are formative in fourth year students' work. This is evident as an 'aha' moment—it is exciting. Students burst forth and flourish and gain new learning from praxis. The resistance to deeply reflect on this process for the preservice teacher is real. It requires rigour and scrutiny.

During Meredith's interview there is an openness which is unfathomable. Links between her theoretical beliefs, practical experience, knowledge and life are extracted and surface. New mindshifts are reached during the interview to transform levels of thinking and inquiry and these result in understanding of self. It is an intensive time. While witnessing the shift, I have tried capture the mindshift moment (Figure 5.7).

CHAPTER 6

Sue is a physical education major. She wants to be a physical education (PE) teacher and while studying, works at a gym where she coordinates programs for clients and the public. She teaches swimming and manages other physical activities for the customers. Being an athlete, Sue regards herself as a kinaesthetic learner and not an artist. She is short with blond hair and her body movements are deliberate and her body moves even while she speaks. Sue is from a small northern rural town and has come to the city to study. It takes her three hours by car to travel back to her family and home town. She visits her home when she can, but her work keeps her from travelling back most weekends. Sue is a very positive person and she seems to have settled very well into her new environment.

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Sue

Shaping self

Social mobility

**Learning by experimenting in the classroom
and artful practice**

Persistence

Competition

Safe and secure setting

Reflecting with significant others

Family, friends and teachers

Stepping up

Independence

Bestowing of responsibility

Cultural expectations

Moderated risk

Flexibility and strategies for resilience

Expertise

Recognition as a professional

Professional development and ongoing experience



Figure 6.1: *Experience a different everything*, Sue, acrylic on canvas

Sue has sprayed the canvas with many pale colours. When the canvas is spread on the table she looks at the brushes, colours and materials and examines them carefully. She examines the brushes holding them at eye-level. She sorts through them and chooses a stick and then with a spoon—flicking action. While she is choosing a brush to use, I continue to communicate as we have been doing since her arrival to the studio. We talk about the colours and the materials that are spread out for us to use. Sue looks around to take in all paints and tools available to her. The interview begins and I am already thinking about her artful practice and what images might look like.

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The product of the interpretive bricoleur's labour is a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage—a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting parts to the whole.

(Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 6)

The interview begins.

JULIE: *Choose a colour. Any colour that suits you to use is fine ... and, as we go, we're just going to chat. First of all, I'm going to ask you what you think of when you hear the term, 'mindshift'.*

SUE: *What I think it is when your thoughts change, so that you behave and represent yourself in just a different way.*

Sue scoops up red paint onto the spoon and flicks the paint onto the canvas.

JULIE: *So, there are times when this happens more than others I think. I'm just wondering if you can identify some of the times when you can really notice that some of your ideas really come to life or change.*

SUE: *... like in this painting?*

Sue starts to spread red paint on to the canvas with the spoon (Figure 6.2). Soon, she begins to flick it on to the image and then spreads it to create an effect that reflects the physicality of her kinaesthetic disposition and approach.



Figure 6.2: Red paint (lower left corner)

JULIE: *Yeah! That's exactly what it is. There's no um ... necessary condition or way of doing it.*

SUE: *I suppose I notice when something happens that I don't want to do or be. Then I think or I suppose just try not to do that ... and therefore that shapes what I do do. In the last couple of years at uni, that's just been from lectures and being in schools and seeing different teachers.*

Sue has chosen to select the idea of critiquing lecturers and teachers as a way of learning to shape her practice and learning. Through many cumulative experiences this has occurred and regarded as a cumulative epiphanic process. Sue has indicated that lecturers and mentor teachers are important for shaping self and this is an emerging theme for this study.

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JULIE: *So, teachers are formative obviously. Are you watching and looking?*

SUE: [pauses here and replies] *Yeah, like, teachers telling or explaining how to do something in a certain way, and then doing it how they told you, or doing it how they told you not to do it, I suppose.*

She is smiling and I acknowledge the sharpness of the critique and comment. We both talk and paint. She is using red. I am interested in the sharpness of the colour too.

JULIE: *You've inspired me to spread some red about on my canvas.*

SUE: *Sorry. Yours already looks better than mine.*

JULIE: *So, if you go back further into your learning, are there times when you're aware of that mindshift happening?*

From red to white; in Figure 6.3, Sue adds thick white paint by scraping it on to the canvas with a spatula.



Figure 6.3: White paint added using a spatula

SUE: *There was definitely one occasion when I was working. I was employed in a managing position and one of my colleagues, a co-worker, asked me why I wanted to do teaching; why didn't I want to do something better, like managing. That was definitely a moment where I thought, 'Why teaching? Isn't it a good field to get into and why did they think it was bad?' But that thought ... it didn't last very long.*

JULIE: *I wonder why they said that?*

SUE: *I think um ... maybe they didn't value it; in financial way. They were possibly thinking about the number of hours versus the monetary value and what you get out of it. But I don't think they get it—all the other stuff.*

Sue scrapes the canvas after now adding dark red with some force and she is using broad heavy strokes as she applies the paint (Figure 6.4). She uses one hand to hold the canvas while she spreads the paint with the other.



Figure 6.4: Broad, red areas of paint applied

Financial remuneration is not an essential in her choice of career and for Sue at this stage; this is her stance. Her considerations regarding the idea of wealth and social mobility are not a major reason for work choice and this is an emerging theme from Sue's narrative.

SUE: *The mindshift is definitely gradual. I don't think you can just wake up and say 'I want to be a teacher' or ... there has to be things that have happened ...* [She stops at this point and I finish her sentence to clarify and support her to continue.]

JULIE: *... along the way?*

SUE: *Yeah, along the way; like little things that you may not even notice, that just help you decide—this is how you're going to behave; this is what you're going to do; this is the mindset you're going to be in.*

JULIE: *So, it's the number of experiences?*

SUE: *Yeah. It'd have to be a number of experiences. I've had good teaching experiences.* [She stops on this point and refers to her painting now.] *I don't know what that looks like—sorry.* [I move on to continue the previous point.]

JULIE: *Can you think of some of those experiences?*

SUE: *I think at a small country school the teacher's always supportive, and the teachers always know you and know everything about you and ... I don't know ... it just helps—it makes you feel important and not alone. That's early on ... then you move on to a bigger high school and a university.*

Sue has an understanding of the importance of knowing students. An important emerging theme it is connected to relive experience and can supports a moment of a relived epiphany. During this conversation she has painted yellow paint onto a leaf while talking. She carefully holds the fragile leaf in one hand while adding the yellow paint with a brush. It is close to her face. She holds it down while we talk.

She places the leaf paint side down on the canvas and starts to press it lightly, with the aim of making a print of a yellow flower on the canvas (Figure 6.5).



Figure 6.5: Yellow leaf print

JULIE: *So, those foundations are very important?*

SUE: *Mmm ... [agreeing]*

JULIE: *Does that affect the way people teach and become teachers?*

SUE: *Well, people can either use it as a negative. 'Oh, that didn't work' [looking at the flower print] ... or a positive. [At this point she picks up the leaf that she has been pressing onto the canvas. It is a positive print image and it has gentle texture and shape. She examines it while stating] If you have a bad experience with a teacher, then you can learn to never do that or what he did ... or what she did ... Whoops [Sue observes and smiles at the result of her printmaking]. Never be influenced by him or her, or their actions. Yeah, use it as a learning tool and don't dwell on it.*

Sue paints the leaf once again to make a print. She is careful to completely cover the leaf with the paint. She persists and applies the paint to the small leaf. Sue is learning by experimenting in the classroom and artful practice. Her attention to playfulness when applying the paint in an attempt to print a perfect flower is wonderful to watch. I like this about Sue; she takes time to engage in new learning and delights in the results of 'hands-on' experimentation. Learning by experimenting and the characteristic of persistence appear to be emerging themes for Sue.

JULIE: *So when you were at that small school, describe to me what it looked like?*

SUE: *Lots of land—and like undefined big ovals, just three big grass areas with lots of trees, two big playgrounds. Someone's backyard was also part of our school grounds so if we had some extra space ...*

JULIE: *What about inside the classrooms?*

SUE: *Inside the classroom, we had portables ... that describes a lot* [Sue infers here that the school has portable classrooms and therefore was not well resourced. For Sue, portable classrooms are a poor substitute for permanent classrooms.] *Um, little hooks for your bags with your name on it, a little space to sit on the floor, little tables and a teacher's desk in the corner.*

I don't know what I am doing over here. I'm not sure what this is [referring to her painting].

Sue pauses and I watch as she pours orange paint into a tub. She takes a small stick and dips the stick in it, covering it with white paint too. She then takes it from the tub and proceeds to roll the small stick on to the canvas and it makes some marks in white. Her hands have lots of paint on them now.

SUE: *Can I use my fingers?*

She pours the orange paint on the canvas and spreads it with her finger. Now I feel the painting has begun and she is feeling more comfortable (Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.6: Orange paint applied with fingers

JULIE: *So when you think back to your primary school ... can you think of any great moments?*

SUE: *Oh god! Ahh, I beat my sister in a times tables race.*

JULIE: *Oooh!*

SUE: *... and she's older.*

Sue proudly smiles and bends to pour copious orange paint on to the canvas to spread.

JULIE: *That's impressive. Why is that important?*

Sue laughs loudly and adds ...

SUE: *I can't believe that was the first thing that came to my head!*

JULIE: *But why is that impressive? Why is that moment for you still there?*

SUE: *I don't know ... maybe just because you're not supposed to do that* [referring to competing and winning against her older sister].

JULIE: *Well that's maybe what the rules say.*

I am reminded here that Sue is a Physical Education major and competitiveness may be important to her. When the issue of competitiveness with her arises from her narrative, I am not sure if it is uttered spontaneously. There is some tension with this utterance as she admits, 'You're not supposed to do that.' Competitiveness is noted here as an emerging theme for Sue and from minor/illuminative experience. Sue is running low on orange paint. She scrapes the remainder of the paint from the pot and uses the small amount that remains by spreading it lightly with her finger onto the canvas.

It is engaging to watch the rhythmical sweeping of Sue's finger tips in orange paint. Yellow paint has been sprayed beneath earlier and by adding the orange using this gentle technique with her fingers results in a feathery lightness and brightness to the work (Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7: Finger tips used to spread the orange paint

SUE: *I don't really know what else to describe. Um ...* [she pauses to think and continues] *I remember being allowed into the staff room all the time—that was the exclusive part of the school.*

JULIE: *Oh really?*

SUE: [laughs]. *Yeah ... I remember ringing the bell, being the bell monitor; that was cool.*

JULIE: *Oh yes? So, it was more like a community?*

SUE: *Yeah, very small ...*

JULIE: ... *and safe?*

SUE: *Oh yeah! You wouldn't have even known what safety meant 'cause you [we] weren't even aware of it.*

I have suggested safe to the narrative here to assist in probing further, because the scene Sue has set seems to have foundation based on security which she has taken for granted. A safe and secure setting evolved from the charming picture of school life described is included here as theme from her.

JULIE: *So, this idea of mindshift, can you explain it in a way that relates to your experiences?*

SUE: *Like primary school experiences?*

JULIE: *Yes. What's really been pivotal in the way you think or in your ... learning? How did you get to where you are now—wanting to be a teacher and why teaching?*

When attempting to ask this question, I have aspired to put too many parts to the question. In the context of a micro-inquiry however, it is important to maintain the hermeneutic approach and 'flow' of the interview. I want the conversation to flow. Holding back is useful and required at times. For me, it is a critical and complex and sensitive balance to hold. 'The critical bricoleur stresses the dialectical and hermeneutic nature of the interdisciplinary inquiry, knowing that the boundaries that previously separated traditional disciplines no longer hold' (Kincheloe 2001, p. 683 in Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 6). I am aware that I must work to obtain layers of perspective from Sue and it is the interactiveness that shapes the reflection. From the rich accounts I can build the montage of experiences to connect reflections about Sue's world and learning that are worthy and honest. Sue replies in her cheerful way and I am pleased I have not disrupted her thoughts.

SUE: *Teaching was always the fundamental thing in the background; it was the common thing that I always resorted back to. But I'd change my mind—I wanted to be a weatherman or 'girl'... and at one stage I wanted to work at a bakery my whole life. But teaching? I think, when I said I wanted to be a teacher, everyone agreed. Everyone said, 'Oh you'd be a fantastic teacher.' That was the start of it, I wanted to be a PE teacher, and everyone agreed and I said ... 'that's what I wanna do'! It was unquestioned so it was easy to follow that.*

JULIE: *Why did you believe it?*

SUE: *Well, because they're trusted. I mean, I know that they know me.*

JULIE: *Uh huh ... who were they?*

SUE: *Oh friends, family ... like everyone that makes up our little town; both my bosses, teachers—lots of teachers.*

JULIE: *Were they from primary or secondary schools?*

SUE: *Both—because one of my primary teachers was one of my secondary teachers as well.*

The theme is drawn of reflecting with significant others as well as the influence of parents who are teachers. These relationships are formative and shape her ideas and mindshift. The Cumulative encounters like this are identified by Norman Denzin (2001) as important in epiphanic moments of shift. Soon, Sue moves to the table where the paints are. She chooses to add yellow to the pot of orange then selects a new colour. It is a purple tone. Sue selects white paint too and adds it to the pot.

JULIE: *So, is that the only reason. What else was there?*

SUE: *I don't know. I think where we grew up there were lots of kids around. I suppose I was always the one helping. I was the responsible one. Don't quote that—please.* [Sue laughs at the joke she has made about herself. In fact, it may be an honest statement, but humility prevents her from acknowledging this contribution to her learning.]

Previous leadership learning experiences is acknowledged as an emerging theme from her account here and from the commentary below.

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JULIE: *What defines that?*

SUE: *Kids were allowed to go out and play if I was going to be there.*

Without stopping she adds a new colour stating, 'This colour is better.' This addition is another strategy that is used to take attention away from her claim. She quickly integrates another topic leaving no chance of a reply from me or elaboration by her. She then focuses on her work and pauses for a while, taking refuge in the art practice. I am keen to get back to the leadership narrative.

JULIE: *Were they right? Were you the responsible person?*

SUE: *Pardon.* [I repeat the question, but I know she has heard it clearly. She answers in spite of this.] *I was when I was looking after other people. If I am allowed to let go, by myself, then I reckon I was good in a responsible role. It was when I was looking after people—I just stepped up to the responsibility. I think that branches heavily from my mum and dad. As parents, they helped us to be responsible and independent very early.*

JULIE: *How did they do that?*

SUE: *Well, particularly, with the tennis club. By the time we were seven and eight years old we were the ones that were looking after the babies and the toddlers when the parents were on the tennis court. Just little things like that.*

JULIE: *Any other things like that?*

SUE: *Looking after my cousins. We were on a farm and allowed to drive the tractor. If my sister or I was driving then that was OK, we were allowed to have people on the back. If I wasn't driving, even if my older cousins were, they weren't to have anyone on the back of the tractor [Sue laughs]. Is that significant? I don't know.*

Stepping up and developing independence has emerged as a theme. Sue is cheery when relating these stories. She seemed happy to accept the responsibility bestowed upon her while young. Independence and bestowed responsibility correspond naturally to the familiar picture that has evolved from the honest recount of her learning, her relived experience and epiphanic moments during her early life.

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JULIE: *They are the sorts of moments that stay with you. They are significant.*

SUE: *I don't know where that came from.*

JULIE: *Now when you look back, were they right?*

SUE: *Yeah!*

She scrapes the paint pot and it is empty. She uses paper to print on to the work and applies a slapping action to the canvas.

JULIE: *Are you running out of paint? Do you want some more?*

SUE: *No, I'm just running out of ideas I think [she smiles referring to her painting]. I told you at the start it's not going to look good.*

JULIE: *It's looking fine. So ... anything since then?*

SUE: *Leaving a small town, you just had to do it. I didn't have any expectations. I just did it. I just picked up and left. I'd just turned 18 and I just moved out and moved to Melbourne. We just both knew—well, my sister and I both left. My sister deferred for a year. She's 12 months older than me, so we left the same year.*

Leaving home to go to the city for Sue was a clearly a cultural expectation and associated with some moderated risk. Sue elaborates on these emergent themes indicated in the following commentary.

JULIE: *You knew that was inevitable I suppose.*

SUE: *Yes, my sister went to one hour north and I went to Melbourne which was two hours south.*

Risk is essential in the process of learning (Arnold & Edwards 2009; Giddens 1999; Freire & Faundez 1989; Carr & Kemmis 1986). Taking considered, well-monitored and moderated risk when learning is encouraged in teacher education too. Asking questions, new experiences and inquiry are important to research, professional and classroom practice. Freire argues that, ‘At root human existence involves surprise, questioning and risk’ (Freire & Faundez 1989, p. 40). And so, we consider Sue’s move to the city as presenting a minor/illuminative epiphanic moment in her conversation. Flexible and resilient (an emergent theme for Sue), she approaches new pathways and challenges, while learning to exist in a new environment and career. In doing so, she finds social and professional networks important to her transition. The emerging theme of social networks enabled her to learn how to adjust and she admits they were ‘helpful’ to her shift.

JULIE: *What a big shift that was.*

SUE: *When I got down I just went with the ‘flow’. I had lots of friends and networks in Melbourne, so I didn’t stress too much.*

JULIE: *What networks were there for you?*

SUE: *Well, I had been playing hockey in Melbourne since I was 14, so there were some old coaches and old team mates and current team mates, friends, coaches, that sort of thing. So that was pretty helpful.*

JULIE: *So, you had lots of different networks—you had had an idea of being in Melbourne. You had lots of different networks.*

SUE: *Well, there are still parts of Melbourne I haven’t been to or I have not discovered. I learnt how to sit quietly on a tram instead of running around.*

At risk of getting messy, she slaps white paint with her hand on to the canvas. Thick, white and cloud-like forms float in the centre of the canvas (Figure 6.8).



Figure 6.8: White paint added using hand prints

JULIE: *Those big white prints look good.*

SUE: *Yes, I am an artist* [she smiles while mocking me, but gaining confidence in her artfulness].

JULIE: *What about at uni, has there been any significant learning moments at uni?*

SUE: *At uni ... I don't know.*

Now she gathers up purple paint on her fingertips. She leaves purple marks upon the painted features on the canvas. She pauses and slows her painting movements; massaging the purple with both hands, she rubs the paint into the canvas.

JULIE: *Think back to your reflective work anything that you've talked about at uni.*

SUE: *Do you mean uni and class experiences?*

JULIE: *Yes, any of the uni and class or contents.*

SUE: *I suppose, you are 'being' a student and trying to learn, but at the same time you're trying to not be a student and become an 'expert' at whatever you're studying. Just working out when to go to class and when you go to uni and how much of a student you're going to be and how much of an expert you are going to be is demanding.*

A sustained silence suggests there may be something missing here; Sue is not talking and explaining her idea. She pours more red. She mixes paint furiously with her hands in the palette tray. She then picks up the tray and takes it to the canvas. Sue looks at the canvas and slaps the paint it.

SUE: *I think the mindshift comes then that you know you've studied enough and you know enough.*

JULIE: *When do you know enough?*

SUE: *When you die.* [We both giggle at this remark and then she adds] *When you're comfortable or confident.*

JULIE: *How do you know when you're confident? What tells you that?*

SUE: *Maybe the reactions of other people, when make a statement or attempt to teach something. When people believe you and say, 'Yes! You are right'. Then that would be an indication that you know what you're talking about. You're seen to be more professional or expert than before.*

There is some tension in her voice and the act of slapping the paint on to the canvas is a new and key shift in technique. Sue's discussion on the topic of expertise and being considered an expert by others is an emerging theme. Using the term 'mindshift' indicates significant thinking on this topic. It is for these reasons that I feel it is indicative of a minor/illuminative epiphanic point in the conversation.

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JULIE: *Who would do that?*

SUE: *Well in this course, possibly other teachers and mentors, friends, classmates and yourself.*

There is a sustained silence while she is using her whole hand to slap the paint on. At this point she is very engaged with the canvas and reaches, stretching out to place paint over the canvas, as if she is seeing the entire canvas for the first time.

She is no longer concerned with parts of images or colour. She is expressive and casting the paint to the large sections of the image. She does not look up and has gained a momentum that is charged with artful practice (Figure 6.9).



Figure 6.9: Paint is spread by hand (right side)

JULIE: *You are really getting into it.*

SUE: *It's like Kinder—I did finger painting for hours.* [After some moments she adds] *I've still got the whole other side to go.* [Reaching across the canvas she continues.]

JULIE: *Do whatever you fancy—You don't have to do it all.*

SUE: *'Wild Kenya' [she states and smiles as she picks up a pot of paint and reads the label. She decides not to use it and adds gold and yellow to the palette.]*

SUE: *Yours looks really good.*

JULIE: [I smile and say] *I'm just trying things.*

SUE: *What else to you need ... am I helping at all?*

JULIE: *That's good. I am just after the most significant moments, what they look like.*

SUE: *I think it could that the most significant moments could come from the most significant people.*

Yellow and orange are applied by scraping and printing. A brush is used to extend and stretch the markings (Figure 6.10).



Figure 6.10: Orange and yellow paint is scraped over the image

JULIE: *So, what sort of teacher are you going to be?*

SUE: *A good one. I am trying to say one word but it is very hard.*

Sue increasingly uses her hands to mix and apply the paint. She scoops the colours from in the tray and places her hand on to the top part of the canvas. This action achieves a 'crosshatching' effect creating movement or flurry of colour (Figure 6.11).



Figure 6.11: Colours are added by hand and mixed

SUE: *You have to be passionate about what you're teaching and how you're teaching it because then it is crystal clear. So I'll have to be passionate and enthusiastic, energetic and organised—maybe not organised, maybe prepared. Sometimes the feedback moment from mentor teachers is significant. When the mentor teacher does give back the feedback; whether it is positive or negative or in between, that's the moment when you really should learn and listen because they are the professional. I think that's where you should really try to take on board what they say and try and change your ways in order to learn.*

Reflecting on practice after feedback from mentor teachers has been a consistent theme and is also noted here in the process of Sue's learning. I think there have been many epiphanic moments for Sue during the interview narratives. Her next statement underestimates the significance of the important learning that she has been engaged in over her life so far.

SUE: *Yeah. I'm amazing! [Tapping the tray impatiently with the spoon she adds] I wish I had a 'wow' moment for you, never mind. This year I have definitely tried to step it up a bit. I want to be a teacher not a student. I just wanted to be taken more seriously.*

JULIE: *Where does that happen?*

SUE: *Definitely at school and I'm not with any other preservice teachers at all. I am at a new school so I want to be treated like a teacher not a preservice teacher so you [I] really step up and dress nicer and speak properly.*

Advancing the case for school-based / site-based learning stems from this theme of authentic teaching responsibility. As a cumulative epiphanic learning moment, Sue indicates she values learning in the school setting. Linking theory with practice in site-based settings is possible and is discussed in the summary of this thesis.

JULIE: *Why do you have to do that?*

SUE: *So they take you seriously.*

JULIE: *That's great to step up. I notice that some preservice teachers do that.*

SUE: *I don't know why I chose this year to do that and everyone was very surprised. I think that maybe over the holidays when family were asking about when I was finishing and how it has been at uni. I wanted to be recognised not as a uni student but as a teacher.*

JULIE: *So now what are you?*

SUE: *A preservice teacher.* [She picks up a stick and daubs black paint]

Sue uses black paint from the tray and places it on the canvas with a stick. The prints are scattered and scraped on and shift about the entire canvas (Figure 6.12).



Figure 6.12: Black paint prints using a stick

JULIE: *So what are your ambitions?*

SUE: *I would like to use teaching as a tool to get myself among lots of different communities and towns in Australia and experience a different everything and eventually settled down in the one place in the country. I would like to run camps for some children I don't know what type or age maybe ... disadvantaged, disabled or regular children.*

Sue values professional development and has plans for her ongoing learning experience and is an emerging theme to add to the collection of her data.

SUE: *If you had asked me last year last year I had nothing ... I don't know. This year I think it is all coming together.*

JULIE: *Very artistic!* [referring to Sue's work]

Sue puts the tray aside and collects the leaf that had been left sitting for some time to make a simple print on the centre of the canvas. She pulls it quickly to reveal a small image as she calls 'Dahhh Dahhh!' as if she is a magician and has conjured an elusive trick. The image now complete, the interview ends.

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My art work in response to Sue



Figure 6.13: *It's all coming together, Julie*, acrylic on canvas

Sometimes it is difficult to see the whole person. What are the parts that come together to make clear who we are? I am thinking of all the qualities and fragments that measure us. While Sue and I can talk together of beliefs, being and chunks of life experience—they remain invisible to the public view. And so, it is here that I search for Sue. My art work reveals the thinking, the values, the childhood and the many connected features of her light and illuminative character and so the image takes flight. I want it to leap about and through complex and interconnected images in my interpretation which flash before me as we talk. However, connecting the art, narratives and themes, the bricoleur will attempt to make clear a picture of Sue.

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CHAPTER 7

Ivan is tall and has short dark hair and is defined by dark features. He was born in Australia and is from a European background. From the outset, Ivan is very precise and particular. Ivan also has some expertise in visual art and has studied art as part of his previous degree. Ivan's parents are teachers. He wants to be an art teacher and has a passion for art and in particular art education. During the interview he conveys some of the ideologies and art environments he wants to create for learners.

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Ivan

Expectations of teaching

Parents are teachers

Mentor teachers

Persistence and resilience

Experimenting in the field

Linking theory to practice in schools

Teacher disposition

Discipline knowledge

Integrated and self-directed learning

Building relationships with students

Knowing students and their culture is important

Reflecting on mentors

Preservice teacher reflexive narrative

Imagining and re-imagining

Safe and secure learning environment

Self-doubt and critique

Realistic approach to systems and structures in place

Resilience

Trust in the learning even if it seems irrelevant at the time



Figure 7.1: *Unleashed*, Ivan, acrylic on canvas

Realising and imagining the possibility of lived narrative is exciting, particularly for Ivan who is soon to move from preservice teacher to professional practitioner. Maxine Greene (1995) points out the importance of our own narrative in the context of teaching. She came to realise that we can view ourselves ‘in stages of a quest’ (Greene 1995, p. 1). Greene points out that,

neither myself or my narrative can have, therefore, a single strand. I stand at the crossing point of too many social and cultural forces; and in any case, am forever on the way. My identity has to be perceived as multiple, even as I strive towards some coherent notion of what is humane and decent and just. (Greene 1995, p. 1)

Ivan has studied and had experience in visual art. While we discuss the project, I offer him a protective coat. He puts it on and rolls up the sleeves. He rolls them up above the elbow. While we talk, he selects some appropriate colours and a brush he intends to use. The camera is on and the conversation has begun on the topic of teachers and continues like this.

.....

The interview begins.

IVAN: *Some teachers see art as a ‘cruisy’¹ type of subject, because these teachers, sometimes they don’t care if the students are paying attention or not.*

Ivan has some expectations of teachers (in this case, art teachers) and this is a theme that has arisen from previous learning about teachers.

JULIE: *That’s right.*

IVAN: *Art sessions are often at the end of the day—at that time of day when we know the students are not going to have that [adequate] type of engagement.*

It is early in the interview and Ivan is quick to establish a comfortable and open conversation.

Ivan applies the paint with precision and the images he creates begin to have depth, shape, colour, tone and perspective. They are finely pronounced with accuracy and care in Figure 7.2.



Figure 7.2: Dark shades of colour

JULIE: *That’s right.*

I agree and hope to find a way of navigating the communication to continue to encourage the interplay between voice and art. We work together and placing our art making in the common ground may encourage a platform where the art modes are equal to the conversation itself in valued discussion.

.....

1 This term can be interpreted to infer easy or relaxed.

JULIE: *Now, I also use these sorts of things to put that paint on [pointing to objects as blocks, sticks etcetera for applying the paint to canvas]. Feel free to use what you want.*

IVAN: *I'll use chalk pastels.*

JULIE: *So what I'm looking at is the idea of 'mindshift' and what you might think it. You might have experienced it at some stage. What do you think 'mindshift' could be?*

IVAN: *Mindshift. I think it's ... umm. It could be about just a change of perception about what teaching and learning is all about. I suppose mine might not have been that great, because I have a pretty realistic view of what teaching was about because both my parents were teachers. Yeah, so that might have helped a little bit there. But certainly, I don't really know how to put it. I did have a change in my thinking towards it. I think probably at second year. Umm ... when I was in the primary-school-based part of it. I had a really strict mentor teacher, who would plan everything to a 'tee'; that sort of showed me that there is far more structure and a serious side to teaching, than what I'd seen before.*

It is not uncommon for preservice teachers to have parents who are teachers too. I consider this an emerging theme. There have been other participants from this study who have continued in the tradition of their parents. Ivan also suggests that mentor teachers (an emerging theme from the commentary) have encouraged 'mindshift' concerning planning and structure necessary for professional practice. There is evidence here for the lived experiences to indicate relived epiphanic moments of learning.

.....

JULIE: *So how did you like your mentors?*

IVAN: *I did a lot of hard work just to please them. That's just the way I had to do it in order to survive. I certainly didn't want to complain and be moved to a different school or anything like that, so I just put up with it.*

Ivan has had some negative experiences in school placement, but indicated he is resilient and able to manage (he terms it; 'survive') the social and cultural forces of schools. Mentor teachers are merely one of many forces that may contribute to ways in which preservice teachers must adapt. Like Ivan, many adjust and are resilient, but the demands of the education system, personal relationships and professional practice may be too difficult for some to manage and they are forced to leave, unless there is some form of intervention. Persistence and resilience emerges as an important theme for Ivan and I consider it to be a minor/illuminative epiphany. Often the preservice teacher is required to continually approach adapt, review and reposition in the classroom. Maxine Greene suggests, 'The beholder, the percipient, the learner must approach from the vantage point of her or

his lived situation, that is, in accord with a distinctive point of view and interest.' And she suggests that 'it may well be the imaginative capacity that allows us to experience empathy with different points of view, even with interests apparently at odds with ours' (Greene 1995, p. 31).

.....

JULIE: *Yes. That says a lot about persisting.*

IVAN: *Yeah, that's right.*

JULIE: *So, there have been times where you've realised you've learnt something significant and there might have been something special that happened at that time. What stands out?*

IVAN: *Umm, I think most of my learning is actually taking place when I've been in a partnership school and actually teaching, when I've actually been in there trying. I don't know, but I really believe that teacher training should be more an apprenticeship than anything, because it's that sort of a job. I think you've really got to get in there, be with the teacher and see how it all works. I mean, the theoretical stuff is excellent and very valuable, but you've got to be able to apply it. You've got to learn the skills to be able to apply your theoretical knowledge because you could have a head full of fantastic lessons and ideas but if you've got no idea how to relate it to the students. I guess you'd be lacking in experience, you know, if you're not actually getting out there and implementing it, then you're not going to be any good at it I don't think. You would really struggle. I think I've learnt most of what I've learnt about training to be a teacher from partnership schools and being a student teacher. I'm just able to back it up with what I do with the theoretical side.*

Experimenting in the field and linking theory to practice in schools are considerable critical ideas suggested by Ivan. These themes are concepts which draw on contemporary critique and public debate.

.....

JULIE: *Mmm. So, is teaching a trade or science?*

IVAN: *Oooh! Now you're asking some tough questions.*

Ivan looks up from his art making, smiles and gains eye contact. I smile back at his reaction.

IVAN: *Ummm [Ivan pauses]. Yeah, I don't know, it's ... it's hard to say whether it's a trade or not, really. I know I've described it as that, but that's a challenging question actually. What I find too about this course is that there seem to be a lot of different tests; for example, literacy is tested through every essay. They won't accept poor literacy skills, and neither should they either. If you're going to be out there teaching, you've got to know your stuff. There's a maths exam too, but what sort of personality tests are there?*

JULIE: *That's right. Yes.*

IVAN: *There are a lot of people who would make brilliant teachers, but I'm sure in other courses there are people whose personalities are just not suited to them and they're unleashed on these kids just because they tick all the university's boxes.*

JULIE: *That's true.*

I smile and Ivan smiles too, but he quickly becomes absorbed in selecting new materials. He looks at his art work (Figure 7.3), swaps paints and selects new art tools. He is well organised and maintains the detailed approach to the work.



Figure 7.3: Precise stylised shapes

JULIE: *So, what about before university? Have there been any significant moments that you can think of that you know, certain factors around that contributed to what you've learnt—in time?*

IVAN: *Learnt something significant? Um, well before I started, I was doing a visual arts course and I think just picked up a lot of knowledge of art history, which I had no clue about beforehand, and that's something I think is fairly valuable I can take to the classroom as well.*

Ivan has brought up ideas on teacher disposition and discipline knowledge as major contributors to professional practice. I note these are themes at this point.

IVAN: *Umm, and also, I had a bit of ability in art but I picked up a lot from actually being properly trained, so I suppose that's the contributing ... the contributing factor.*

JULIE: *So, content knowledge is important.*

IVAN: *Yeah. Yeah, I think content knowledge is very important. Because, I don't know, I've kind of, I've always seen teaching as having knowledge and passing that on to others, so you know you can't pass on knowledge if you don't ... you've got to actually know what you're doing.*

JULIE: *So, how did you get to get to be here? What happened along the way to bring you to where you are now?*

IVAN: *Well, I had a lot of people tell me that they thought I'd make a great teacher. I was told that because I'm very patient, I've always got along really well with teenagers and I've been a counsellor to quite a few of my younger brother's friends. Whenever they've come around or something, I could usually put myself in their shoes. I thought there's too few teachers out there like that, you know, who actually understand this generation and how they think and ... I thought, 'Well look, if I can combine with something that I actually know and can teach them through the art side of it, I can do that and make a bit of a difference to these kids' lives.' I thought, well, I could train as an artist, which means ... really not very much unfortunately, in terms of you know, earning a wage. So I thought, well, why not branch out and go into teaching? It's something that I'll enjoy and it's something that will be a consistent career for me. I suppose that's what brought me ... here I was looking at all the secondary education courses but when I saw the title of this one was 'Creativity and the arts' I thought that, 'Oh fantastic, sounds like it's right up my alley.'*

It is interesting that Ivan is thinking about integrating the arts into programs for troubled young people. This resembles a cumulative epiphany and derived from a sequence of events involving young people. Ivan is closely connected to art and resembles a self-directed learner. While not aiming to over-interpret through art commentary, I feel that there is the possibility to filter out some points regarding the visual process and approach. Here though, the visual process complementing the discussion does draw some fascinating resemblances to Ivan's world.

During this part of the discussion, Ivan has focused on a section in the lower right corner of the canvas. He talks and does not look up except when applying paint to the brush, which is not often because he blends the paint very carefully and spreads it evenly, so that it merges and brush strokes are almost undetected (Figure 7.4).



Figure 7.4: Dark colours are blended

JULIE: *Yes, it's good. It's really important to enjoy what you're doing.*

IVAN: *Yeah absolutely, I really thoroughly enjoy teaching. I don't think I'd be able to hang in there for this long if I didn't.*

JULIE: *Yeah. So obviously the art course is significant.*

IVAN: *I think it was a course that's when I started really doing things that I was interested in, educating myself in things that I wanted to know about, as opposed to just being fed things at high school. I thought, 'Do you know what, everyone else is going out and, you know, looking for courses that will further their career; I want to go out and find one that I will ... give me some knowledge that I want, and learn something in an area that I'm really interested in.' So, that's why I went out and chose that course. I felt that I was too directed by other people, you know, for most of my schooling life ... and I just thought, 'No, bugger it, you know! I don't want work full time, I still want to get a further education and it's going to be in an area that I like.' So, I just went for it.*

That's looking good [Ivan observes my art work so far].

JULIE: *Yes, I could paint all day.*

IVAN: *Yeah, same here.*

We laugh at the statement.

IVAN: *It's been ages since I've actually painted. Yeah ... I've just been too busy.*

JULIE: *I know. That's what happens?*

IVAN: *Yes. I know, and it's awful. I always promise myself that even though I will become an art teacher and I'd still be a practising artist ... you know?*

JULIE: *[Ivan appeals here when he adds 'you know' and I do understand.] Well at least you'll have the opportunity to paint with the students.*

IVAN: *Yeah ...*

JULIE: *I do. My students really enjoy it.*

IVAN: *They do actually. Yeah I had a couple of students challenged me when I was teaching at school. Some students were referring to me, 'Oh, you reckon you can do it better than this?' So I got in there and painted something. You know, when I did, they said, 'Oh gee! You do know what you're doing.' It's almost like you've got to build that respect with them before they'll accept you teaching them sometimes. You've got to show you know what you're doing.*

Building relationships is noted as an emergent theme here and is a common theme within this study.

JULIE: *Yes, I think you're right.*

IVAN: *I think they've just got too many 'hacks'² in schools ...*

JULIE: *Students sometimes know—and they can see through teachers.*

IVAN: *Oh, they do. People underestimate how smart these kids are ... sometimes they possess a very sly intelligence. They can be very aware of what's going on around them. I can see this characteristic at times though. The clever ways that they sneak around and just some of the ingenious ways they will, you know, try and smuggle grog onto the school camp or something. It takes a certain amount of intelligence and a lot of people don't recognise that as intelligence. It is a mischievous side.*

IVAN: *Do you know I've never actually tried painting like that before?* [Ivan states this and I notice he has added a bright red feature to his art work (see Figure 7.5).]

JULIE: *Haven't you?*

IVAN: *No I've never actually done that before, I saw you start to do that before, so I just thought ... All well! I'll get in there and give it a go. Yeah.*

Ivan is referring to the splash-like addition of red paint that he has printed to the canvas. I use this style in my painting and he has given it a go. Risking the blended approach with a 'daub' of red, it resembles blood dripped on to his canvas. Ivan is experimenting, but I am aware of the power and dynamics of analysing here (Figure 7.5).



Figure 7.5: Red paint print added applied to image

JULIE: *It's a good time to experiment.*

2 In this instance, Ivan is referring to unskilled practitioners.

IVAN: *Yeah, as I was saying before, it's just amazing some of the conversations you hear kids having with each other in the art room. In the art room they operate on a different level once they're doing the art. They're chatting about, you know, who's done what and where ... it's very interesting just to listen in on it sometimes.*

The theme of knowing students firms up ideas about the classroom Ivan intends to create. Later in the interview, Ivan refers to the art room as a sanctuary. The environment should be conducive to dialogue and relationship building.

JULIE: *Along the way, there have been significant things happen to you that help form your identity.*

IVAN: *My identity? Has ...* [Ivan hesitates].

JULIE: *Yes ... as a teacher and a learner.* [Ivan struggles to talk about himself in this way.]

IVAN: *Yeah, okay. I think that umm, a lot of it is actually ... a lot of the influence, umm ... from the way that I teach things and the way that I see things has actually come from my teachers that I had. I've taken a lot of good qualities from the good teachers I had. Umm, my art teacher that I had for a while, he was fantastic you know—at just caring about the students and you know, having art as a means of stress relief for them as well—especially for VCE; that's why he left tasks very open-ended.*

JULIE: *Oh, I see ...*

IVAN: *... And he allowed for very expressive opportunities. I think that the main thing I keep in mind whenever I'm teaching a class is just how the students see me and, am I the sort of teacher to them I would have liked? Try to be the sort of person that I would have loved to have been taught by when I was that age.*

And ... I suppose those are the things that shape me because I'm always sort of keeping in check too when I'm in the classroom. I'm just sort of trying to, put myself in their shoes.

Yeah, it's hard to think back to what it actually is that's changed. I suppose ... it's ... I don't know. It's really hard to pinpoint because, I know, I'm conscious that this has happened, it's just hard to think where and when. Where the actual ... where that change in thinking came? When a light bulb came on!

Ivan's dialogue on reflecting on mentor teachers is re-lived (re-lived epiphany) and brings the preservice teacher narrative to the foreground. I am thinking of Maxine Greene's ideas referenced

in this chapter about social and cultural forces in shaping of narrative in preservice teachers. These are strong themes which move into reflexive commentary and critique. This commentary from Ivan raises some tension and is considered a minor/illuminative epiphany.

JULIE: *Give yourself time to reflect. Often people don't give themselves that time.*

IVAN: *Hmm.*

He is using a light blue to add a translucent and reflective image to the art work. Fragile and clear, it seems to reflect the light from other colours (see Figure 7.6).

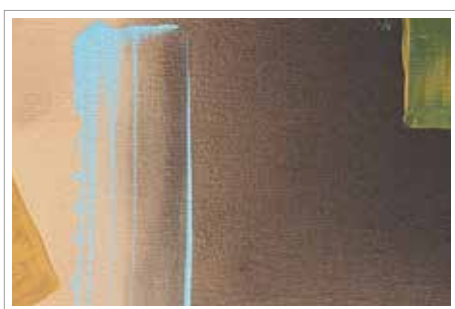


Figure 7.6: Light blue print added to image

JULIE: *Who told you, you were good at teaching?*

IVAN: *A couple of my friends actually. Umm ... I think other people. I'd actually gone to high school. When I caught up with friends at a reunion, I had just finished my visual arts course. I told them I didn't really know what to do, and they said, 'Well, why don't you become a teacher? You'd be great at it, you know, you've got a lot of art knowledge.' And I think that assisted my decision. I think it was just that sort of thing that prompted me to start thinking about whether or not I would be a good teacher and I can imagine myself you up in front of a classroom [now standing upright and his arms outstretched before him]. Now, I know—as soon as you said that ... Now we're getting somewhere. I'm remembering how I felt ... and I thought, you know, I could actually make education fun.*

Imagining and reimagining has bought Ivan to a new point. He imagines he could make classrooms fun from remembering how it felt as a learner. Imagining and reimagining are weighty themes here. For teacher educators it is refreshing to have preservice teachers thinking and theorising for themselves on the ontological and epistemological issues. Ivan's commentary is reflective and reflexive and evidence of thinking that it inspires and imagines transformative practice and outcomes for his students.

IVAN: ... *In doing that sort of this—it could sort of become ... the art room could become a sort of sanctuary for them, like it was for me when I was a bit younger ... and I could sort of create that type of environment.*

Providing students with a safe and secure learning environment is evincing from the narrative from Ivan and becomes a major theme in this interview.

Ivan stands and observes. He moves to the left side of the table to approach the canvas and selects brown to add to the canvas. He returns to the stylistic and detailed form and places heavy brown borders to some sections. They lie heavily and foreboding over the adjacent translucent areas (Figure 7.7). Parallel and purposeful lines may prompt him to state,



Figure 7.7: Stylised parallel lines

IVAN: *Gee! I've managed to make this look pretty 80s with all these things, haven't I? I wasn't even trying to do that* [Ivan laughs while looking at his work and continues to paint].

JULIE: *There's nothing wrong with 'retro'. That's fantastic.*

IVAN: *There been some things along the way too, that have really made me doubt whether I would make a good art teacher.*

There are often times when the preservice teacher admits to self-doubt. As part of teacher education there are moments of uncomfortableness for preservice teachers. Anxiety over workload expectations and challenges in the classroom while on placement can raise self-doubt. Self-doubt is noted as a theme.

JULIE: *Oh yes, why?*

IVAN: *During this course; it was in second semester of second year and we were studying all about art and art education. I don't know whether it was because I didn't quite get what they were assessing for, but I got really harshly marked for it. I just thought to myself, 'You know what, maybe I'm in the wrong course here; maybe I'm not doing*

it right?’ I just I felt like I’d really missed the mark and therefore maybe I was going to be missing the mark as a teacher.

JULIE: *Yes ... so how did you get over it ... that feedback, I mean?*

IVAN: *I was looking forward to placement and teaching secondary school in the following year ... and that was the light at the end of the tunnel for me; actually getting to be in the secondary art room, which is where I wanted to be since I started the course. I want to be properly prepared as a secondary teacher ... am I going to be? I don’t know. I feel a bit ripped off. Oh! The other thing too is I think because this is a prep–12 course you’ve got to have a good, general content knowledge ... and it’s so inconsistent. Some people get to pass it in sections.*

Ivan is clearly frustrated about the inconsistency of the course structure. He opens a pot of yellow paint and applies it to the canvas while he is talking. He is speaking loudly and is critical about the course. This is an indicator that he is feeling comfortable to speak freely and conscious of the relative power position between us which has somewhat diminished. He slaps his hand on the back of the small container and the paint pours out onto the palette and he adds,

IVAN: *You know, there are easier versions and there are tougher ones? You don’t know which one version you’re going to get. Some people tell me about the questions in theirs and I couldn’t pass that. It’s just like the maths test. I still haven’t passed it yet. I still haven’t passed it yet, because I’m an art teacher, not a maths genius, you know. But that’s alright. You know, that’s another ‘changing’ thing again—and that’s just me, looking at it with an optimistic point of view and saying, ‘Look it’s a prep–12 course. If you want to be a qualified primary teacher too, you’ve got to have that knowledge. It’s just the way it is.’*

Ivan has a realistic approach to systems and structures in place and this is an emerging theme. This approach and disposition taken by Ivan contribute in a constructive way to his professional growth. Certainly, we know that there are times when these challenges occur. Ivan seems determined to overcome the difficult tasks ahead with some resilience and this is noted as an emerging theme also from Ivan’s story.

JULIE: *It’s the way it has to be, I suppose.*

IVAN: *Yeah, exactly.*

JULIE: *But it is difficult. So how ...* [and Ivan begins without hearing the rest of the sentence].

IVAN: *It’s just sort of taught me to ... if there is a bit of doubt, to push myself to do things that I really am opposed to.*

JULIE: *So, overall reflection—on considering your journey? What's the one thing you can say to someone, some of your students, about learning, and what is the one thing that you could say to them as a learner?*

IVAN: *As a learner?*

JULIE: *Yes.*

IVAN: *I'd probably say it's always easiest to learn about something that you're interested in and that you want to learn about, rather than pushing yourself to find out about something, you know, that really you don't think it's relevant to you. So, as a learner when you're in schools, sometimes a lot of it might not seem like it's relevant but try and assume that it is all very important to you. Try and be interested in it, in order for it to sink in, you know, it's ... trying my best to make the most of it. And you never know what comes. You never know when you might need that knowledge. It might seem useless to you at the time, but when you get home, it's actually relevant and worthwhile.*

JULIE: *That looks fantastic* [looking at his painting, I compliment him].

IVAN: *Oh, thank you.*

.....

My response to Ivan's interview



Figure 7.8: *Imagining*, Julie, acrylic and ink on canvas

While listening and reflecting on emerging themes from Ivan, I cannot overlook the surprises which magnify to reveal mindshift. There have been many moments of learning for me while listening to Ivan. One final emergent theme in particular has shifted my thinking and it relates to his comment regarding what might seem unwarranted and unnecessary learning and I am enlightened. For Ivan, he tends ‘to push myself to do things that I really am opposed to’. The idea of trusting in the learning even if at the time it ‘might not seem like it’s relevant ... but try and assume that it is all very important so you’. He adds, ‘Trying my best to make the most of it. And you never know what comes. You never know when you might need that knowledge.’ Grappling with learning becomes clearer for Ivan when he reflects on his ideas and concerns and possibilities and imagining. Ideas about learning endure and can be built on ‘in stages of a quest’ (Greene 1995, p. 1). From Ivan, narratives spring forward to acclaim moments of possibilities and imaginings and inform the theme of my painting.

CHAPTER 8

This interview involves Carl. He is in his early thirties and has come from a close family from a suburb of Melbourne. He has siblings and his father is a retired minister. After graduating from an undergraduate degree, Carl began work in the corporate world and soon became disillusioned by the business world. He took the chance while single and in his twenties to travel. He travelled much of Europe and particularly enjoyed Italy. I shall let him retell the story about his travels and the experiences that begin to change his life. Carl is tall and has a gentle nature. He is quite interested in the arts, but does not consider himself a painter. He has blue eyes and tends to smile when nervous. Today he walks into the studio with a large grin and while putting on his protective coat we talk about the events of the day so far. He relaxes and I relax too. He is engaging and we stand at opposite sides of the table with the canvases stretched out before us.





Carl

Family expectations

Self-doubt

Role models

Risk taking

Travel and self-discovery

• **Mentors**

Responsibility

Community involvement

Caring and integrity

Compassion

Educational literature

Lecturers/teachers

Metacognition and self-monitoring one's learning



Figure 8.1: *It's just seeing*, Carl, acrylic and ink on canvas

Dewey (1944), when attempting to interpret the reconciliation of the concept of mind with the self and the conscious state, argues

What is taken for knowledge—for fact and truth—at a given time may not be such. But everything that is assumed without question, which is taken for granted in our intercourse with one another and nature is what, at the given time is *called* knowledge. Thinking on the contrary, starts as we have seen, from doubt or uncertainty. It marks an inquiring, hunting, searching attitude, instead of one of mastery and possession. Through its critical process true knowledge is revised and extended, and our convictions as to the state of things reorganised. (Dewey 1944, p. 295)

Dewey's description of searching and hunting as a reconciliation of the mind with the conscious self relies on learning and experiencing the world, and an important element in the progression of mindshift. This chapter presents the mindshift of Carl, a male preservice teacher. By observing the interplay of his narrative and painting, he is able to explore and illuminate the events from an overseas journey to cast reflective light on his learning. Journeys can often represent very real contributions and virtues towards personal learning. Interestingly, Carl is able to interpret his actions in a way that suggests his metaphorical journey to the teaching profession has been induced by a string of real-life chance meetings and events. To preface the following interview, I want to, here, introduce the theme of the quest or journey, as an act of discovery of self, as learning. When examining the events, art and subsequent emergent themes presented, we are able

to evidence mindshift, we are able to consider by way of acknowledging particular elements of epiphany from Carl's personal journey. As with all of the interviews in the thesis, this one begins with a question to determine the participant's idea of mindshift. Themes are then drawn from the commentary Carl offers throughout the text and indicated after presentation of small sections of the interview. These themes provide platforms for analysis of and response to the signifying moment of learning that transpire into a mindshift from Carl.

In preparing Carl for the interview, I welcome him and we have had an easy conversation in the space where the interview will take place. Carl and I use diluted ink on parts of the canvas. We can now paint and talk. The room is ready for the interview; the camera is in situ and the art materials are spread out on a large table. The room is light and sun flows through from the windows of the old building. I have explained that the process will involve some questions and conversation about his experiences in learning. He adjusts the sleeves of his protective coat to begin work and examines the paints and canvas on the table. Carl pours some paint out onto a palette very carefully. He is quiet and looks comfortable with the task ahead, so we begin the interview.

.....

The interview begins.

JULIE: *What is your understanding of 'mindshift'?*

CARL: *'Mindshift', I suppose, it's just seeing yourself in a different persona. Going from 'I understand myself to be this' and then all of a sudden I put on some different boots and now I've got a different face that I wear.*

Carl selects a large bottle of ink and dribbles it gently, sensitively and tentatively onto the canvas as he begins to speak (Figure 8.2). After it has been applied he stands back to view the marks he has made while he was talking. At this early stage he appears to be cautious. His speech and paint application are similar in that the approach is slow and measured.



Figure 8.2: Ink is applied to the canvas

CARL: *I think, as life is continual ... it provides lots of mindshifts.*

JULIE: *So, could you give an example of a mindshift that may have happened that you recall?*

Carl begins to spread the ink with a spatula (Figure 8.3). He uses a rhythmical motion and is more relaxed now. He is engaging with the medium and spreads the ink to create a rhythmic image on the canvas.



Figure 8.3: Ink features enlarged using a spatula

Carl stands taller and makes eye contact while shaking a bottle of ink. He is clearly less hesitant and he dribbles the ink from a slightly higher angle. As he talks, he is clearer, louder, confident and more settled with this topic that is related to familiar experiences within the family. He continues the conversation, letting the ink fall resolutely and from high above the painting.

CARL: *I remember the first time I got really, really scared by the concept of being a teacher. What was his name? [Carl is trying to remember the name of a university lecturer.] He was the lecturer and talking a lot about Paulo Freire and all that sort of stuff and all the responsibilities of being a teacher ... and being an agent for positive change in the world, and you sort of think, 'Whew! Yeah! Okay, it's a big thing. I've always thought that being a teacher is a fairly serious profession. My dad's a teacher and he's finally retiring and he's got three days until he retires, so he's really excited at the moment. But, you know, I always have known that he's put a stupid [enormous] amount of effort into it and he didn't ever really treat it in a really casual way.*

So, I always knew it was a lot of work and the whole idea of having formative minds is a bit scary. I have those thoughts like—am I an appropriate role model? What do I want my legacy to be? I might just be out shopping with Dad or something and he'll run into students he had 20 years before and they'll say, 'I still remember your class in grade 6 and you're the best teacher I ever had.' It's like 'Wow!' And you do, you can remember the good teachers and the bad teachers.

There are 13 themes that emerge from the interview and 17 epiphanic moments and these are indicated at the concluding section of the thesis. The themes and epiphanies arise after an interrogation of the text, the art making and gestures observed during the interview. A preliminary

theme has been revealed in the commentary above. Carl has introduced his father, revealing a relived epiphany, which begins to describe his father. He stands as a major figure in the interview and therefore family is an emergent theme for consideration. I am uncertain, at this point, if Carl's father is an inspiring figure for him or if Carl chooses to set himself apart from his father.

.....

JULIE: *What's a good teacher?*

CARL: *I think the ones that inspire you.*

JULIE: *Do you think that's right?*

CARL: *I think it's worth trying. Because, it's like having children and you don't want them to just end up being you ... You want them to learn from what you've done, but you don't want them to be you. You want them to create their own path and destiny.*

Carl suggests teachers should inspire students to learn to create their own path. Role models are important to Carl and this theme emerges from the course of the conversation. Carl is still concentrating on the details of the painting and the project's seriousness on this topic. He does not make eye contact. At this point I am taken back to reflect on the early comments about Carl's relationship with his father. I wonder if he is referring to his father as his teacher, and his role as student or son. The complexity here marks a tension and this reflection provides evidence for a minor/illuminative epiphanic moment.

JULIE: *Can you recall a critical event that may have underpinned the concepts you have about teaching. Has there been a time when you have formed those sorts of ideas about teaching?*

CARL: *I suppose the scariest part of the teaching prac was at my secondary school practicum experience ... an in your face experience: 'Here, you are; here's a year 10 class ... teach them some history!' 'Okay, anything in particular?' and the teacher [mentor teacher] at the time said, 'Whatever you find interesting.'*

Carl uses a higher pitch in his voice to accentuate the uncomfortable situation he is describing. Carl has completed the ink image and selects a large brush to add a new image.

He dips it in orange ink and drips copious amounts in the centre of the canvas and then begins to spread the ink out from the centre. Later he scoops large amounts of white acrylic and yellow acrylic and paints around the image in the centre of the canvas. The white and yellow acrylics subsequently appear to be behind the ink (Figure 8.4).



Figure 8.4: Orange ink is added

JULIE: *Was this a useful experience?*

CARL: *Yes. That first Vietnam War lesson that was ... was terrifying.*

The history lesson he describes as traumatic. Taking risks when teaching takes courage and this is an emergent theme. Carl feels he learned from the experience, yet he is not willing to talk on this topic. Traumatic moments offer major epiphanies. Carl picks up a shorter, but wider-bristled brush and scoops paint up and once the brush is carefully over the top of the canvas he commences to flick the brush vertically so large drops of paint hit the canvas randomly. He continues these movements; they are pulse-like and he smiles as the paint hits the canvas. He is enjoying this and seems cheerful and content until the next story.

JULIE: *What I'm interested in are moments in your career so far, in life, time at university or any time there has been an experience that's transformed you? Can you think of a single event that may have happened and why are you here at university doing a Bachelor in Education?*

Carl becomes more serious with the raising of this topic. This is evident in a number of ways. He moves to apply the paint slowly, he picks up the brush with elbow bent so the brush is close to his body, placing his head close to the canvas and he applies the paint very carefully with very small movements to ensure a detailed image. His face is humourless and sober. The topic is important and significant.

CARL: *Ahmm ... because [pause] I went to a place [pause]] in Italy called Assisi—you know St Francis of Assisi—and at the time, I was sort of just wandering about dealing with the 30th year middle-age crisis and trying to find direction and meaning in my life because what I had been doing wasn't what I should be doing.*

There is no eye contact and Carl appears to be escaping to the art activity, while thinking deeply about the grave response.

JULIE: *How did you know that?*

CARL: *Ahh, just that general sense of unease that ‘Okay I don’t really think I’m here to make money I don’t really see that as a purpose to ...’ I was working for a major corporate business at the time and the money was great but it wasn’t exactly fulfilling [work]. So, I went for a bit of a wander around Europe and had been reading a few books [Carl pauses] and reading up on a few different philosophers, too. I had toyed with the idea of writing a book about a ‘Living Religion’. It was sort of ... it wasn’t exactly about religions themselves. I had done a few interviews with a couple of people in China and some Buddhist/Hindu people and I was collecting data for that and I got about six months into that project and then I found a book that had just been written, which was pretty much like the book I was writing ... so [Carl begins to laugh].*

An interesting journey of self-discovery and an important theme provides a unique basis for learning. During this story we make no eye contact and Carl methodically, almost in a systematic way, applies paint and then takes a step back, stands—considers the marks. At this stage I assess that he is not only thinking about the paint or marks. He is thinking also about the story, pacing it slowly, trying to sequence the events to make sense of them and to get them to make sense in order to give a true and accurate account of the experience. He works very slowly, mixing, observing and adding to the art work.

Carl uses the time between rhythmic broad strokes to consider and this provides a space to think deeply to a deliver a precise interpretation of the following story (Figure 8.5).

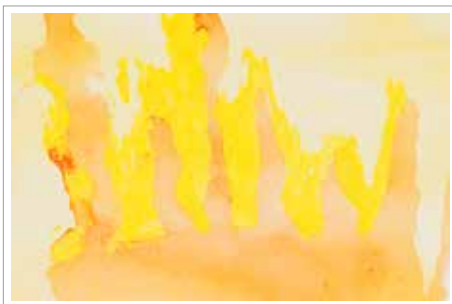


Figure 8.5: Yellow border added

JULIE: *What did you do then?*

CARL: *I was bumming around Europe basically. But I’d read about St Francis of Assisi and I am non-Catholic in background so this was all new to me. I happened to be in Florence and there was a train to Assisi in 10 minutes. I grabbed my bag and jumped on it. I didn’t speak any Italian but got there and it was sort of fun. The lady at the Youth Hostel Association spoke enough English to take my money and give me a bed. And then I wandered around for five days without speaking any English, and just sort of asked the powers that be for direction. I sat in lots of pretty cathedrals and contemplated the universe and asked for a lot of direction and at the time I didn’t think I got the answers.*

During this section Carl becomes more agitated and excited. He moves his left hand to emphasise the dramatic sections of the story that follows. He moves back and forward in an attempt to collect paint to apply. He shifts his eyes between the canvas and the paints, not knowing what to apply. He seems more confused and the story is revealing a new pace and a self-styled gestural meta-language. He continues in this way for the following story.

Carl paints using smaller strokes of yellow (Figure 8.6). With eyes and head closer to the canvas, his movements are gauged and details on the painting are positioned carefully with measured and neat calculated motions.



Figure 8.6: Small yellow detail added

CARL: *And on the last day there I met a person who spoke English—I hadn't spoken [English] for a while—big conversations—[she was] amazingly switched on and just knew all this stuff that I'd been struggling with and learning for years, like, how to be present and, you know, how to be singular in [smiles] Argghh ... [Carl is speaking loudly and head is high]. I don't know ... I don't know how to describe it! But all the big concepts and the things I had been struggling with for a long time. She was there and had lived it, and strange enough, after I had been talking to her for a day or so, I found out she was 19, and I thought, 'How are you here?—How are you at this point already? I'm 30 and I'm just coming to grips with it now.' Arghh, and it was amazing. She went to a Steiner school ... blah blah ... for her whole schooling, and I found out about the whole background behind it—Steiner. 'Okay, what's this all about?' And so, that became the 'Steiner journey'. Then as I'm filling out my journal as an Australian heading north, I was writing away ... and actually I got the answer I wanted, and then more things kept happening as I travelled. I kept meeting more and more people that had done nothing but Steiner education for their whole life. And these were amazingly 'switched on' people with ideas and concepts. They hadn't been force fed but they had been in an environment that allowed them to develop for themselves and it was all their own learning. It wasn't anything forced on them, and that was what I thought was that was the great thing about it. So I started researching all about Steiner and when I get back to Australia I've got to be a teacher. But not just a teacher—I've got to be a Steiner teacher. That was my epiphany.*

Mentors identified by Carl have assisted his learning and this is an emerging theme here. A chance meeting—Carl has termed the culmination of this learning experience an ‘epiphany’. At one point Carl stops when stating, ‘I don’t know ... I don’t know how to describe it! But all the big concepts and the things I had been struggling with for a long time.’ He holds his hands cupped in front of him. He becomes more settled and begins applying paint. He seems confused as he picks up paint and places it down without using it. He then selects a brush and quickly replaces it on the table. He does not make eye contact and observes his work at length without painting. He seems slightly anxious, but keen to tell this story. In the succeeding sentences, Carl becomes quieter and calmer and ends the story when signifying a cumulative epiphany.

During the final two sentences of the story he selects a new shade and, more confidently now, uses broad strokes at the lower left new corner (Figure 8.7). This image is bolder. Carl stands and speaks more confidently.



Figure 8.7: Large orange motif (lower left)

Paul Coelho (1993), the author of a fable titled ‘The Alchemist’, explores the role of learning through the act of personal journey through a series of often accidental events. In his book, a small shepherd boy, Santiago, travels in search of worldly treasure, but instead gathers a story and history of his own self. The story is an account of simple accomplishment, but richness comes in the discovery and essential wisdom he gleans from the experience of a journey. The boy’s questions and attempts to make meaning are strong throughout the story. Santiago comes to look upon his sheep as his, albeit inadvertent, teachers,

There are probably other things in the world that the sheep can’t teach me ...
all they ever do really is look for food and water. And maybe it wasn’t that they
were teaching me, but that I was learning from them. (Coelho 1993, p. 60)

In a story where simple and extraordinary experiences develop, an analysis of events is interpreted for the reader. Santiago shifts from observer to learner and teacher. The analysis draws on some common themes, but is particularly reflective around the idea of identity creation. When contemplating who one is, Santiago learns,

The closer one gets to realising his Personal Legend, the more that Personal
Legend becomes his true reason for being. (Coelho 1993, p. 74)

Epiphanies exist. However, there is a tension between the religious and the secular when naming the phenomenon as an epiphany. Therefore, epiphany is often named using other terms, such as ‘mindshift’, ‘appearance’, ‘reflection’, ‘transformation’, etcetera. This research implements a Joycean notion of epiphany; a secular examination of personal episodic enlightenment drawn from religious and spiritual metaphors. Renaming epiphany in behavioural and scientific terms has the effect of a religious sanitising and so, to some, legitimising the term. Carl, on the other hand, uses the term ‘epiphany’ freely and unapologetically following the stories of his Italian journey and related learning experiences. Carl asserts and applies the term without hesitancy or disinclination.

.....

JULIE: *Oh really?*

CARL: *Yes, I suppose so. Yes, an epiphany moment. That's it—your life vision changes.*

In this response, Carl acknowledges the arrival of a rich learning moment. Donna Raines (2004) in her research describes epiphanic moments. On the process of gathering her portraits and rich stories for her research she states,

Critical incidents were shared from individual participants representing catalysts for momentous change; themes of personal realizations, barriers to effectiveness, and challenges in the career of an administrator also contributed as dominant elements of the final work. (Raines 2004, p. 2)

.....

Carl cocks his head on the side momentarily as he paints. With this movement he changes the angle from which he now can view the canvas and so, both literally and figuratively indicates a change of vision. He then stands back to observe the detailed section he has painted.

JULIE: *Are there any other relevant events?*

CARL: *When I got back to Australia, I was just killing time until uni started. I'd actually signed up to a university in New South Wales ... just because I loved the area. [Carl smiles.] That was the only reason. It wasn't for anything in particular, but as I was waiting for uni to start, I jumped on my motor bike and I was dropping in to visit people that I had worked with or just knew from different points in time. I came across my current partner, who I had known from years ago but hadn't seen. She had a nine-year-old son and within about two weeks he started calling me 'Dad' [laughing again] and I thought, 'Hold on, that's huge,' but I decided that I was happy to accept that responsibility.*

JULIE: *So, 'responsibility' is important?*

Responsibility as a personal realisation and enormous challenge (Raines 2004) is noted in this work as an emergent theme and a major epiphanic moment for Carl. Now repositioned, and now declaring new responsibilities, Carl begins with broader strokes. The lines are more liberal and open. He uses this freedom throughout the next episode in his recurring father-son story. He moves around the area and even, as a right-handed person, paints while positioned at the left side of the canvas. Carl uses a liberated and untamed flow when describing himself as a procrastinator. He uses this term shamelessly and announces it while engaged in the flowing confident lines of his brush stroke.

.....

CARL: *Yes. So, I moved down here. I spent six months doing correspondence education subjects. I really liked learning by correspondence and then decided that I actually had to go to uni. I'm too much of a procrastinator not to have actual class time. My son, Jake, was having a hard time at the school he was at anyway, and so we looked around at schools and there was a Steiner school around the corner. I couldn't believe it; at Bay City Primary. So I went there and had a chat to teachers there and had a talk with the classroom teacher. The teacher was amazing. He works on the curriculum for Steiner schools across Australia, so, he's pretty 'switched on' and knows his stuff. He gave me some stuff to read and away we went. We changed and moved Joe straight round to that school. So, I've had a lot of involvement with them this year with that school doing singing nights, etcetera.*

A number of cumulative events have contextualised an epiphanic point and concerns Carl's school community and subsequent involvement. This involvement has become an important step for Carl and is an emerging theme in the narrative. Carl stops here pausing from the story and the art making for the moment. This is an inconclusive moment and he is thoughtful. Reflection on this story is marked by this break/conclusion. He is smiling and looking forward toward me.

JULIE: *Have there been moments there?*

CARL: *Uhhh. Yes, I found probably when I was working with the year 2s at the start of the year at the Steiner school that was pretty amazing with the just ... the difference to the standard classroom. I realised, 'Okay, yes.' It sort of 'concreted' what I was doing was right.*

He scoops up some paint while his head tilts to the side slightly.

JULIE: *What other characteristics particular to you have brought you to teaching?*

CARL: *Uhhh ... I feel there's not much point to existence if you're not helping people.*

He pauses here. Care and one's integrity to enable caring for others is an emergent thread through this discussion. A relived sensitive narrative encompasses an epiphany and moment of learning. Interestingly, Carl begins approaching the canvas to apply a very small detailed section to the art work. It is as if he has noticed something all of a sudden and it requires delicate and sensitive attention. His head is bowed very close to the canvas. He continues the delicate work and the delicate, but significant topic below.

CARL: *My father was a teacher and a missionary for a while. For years I couldn't say I loved my father, but I have always respected him. He always believed what he believed and did everything to make it and to live what he believed. An historical figure that I really love is Ghandi, and so ... my dad and Ghandi sort of have got a lot in common. But, I was the black sheep of the family and I didn't really take of the religion thing too heavily.*

JULIE: *Do you think that has that been a disadvantage?*

CARL: *No, I don't think ... I know people that have and I think it would have been a limit to my learning if I had sort of accepted the religion that was fed to me without consideration and thought. I don't see anything wrong with religion. Religion is great. It helps lots of people, but it's got to be a choice. Not something ... people should be free to find their own religion. I don't think there are many people who don't have religion in some form or fashion. Atheism—even that's a religion.*

Carl relays the story evoking some tension and it can be considered a minor/illuminative epiphanic stance on the topic of religion. This topic reveals more accurately Carl's ability to accept values of others and uncovers further the compassionate nature of Carl. Very slowly, Carl reaches for the next scoop of paint. He is distant and thinking deeply. He is pausing in the conversation and is slowing the pace of the interview down. He needs time to think about what he has realised in his story above.

JULIE: *You have described certain things and sort of explained certain things, too. You have theorised a lot about some of these things that you thought are major concepts. What about teaching and the context that's formulated those transformative moments? First, you were overseas, you are part of a family. What else is particular to you that have made those moments happen?*

CARL: *Uhhh ... Context? Arhh ...*

Carl stands back to absorb the words and then darts forward to a considered section on the canvas where he works intensely, concentrating on small details. His head is very close to the canvas, possibly inches above where he is painting. He adds white to a central image which can give the effect of highlighting the original image (Figure 8.8).



Figure 8.8: White paint is applied between orange features

JULIE: *How can we replicate those conditions?*

CARL: *The conditions of ... Wow. I think for me it pretty much came down to the authors I was reading I suppose. I've always been a big reader. Someone gave me a book actually when I was still working in corporate business. It was about 'four big philosophical thinkers'. It was like a summary and you could like read a passage. The book ran through all these different people [philosophers]. That was the first time I read about St Francis of Assisi. He had Gardner¹ in there and even Paulo Freire. Just as I was reading it for the first time—it was like 'Wow!' There was sort of truth to it all. It had some Buddhist stuff in there and some Hindi stuff in there.*

Carl suggests literature as a way to transformation of one's self and indicates a new emerging theme. Struck by the important work of great writers, Carl was overwhelmed by the '... big philosophical thinkers' and there lies a tension due to the underlying fear of the new type of literature he was engaging with at this time. The illuminative 'Wow!' suggests, and the associated tension supports, the existence of a minor/illuminative epiphany from this commentary.

JULIE: *So you think reading is important to transformative thought and being a good teacher?*

CARL: *It's one thing to talk to people and get their ideas and what-not, but it's always another thing to actually have the time to read and sit and reflect. There were some outstanding lecturers.*

JULIE: *Yes, here at university ...*

CARL: *Andrew [a lecturer from Carl's class] was pretty big, too. He gave me lots of 'food for thought'. That was all about social justice and just what we are taking on in the role as a teacher.*

¹ Carl refers here to Howard Gardner (Harvard University).

University lecturers/teachers have not been a focus from the interviews, but now this emerges as a theme for Carl. The pace of the conversation has been lively, yet now Carl talks slowly. While the tempo of the conversation slows, Carl's movements slow too. He pauses often, and applies the paint increasingly in small amounts. Carl looks at the canvas more often and adds details to his art work indicating he is clearly interested in the appearance of the final product as he senses the interview is drawing to a close and I am aware we will finish the interview soon.

.....

JULIE: *So, social justice?*

CARL: *Social justice is part of the teaching role and not just in the classroom but also giving students the means to be agents for change. I'm looking forward to doing his lecture again this year because I don't think I was really quite ready for it.*

JULIE: *Oh really? Was reading useful?*

CARL: *Yeah! I think that once I did, I realised I had really struggled with writing and reflecting. I kept researching and I kept reading and reading and reading and reading, but it took me a long time to get to the point where I had any sort of ... or anything of merit to say about the topic and it didn't come straight away.*

Carl is critiquing his ability to reflect and is provides evidence of his capacity to be metacognitive. As a self-directed learner Carl see the value of rich university program. This moment is powerful in exposing mindshift. New questions and curiosity create a tension and he states, 'I realised I had really struggled with writing and reflecting.' For Carl there is urgency for knowledge and illumination. A minor/illuminative epiphany was pending. It resolves and we can gauge from the final phrase above he eventually recognises the shift.

CARL: *You're making a nice mess. I like it.*

Carl is referring to my painting. Apparently, I have become particularly excited and animated at this point. Carl notices that I am applying the paint vigorously (Figure 8.9).

Carl continued to pace the interview slowly and it drew to a natural close. And so, we finished. We spoke a little to thank each other, and before he left the room, we took a last look at his art work. We agreed he had completed a lovely piece for displaying in his future classroom (see Figure 8.1). I told him I would hold on to the work to dry and frame it and return it to him when the study is complete to place in his classroom.

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My artwork in response to Carl



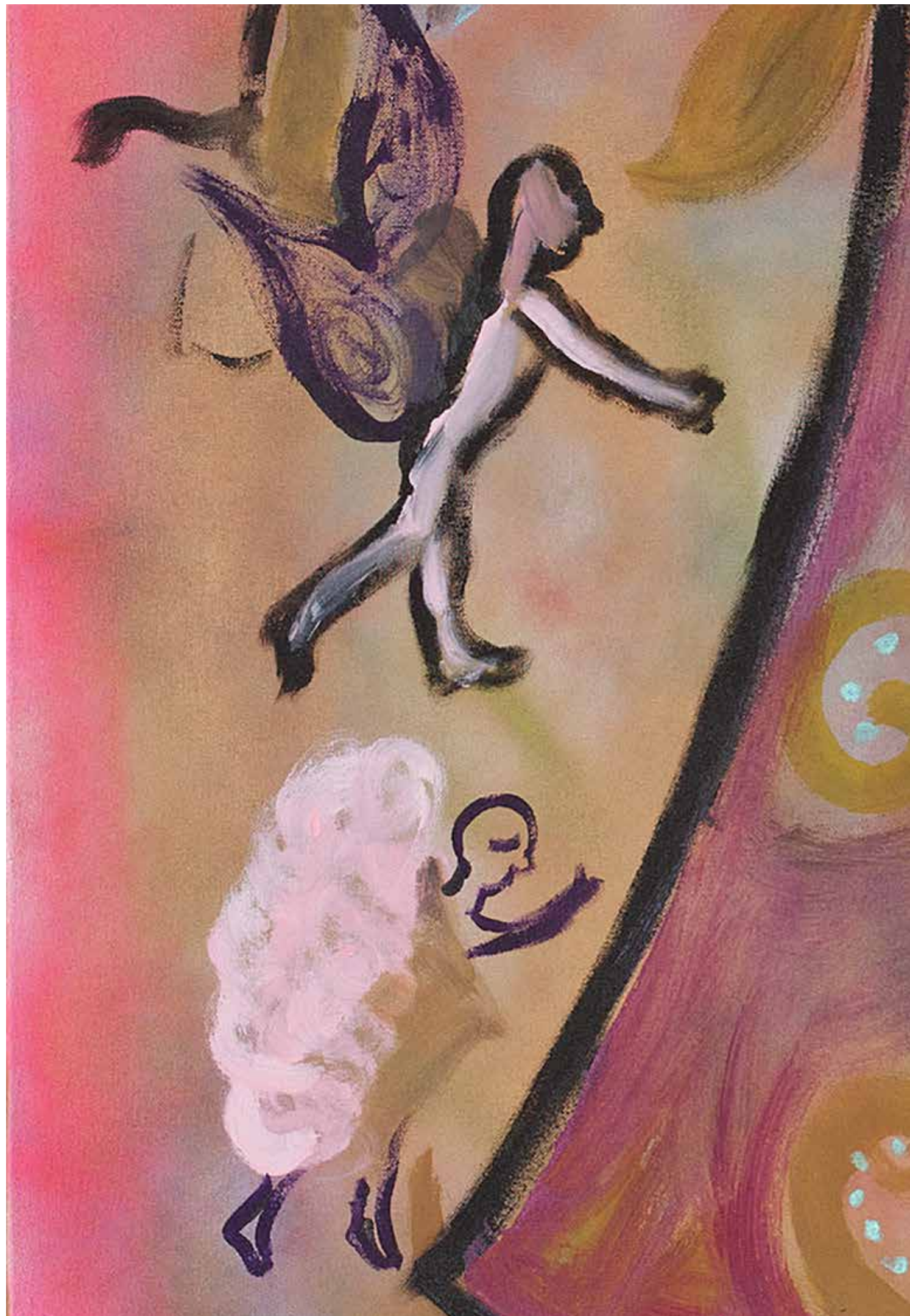
Figure 8.9: *The elements of epiphany*, Julie, acrylic and ink on canvas

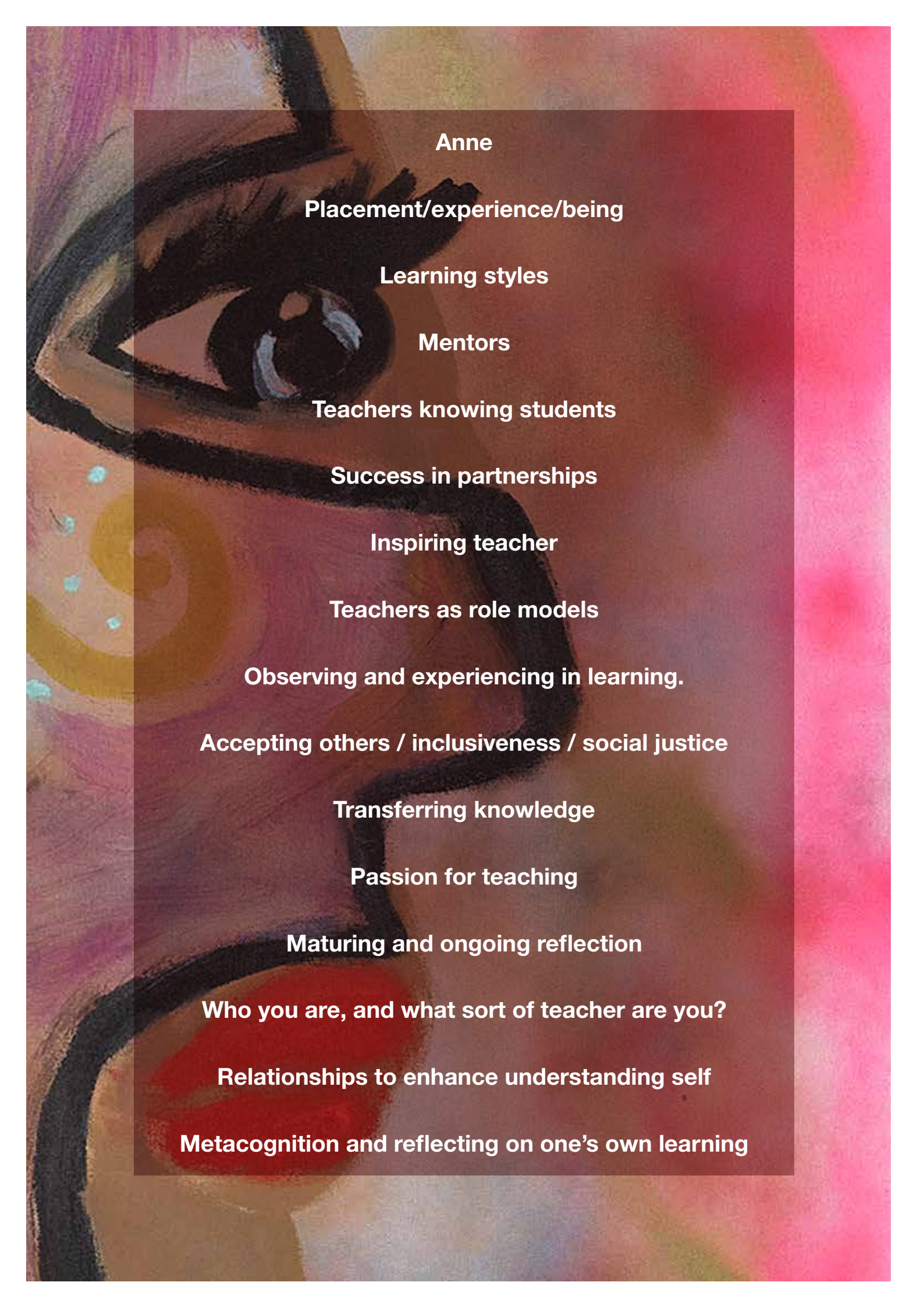
For me, tracing ‘when’ and ‘how’ learning occurs, and following the journey from ‘doubt and uncertainty’ towards new knowledge is a path of inquiry. In doing this, Carl may be able to trace the experiences and real contributors towards learning. His interpretation of narratives and actions are pronounced and captivate me. Carl’s learning experiences stem from and reach beyond the university into studies of different kinds. He has ‘the searching attitude ... instead of one of mastery and possession’ (Dewey 1944, p. 295). Carl is still hunting and searching at a time in his life when mature acquired characteristics and experiences, such as family, can carry important critical issues and convictions. Seeking the epiphanic moments induced by many fortuitous meetings and events is entwined and unique to Carl. The narratives cascade and I am able to trace and record the experiences as they flow and, in doing so, document Carl’s mindshift in an artful and illustrative way.

CHAPTER 9

Anne is tall with long brown hair and is in her early twenties. She is particularly interested in drama, theatre and has been involved in television work too. Anne is expressive, confident and eager to begin the art making and interview. She dresses casually and her hair is falls loose about her shoulders. Anne walks tall as if she has been a dancer too. She speaks quickly, but her voice and pronunciation are clear.

.....





Anne

Placement/experience/being

Learning styles

Mentors

Teachers knowing students

Success in partnerships

Inspiring teacher

Teachers as role models

Observing and experiencing in learning.

Accepting others / inclusiveness / social justice

Transferring knowledge

Passion for teaching

Maturing and ongoing reflection

Who you are, and what sort of teacher are you?

Relationships to enhance understanding self

Metacognition and reflecting on one's own learning



Figure 9.1: *Hands on—magical learning*, Anne, acrylic on canvas

Just as perception itself must be selective in order to focus, so too, must the content that a form of representation can contain. Not everything can be said through anything. The selection of a form of representation is a selection of what can be used to transform a private experience into a public one.

(Eisner 1994, p. 41)

When Elliot Eisner (1994) discusses the decisions about materials and images that are made by artists, he deems these devices that humans implement assist in conveying and carrying human experience into the ‘public realm’ (Eisner 1994, p. 39). Consider Anne in the following interview, when sharing her private experiences of learning. Both what she chooses to represent and experience are shaped by her ‘expressive skills, while at the same time, the use of [her] expressive skills is guided by [her] experience’ (Eisner 1994, p. 41). The form of painting is to enhance and illuminate concepts. ‘The selection of a form of representation not only functions as a vehicle for conveying what has been conceptualised, it also helps articulate conceptual forms’ (Eisner 1994, p. 41).

On this occasion I welcome the participant and preservice teacher Anne to the project and she puts on a protective dust coat confidently. Anne moves with a quick and determined movement to set herself up for the task. She opens containers, mixes paints on to palettes, moves the palettes close to the canvas and replaces caps and collects other paint and places it close by in preparation. We have applied some spray paint to prepare the canvas’ outside and once applied we can begin the interview. The smell still lingers in the studio. We are still chatting about colours and the task and I ask the first question regarding mindshift.

Anne has applied tones to the canvas in spray paint to begin the art work in Figure 9.2. Soft and dream-like the colours merge and provide a translucent space on which to place her artful work.



Figure 9.2: Blended tones

The interview begins.

JULIE: *Now, what I want to ask you today, I want to talk about mindshift might look like in the context of your learning?*

Anne collects a brush to use and brushes it across her hand as she listens.

ANNE: *Maybe when you have an idea about something and you change your mind when you have more knowledge about that particular thing.*

JULIE: *Can you think of any time when that might have happened?*

ANNE: *Uhhm. I guess ... at uni, through placement. The more you learn about teaching ... and the more you can relate to the students, the more you relate to other information and be your own teacher and teach students. If you don't know yourself then basically ...*

Anne does not complete this sentence, but after thinking on this question suggests that placement and 'being' in school have been important to her mindshift. It is a common theme which emerges from the interviews and Anne has raised this theme early.

JULIE: *So, can you think of anything or examples of learning that you think may have experienced?*

Anne began painting with big broad strokes reaching across the canvas almost to the top. She created a large profile of a face. She defines the outline and begins outlining the mask profile in black (Figure 9.3).



Figure 9.3: Profile defined

ANNE: *I guess when I learned through drama. There were a lot of students who were going through the same thing as me, stressing about it and we did a performance about it. We got to realise we were not alone in experiencing those feelings. So, I guess that was a big learning curve for me because everyone was feeling the same thing as me and we can think about it together. Anne's voice gets very quiet here. We did a 'huge' play (dramatic performance) about this issue.*

JULIE: *Did you?*

ANNE: [Excited now] *Yes, we did a big performance about it all. You know, about everything you go through, about depression, all the things that can happen as you work out who you are.*

JULIE: *So, that was in a theatre performance?*

ANNE: *Yes, it was just down on campus. It was a big change for me to realise that we are all here together. Yeah!*

Learning styles have an impact on Anne's learning—'I learned through drama' and noted in the comment above and this is an emerging theme and contributing to her mindshift toward her becoming a professional practitioner. I can also note here that Anne indicates a minor/illuminative epiphany from her response regarding a mindshift change. She draws clear connections about an important issue and underlying tension of depression, and a staged performance, towards what she describes leads to a shift in thinking. 'It was a big change for me to realise that we are all here together.' Moments such as these emerge in stories and can lead to deeper learning which I call an epiphany—a moment of realisation. The Irish novelist James Joyce adopted the concept of 'epiphanies' and when writing chose to depict a series of short stories containing 'epiphanic' moments. Although somewhat sad, the stories were published in a book titled *Dubliners* in 1914. While he had been religious for most of his early life, he did not care to use the term in a spiritual sense. Joyce termed epiphanies a 'sudden revelation of the whatness of a thing' (Ellman 1959, p. 83) as quoted from Richard Ellman's (1959) biography of Joyce. Joyce's epiphanies were for him moments of self-realisation from daily experience. At this time too, Freud was focusing on the conscious and unconscious mind in his psychoanalytical research. Although both, presumably, used similar terms (there seem to be no documented connections of ideologies between Freud and Joyce), Joyce regards the dream-like reflective state as revelatory rather than scientific (Ellman 1959).

.....

JULIE: *Are there any other instances of mindshift at uni or even earlier on that you can think of?*

ANNE: *I think I had a really good mentor in second year that changed me. I really did learn a lot from her and it did change my idea of teaching. I had only had one mentor previously in first year and she was, I don't know ... [I suspect she hesitates here slightly and there is some tension here, not knowing whether to be critical in her opinion of a mentor teacher's performance, and she adds] a different style of teacher, so I guess I learnt a lot from having different mentors and the way mentors engaged. The mentor teacher; she was just wonderful. She was really supportive and she knew about all the kids' different learning styles and problems and so, I did as well. I got to really know the kids. It was good.*

The hesitation that Anne elicits in the minor/illuminative epiphany above suggests there is a tension or professionalism required when critiquing mentor teachers. There are themes presented by Anne here too. For instance, preservice teachers have the opportunity which enables them to research and critique mentor teachers while working in the classroom in schools. She also suggests that teachers and preservice teachers who know their students well contribute to

successful teaching and learning experiences while in partnership practicums in schools. These are important pedagogical approaches and themes.

Here, there is a pause as Anne selects a new brush and pushes the bristles in her hand, she moves toward the table. She carefully pours a large amount of black paint on to the palette. She carefully applies the black once again to the outline of the profile.

Using a fine brush this time Anne attends to detail to make the lines clear and more precise than her prior images (Figure 9.4).



Figure 9.4: Details added to image

JULIE: *Anne, how did you get into teaching?*

ANNE: *I always liked art and drama and I wanted to do this. Always! So, I thought what better way to do this than to be a teacher and be passionate about what you are doing.*

JULIE: *How did you know? When did you know?*

ANNE: *I knew, I knew, always, for as long as I can remember; always wanted to be an actress [she laughs; I think she is little embarrassed at this admission]. I guess it was maybe ... year 10, when I thought, 'Oh, what a great idea!' My drama teacher inspired me a bit and I thought that would be a really cool thing to do for the rest of my life.*

JULIE: *What was your drama teacher like?*

ANNE: *Well, she was really outgoing and showed all sorts of things that students could do with their hands and they could do through plays and had great ideas for them. She got students really enthusiastic about performing. [Anne looks up from her painting sharply, but quickly looks down to paint again. I wonder about this quick glance and return. She continues] ... then in Year 11/12, I had a different drama teacher at a different school. She was fantastic. The kids would go to her for help and I was even more inspired. I realised how passionate she was and that sort of experience made me want to do well for her.*

Inspiring teachers and passionate teachers as role models have been influential for Anne in her practice and learning and as themes for creating a shift in her ideas of understanding of what good teachers might look like in the classroom. As Anne talks she continues on the profile of the face. She leans across the canvas. Leaning over the canvas provides a new view point, to enable her to access the overall art work. Anne is very relaxed and absorbed in her work. She has not stopped painting since beginning the interview. Although I ask questions, the interview has now conversation-like.

.....

JULIE: *Are there any other times that you can think of that have contributed to your learning?*

Approaching from the side, she mixes red, blue and white to paint the mask-like profile (Figure 9.5).



Figure 9.5: Colours are painted on to the image

ANNE: *Lot of times when we have demonstrations of 'how to teach' and workshops, I think that really helps people learn doing that—hands on.*

At this point the outline of the profile image is complete. Anne then pours white on to a palette and adds red, mixing in small amounts of red at a time. Once a deep pink has been made, she adds the lighter tone to the mask (Figure 9.6).



Figure 9.6: White adds a lighter tone

JULIE: *Is that learning taking place when you have these workshops or when you watch?*

ANNE: *Both really, because you can learn how to teach when you're doing the workshop and then you also learn how to teach when you are watching it. It is good to see how other people teach a class and this brings a lot of new ways of teaching and lesson plans.*

JULIE: *What about other learning even earlier on?*

ANNE: *I guess I learnt to be more accepting and everyone is different and you can't expect everyone to think the same as you do, even in friendships. Because everyone is different and if you want someone to be a friend you have to accept them as different.*

Anne begins a new image. It is a mythical character set behind the mask. At this stage of the conversations she attends to details and uses small concentrated actions (Figure 9.7).



Figure 9.7: Smaller detailed image

In the short narratives above, Anne suggests ideas which include observing teachers and reflecting on one's own teaching as assessment of teacher preparedness. An important theme and practice located in teacher education, the exercise of reflexivity by critiquing others is a way of understanding and scrutinising one's self. Anne also offers insights on acceptance of others and inclusiveness which present established ideas she has on social justice and evidenced when she states, 'I guess I learnt to be more accepting and everyone is different and you can't expect everyone to think the same as you do ...'

While Anne continues to use the small brush strokes, some emotion has developed in her voice when explaining the previous story. There is some tension in the tone of her voice and added to this there is some degree of detail in her painting. I believe this to be a minor /illuminative epiphanic moment from the story which is seriously delivered and associated tension—as is perhaps a larger story underpins this narrative.

JULIE: *Can you theorise about why you think the way you do? There have been things that have happened to make you think about yourself.*

Anne pulls a face and grimaces and scratchers her chin. Her head is tilted on the side and then she looks down and continues to work at the painting, then in silence, and holding two brushes, she moves quickly using one then the other where required on the canvas. I clarify this point as I want to know if Anne is able to identify theorising her praxis, so I reword it as the following indicates.

JULIE: *Why do you teach and why do you learn?*

ANNE: *I think confidence is important and when growing up I was pretty shy. So, drama brought me out of my comfort zone and maybe it's because of that, I now feel I really want to give that idea to kids perhaps and show them that they can excel perhaps. I just want to show kids what I learnt in a way. Yeah! That's how I understood the world. It was all about 'hands on' learning, magical learning and creative learning; expression and self-expression including painting and things like that. I just wanted to teach kids all about that. If I'm passionate about it then I hope I can give them some sort of interest in it.*

Anne's description of her approach draws on an ideology that attempts to explain her perspective on the topic of teaching as a process of transformation for understanding. For Anne, experiential learning and passionate teaching as contributors to learning provide a sense of who she might be and how she might teach. This narrative stems from a relived epiphanic story and passionate claim. Passion is driving her work and this is a major theme emerging from Anne.

JULIE: *So, passion is significant?*

ANNE: *Yes, definitely! I think that is a major part of being a teacher. [There is a short silence here.] If I am being taught by someone who doesn't actually want to be there or doesn't have a passion for what they are doing ... I've always thought that is a main thing. [Once again there is silence and Anne works intensely.]*

JULIE: *I want to ask you about your painting.*

ANNE: *It is sort of hard to describe.*

JULIE: *Yes, it is really about the process of 'doing'.*

ANNE: *Yeah! I guess, I've always liked the idea of when you are painting—you are painting what you are 'all about'. Well, for me I've always liked the idea of masks. They imply who you are and they can also create anything—other things that you can be too. You can wear it—a mask and be someone else.*

JULIE: *That's the idea of a mask I suppose; it is like a metaphor?*

ANNE: *Yeah! That's what I think.*

Anne has added white to a new brush. She is swapping between three brushes without effort. Anne adds to the pink areas to lighten them and the area begins to look translucent. The profile has now been given some depth. Anne places the brushes down and selects a new colour.

She selects yellow and moves to the top of the canvas and adds decorative features and flower to the mask profile. Holding three brushes now, she applies paint and stands back. She moves closer to the top left corner nearer to the camera. A flower and decorative features are added to the mask (Figure 9.8).



Figure 9.8: A detailed decorative feature

JULIE: *Can you think of other times when you have always completed something one way, then all of a sudden you realise that it was different to what you originally thought? Have there been moments in your life or teaching that capture that or where you have reflected and thought about it deeper?*

ANNE: *I think in second year of uni, I thought, 'I pretty much knew who I was and knew about the world.' I think mindshift happens when you meet a whole new group of different sorts of people and you think, 'Hang on. Do I actually know who I am? Am I who I thought I was?' I guess it's growing up really.*

While sharing this story, Anne moves to use the brush with yellow paint, but, while talking, stops and does not apply the yellow. Clearly, her mind has changed. She moves her body towards the palette and selects black. She uses the black once again to emphasise the outline of the mask. She slows and stops on the final part of this story. Anne moves the brushes she is holding forward when stating, 'Hang on! Do I actually know who I am? Am I who I thought I was?' She then settles, gathers some paint on a brush and lowers her head to continue painting. Her statement on maturity is reflective—'I guess it's growing up really' and is considered an emerging theme that has been an important minor/illuminative epiphanic moment as she resumes and retreats to the canvas. Anne takes a deep breath and spends a little more time just mixing the brush in the paint. I think she is hesitant and sense some tension here.

Anne has selected a very thin brush and begins to apply very fine details to the work, once again using black to outline the profile. Again, we can see a pattern of returning to small details when tension is present. She begins to paint almost immediately, but her movements reveal a pattern.

JULIE: *Who you are might be what other people see.*

ANNE: *Maybe everyone goes through it—questioning. [Anne continues on the theme of ‘growing up’.] I had to do a lot of self-reflection and just relax a bit and not take it [things] so seriously and not try and be anyone; and just be whoever I was. It’s the same with a teaching style; you just have to find your own way and not try to copy everyone else’s. You can gain ideas from everyone and you can gain ideas about the sort of person you want to be as well. For instance, I like people who laugh a lot, so I think it’s kind of good to be that sort of person. But you can’t force yourself to be that sort of person. I think that it is a good thing to tell kids as well [to relax and find your own way]—especially in the art room. They may go in the art room and think, ‘Ah, I can’t draw or paint.’ It is about telling that it is about them expressing themselves. You don’t have to be a good artist or anything.*

During this story Anne has added more details. White dots are added to the yellow decorative features (Figure 9.9).



Figure 9.9: White and yellow details

Questioning to find meaning about who you are, and what sort of teacher you are is located in a cumulative epiphanic narrative from Anne. Relating to people and friends and their attributes and characteristics gives a summative account for her rationale on maturity from her experiences and learning. Anne works quickly, continually rotating between colours and brushes with ease. The concentration in the depth of her reflection is not compromised by the rotating brushes, paint application, tones or styles. For instance, she adds a new tone to the skin of the mask.

Darker in tone, she chooses a shade of tan to add to some sections bestowing a stylised motif to the profile. Red in contrast is then added to create lips (Figure 9.10).



Figure 9.10: Red lips

ANNE: *I think there is a lot of peer pressure and it's just hard to break through that. They [students] might think, 'I don't want to look "silly" if I do that performance or wear that ...' I think maybe one has to grow out of that stage. I think you also learn a lot about who you are through having close friends and relationships. You learn about 'you' through relationships, because I guess you've got to let that other person know who you are, so, a lot of yourself comes out.*

I have learnt a lot through uni as well. In the first year I really had no idea about much at all, and I thought I did. Now I look back, I think, 'Oh My God.' I just know so much more. Who I am. How to teach and just more about everything, you know? And all the people in my course—I know more about them too.

Anne has covered many topics and themes during the interview. Anne discusses and develops a theme arguing relationships enhance understanding self and are important to her professional role as teacher (see above). She also conveys a lovely reflective, metacognitive and considered final statement. These are based on cumulative epiphanic experiences and we both work intensely and for quite a time without speaking. We are both silently painting and reflecting on Anne's perceptions and the experiences from which they have emerged. Anne's hair is falling in her eyes but she is not bothered.

Anne continues to add two more to the series of mythical creatures. She begins with the silver winged image. (Figure 9.11).

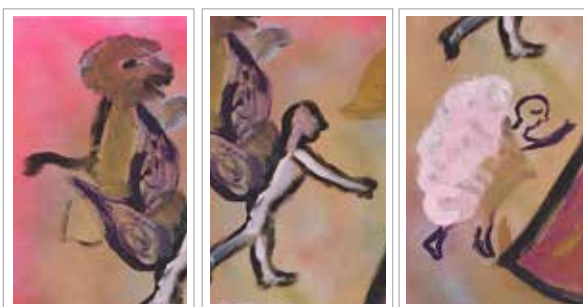


Figure 9.11: small creatures are added

Silence is sustained for a few minutes during which Anne has moved to the top left corner to paint small images; unrecognisable creatures. They are mystical and alien creatures to the canvas. They hover and fly in the corner of the canvas behind the mask-like face. I find these images particularly menacing. They are transparent and seem to enter the painting from the left completely uninvited. She has moved back and forth many times to apply more paint to the brush, but now she is still and she observes her work and smiles.

JULIE: *I think I'm done.*

ANNE: *That's good. Can I just let go and paint?*

With this new freedom, Anne smiles and brushes her hair from her face. There are windows in the studio that frame a landscape of hills in the distance and for a moment I catch Anne looking out at the landscape. She is distant and thinking deeply. Many preservice teachers experience sudden insights (McDonald 2009) which are connected to and flow from daily experiences. I reflect on the conversation with Anne and moments of epiphany. Although Joyce may have coined this specific term he is not alone in having epiphanic experiences, nor was he the first to have them. I can see that now Anne chooses to add to the canvas and finish it to her liking, but now, with our conversation complete, I turn the camera off.

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My art-work in response to Anne



Figure 9.12: *The passionate painter*, Julie, acrylic on canvas

In the tradition of Eisner (1994) and Palmer (1998) I have listened to stories and related experiences. Palmer listened to stories from teachers and argued that all teachers are different. Experiences, perspectives and forces converge to shape the teacher and their practice. He comments, ‘the slow pace of my own self-emergence’ (p. 24) was important in shaping connections of integrity, identity and self-hood. Expressing through art-making as Eisner (1994) suggests, illuminates Anne’s experiences, perspectives and may shape her teaching. She is passionate and seeks these connections, but searching for the essence of the teacher within takes time (Palmer 1998). The interview has explored and traced in a personal and public way some of the characteristics in the pursuit of becoming a professional teacher. In our time together, my art work is an attempt to uncover and rummage through the stories of Anne to search and trace the teacher within.

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CHAPTER 10

David is quite a shy serious person. David has studied art and originally wanted to pursue a career in art in the western suburbs of Melbourne where he lives. His father owns a business, but David's interests at school were always in the arts and he does not want to move into his father's business as a career. David wants to teach art in schools, but is keen to have the skills to work as a generalist classroom teacher as well. Although quiet, David is popular and has made many friends during the Bachelor of Education course. His parents are very supportive of his choice in becoming a teacher. David is close to his family, but has had some negative experiences while at school and as an adolescent.

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David

Resilience

Self-directed learning and aspirations

Work experience

Prior experience in the field

Openness to new experiences

Friendship

Learning about indigenous Australians

Connecting with 'the other' is about problem solving

Parent aspirations

Justice and fairness

Constructivism

Making your achievements and ideas public

Content / discipline expertise

Family values

Social and ethical responsibility for those less privileged



Figure 10.1: *The lure of the canvas*, David, acrylic and chalk on canvas

Far from being methods that provide possibilities for merely meaning and clarity, arts-based methods in this study sustain an autonomy and universality for the participant. So too, there are other important existential elements which are observed, heard and felt associated with this art-based methodology. Greene (1995) suggests, ‘At the very least, participatory involvement with the many forms of art can enable us to *see* more in our experience, to *hear* more on normally unheard frequencies, to *become conscious* of what daily routines have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed’ (p. 123).

David’s commentary as data also has such features for me to consider in the content of the stories that are seen, heard and felt. Although these stories are rich in data and possibility, it is important to note that I, as the researcher, I am conscious of the inevitable biases I bring to the research and as I am both participant and researcher, I try to remain as objective as possible. I want to describe actions, patterns and processes of participants and record these in a true and factual sense.

David is shy and during the interview is consistently ‘lured’ back to painting when parts of the story become difficult. I am grateful. David thinks deeply and so, when reflecting, he chooses

to speak or not. I respect the unspoken—for it is then when we can note—it is time to move on. Lured away by the canvas, David takes on a level of sensitivity and purpose for the canvas.

To begin, David applies some spray paint to the canvas. He chooses green and yellow and applies these colours to opposite sides of the canvas. Orange ink is then thrown and splashes as it hits the canvas. Now, the combination of colours has been placed as a backdrop, he adds to the canvas. At this stage, we are ready to start and we begin the interview. David tugs at a cap he is wearing and then places the opened paint container near him and selects two brushes. It is obvious that he is ready to begin, although he has a very serious expression on his face. I feel that he will take this experience seriously. He does not smile. His eyes are covered by his cap when he tips his head forward and he does this often. He understands the process of the interview and we have talked about the questions that I might ask him and so, I begin. I ask him the first interview question.

The interview begins.

JULIE: *What do you understand mindshift might look like? Do you have any ideas about what mindshift might be?*

He has pushed up the sleeves, pulls at the hem of his dust coat, scratches his back and has picked up a palette while listening. He then answers using a brush in his hand to point mid-air and tap on his hand when articulating important phrases and suggests,

DAVID: *It's about different experiences. It's about the way you think about things a bit differently after you learn something more specific.*

JULIE: *So, has there been any instance that you can recall, where that has occurred?*

DAVID: [David looked forward and beyond me as if looking into the distance.] *Maybe after year 12 when I was a student at a secondary school, I slacked off a bit. I did an IT course after year 12 and I didn't really like it after about six months and then I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I wanted to do art, but I didn't get in, so I just 'bumbled' around in part-time work and I didn't tell anyone about it ... but I didn't get in!*

David began to push up his sleeves. I felt he was tense. Looking down towards the canvas, he pulled at the back of his collar. He then he bent forward to scratch his leg. He pulled at the back of his collar again. He seemed unsettled. It is interesting to note here that he hadn't begun to paint, and there had been some interesting observations. While speaking, he waved the brush and held out his hands open and forward. I felt he was clearly disappointed.

JULIE: *So, was that reflective time?*

DAVID: *Ah, in a way, but it was a bit of a waste, but it got to me, in my mind at the point that I would have to do something. And if I wanted to do what I wanted to do, then I have to do it myself. So, I applied for another course and got in the next year. So, that was about a year and a half before I got into a media and design course.*

More relaxed after articulating a number of events, David resolves the narrative by indicating the outcome. The retelling of the events signifies a cumulative epiphany and a theme of resilience. Sustained aspirations underpinned by a sense of self-directed learning enable success for David. Meanwhile, he has finally applied some paint to his brush and begins to apply it to the lower left of the canvas. His movements are more relaxed too; they are slow, and he increasingly tends to hesitate before painting and before speaking.

JULIE: *So, what did you do then?*

DAVID: *So, after I did that course for a year and a half, I worked in the field for a little bit but I found it hard to get into a lot of places—you need a lot of experience in the area and I didn't have a lot of experience because I had only just come out of the course.*

JULIE: *So, how did you get experience?*

DAVID: *Well, my dad's got his own business, and a lot of his friends own their own business, so I spoke with them and asked them if they had any ideas or if I could give them a hand with advertising and designing their own leaflets for their business. So, I got experience like that. The last thing that I did was some screen print for a company. That was just part time. I did apply for a full-time job after my course, but they said I was over-qualified.*

David sees the value of experience in learning and I note this too as a theme from his experiences. The tension associated with this epiphany indicates a minor/illuminative epiphanic moment. The paradox described in his story is frank and he frowns and throws his arm out gently appealing towards me. Sometimes this type of gesture is noticeable in the classroom when children are learning to read. When they come to a word they don't know, they look up from the book, turn to the teacher and knowing they must not ask the word, appeal silently for assistance. This is termed an 'appeal'. Similarly in the case of David above, the signs were there that this was a case of a silent 'appeal'.

DAVID: *I didn't understand.*

While observing David, this study has revealed that painting may have quickly become an escape route to distract him from the tougher parts of his story. For David, the canvas is a lure and safe space when grappling with these early difficult stories. Returning to the canvas seems a place for safe retreat when confronting his challenges and he soon begins too to articulate in a more enthusiastic and effusive manner when approaching the topic below.

DAVID: *I went overseas to the United States for five or six months. I went to a summer camp and worked with kids over there. So when I was over there I liked working with kids and I thought this could be a good idea and be something I like so perhaps I could teach. There were about 300 kids at this camp. I was in charge of a group of kids and you look after about six or seven kids to yourself. You get one or two days off.*

JULIE: *So, it was possibly a rehearsal for teaching.*

DAVID: *Yes, and I was in charge of the art department, so that was good. I did some fishing because I like fishing. I would go to the giant lake in Maine in the north east of the state near the border of Canada, then, I just travelled around. I came back early because I had to apply through VTAC.¹*

Prior experience in the field has been articulated by David and by doing so indicates this has been an important event in his pursuit of teaching. Prior experience has emerged as a theme at this stage. The way in which he describes the learning from the lived experience is noted as a relived epiphany. During the conversation, David has relaxed into the art practice.

However, while talking, David is still focused and a more complex image appears (Figure 10.2) and he has not deviated from the tone and shape of the original spherical pattern he began.



Figure 10.2: Tones added to the spherical image

DAVID: *So I got into this course.²*

JULIE: *I suppose that was pivotal.*

DAVID: *Yes, because I had changed, so that was good. Also SWIRL³ program. I did it with a friend. I met a few new interesting mates on the bus on the way up.*

1 Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre.

2 Bachelor of Education (P-12).

3 The SWIRL program 'Story Writing In Remote Locations' is a practicum based literacy program offered in the Bachelor of Education at Victoria University and located in schools in remote areas of central Australia.

JULIE: *Were they from this university?*

DAVID: *Most were, but there were a few from Australian National University and I think a few from Edith Cowen Uni as well and it was good. Yes, it was good up there. It opened my eyes up to a few new and different experiences. I could try out a few different areas of life in a way. I don't want to be stuck in Melbourne all my life. I have a few friends that work in office buildings or behind counters and stuff. They are different to me. I couldn't do it. I want to get out.*

JULIE: *So, SWIRL was significant?*

DAVID: *Yes it was. I was different. Just being with different friendship groups to hang out, and catch up with on the weekends.*

David is open to new experiences and meeting others; these are themes which emerge. Friendships provide a way of monitoring and learning about his possible future aspirations. Learning stemming from a relived epiphanic event is evident in this narrative.

JULIE: *I guess you are in position to look back on this and reflect. Did anything significant happen on SWIRL that stood out?*

DAVID: *I noticed not only about how indigenous people live, but just about the experience itself. We didn't even know anyone when we 'rocked up' in the town. We saw a tribe of people in the town and we didn't know the people, but when they saw the bus, they just jumped on it.*

Learning about indigenous groups through experiences such as SWIRL is a popular program and important to preservice teacher learning on the topic of Indigenous education and emerges from David too, as an important learning moment.

JULIE: *Anything regarding teaching?*

DAVID: *Connecting with a troubled kid with really short attention. I was playing on a guitar and he came and started playing drums. He was about six years old and it was just the way that we sort of ... Yeah, it was good.*

David stopped before completing the story. I imagine the word 'connected' is missing at the conclusion of his story. At this point he placed his hands out as if he were balancing something in them. The hand movement provided a gestural meaning of 'connectedness', which I feel was implied within the commentary.

JULIE: *What is it that maybe connected or connects with others? If you had to tell people that this is how you connect with people what would you say?*

DAVID: *I think it is just trial and error or maybe try one way and if that doesn't work try another way and maybe keep trying. Maybe ask the people you can't really connect with 'Why?' Yes! Seeing different things.*

David is a problem solver. Learning ways in which to approach the authentic problem is prompted here by a tension of connecting with a small student. David's explanation for solving the issue, I think, reveals a minor/illuminative epiphanic moment.

JULIE: *What about your earlier life, before uni and SWIRL?*

DAVID: *At high school, I was always the artist or the drawer. I used to do the school newspaper. I used to do caricatures of the teachers and things like that. I was always known as the kid who draws. In a way, the last couple of years ... well, the reason I wasn't ... Well, I could have tried harder. But looking back, I knew I just needed a folio to get into what I wanted to do in my area. In my mum's eyes, I should have been a doctor or a paediatrician because I was good with children, but I knew myself and I didn't like science or maths.*

JULIE: *You weren't interested?*

DAVID: *They just said, 'Do what you want to do.'*

Parent aspirations are important and a new emerging for David as he tells of his mother's ideas for his future career. It is a theme that is of interest to David at this stage. After a pause, David stands back briefly to examine his work; this is a time for thinking.

DAVID: *When I was 13, I was very conscientious at school. One day a kid got expelled. On one occasion at school, he pushed me and punched me to the playground and I stood up. All these other guys looked, but I didn't even touch him and after that they put me in the hallway [as punishment]. I think that was pivotal.*

JULIE: *So, what were the implications after that?*

DAVID: *Well, I don't know. Every time I saw him, I was a bit nervous and scared. I knew that he was friends of these other 'big' characters, so that made me a bit scared.*

Justice and fairness prevail in the narrative above and this is an important theme. David grabs the back of his cap to adjust it. This has been a prevalent gesture at times when he attempts to refocus his thoughts and is enabling a relived epiphany. He then continues a new story with a social justice theme again and becomes immediately quite focused.

DAVID: *One day I was mugged at knife point and they were 'big' guys in year 12 and from a high school—it was only \$5 but ... I was pretty scared. Because they were big guys and I was only 12 or 13. I was by myself and they said, 'Give me your wallet.'*

Since beginning this interview, David has now completed what I think will become a significant feature of his artwork. David became focused on a circular motif, which he worked on for 18 minutes. The impressive pattern drew him into and pulled him back in a persistent manner and he moved the brush so the colour evolved into a smooth image and colours merged. This technique created an image which is reminiscent of a deep and penetrating representation—perhaps of a chasm or abyss and consequently draws the viewer into its orbital sphere. It is impressive and he returned to it many times to encircle it with colour repeatedly. Typically, 'expressionistic', it has overtones of evoking feeling through features of brush stroke and use of colour, in the researcher's estimation, not unlike *The Scream* by expressionist, Edvard Munch. The colour is bold and the work is deeply personal. It has evolved through an unconscious expressive act, unfolding and manifesting into a pervasive image for David and me as the viewer.

The image that David has created (Figure 10.3) has expressive features and sits as a temporary gateway to the overall art work which will be revealed on completion. The motif is significant to the overall work.



Figure 10.3: shaded spherical image

David wants to change the topic and the following stories are from his younger years. They are relived moments that track his learning—relived epiphanies—and they are chosen by David to reflect on times, people and approaches that have influenced his learning.

DAVID: *I've always enjoyed art ... since ... My grandfather, he was from Slovakia and he always painted. He died when I was young, but I just remember doing lots of art, and so that was good.*

David uses hands to explain. One hand and forms a cupped gesture with his hands in front of his body, which is still slightly bent while painting.

DAVID: *Yeah, and he always different sorts of paintings like snow-capped mountains and things like that.*

David becomes inaudible ... I have trouble hearing him and feel he does not want me to hear this. He is embarrassed when discussing this. He quickly moves on to a more comfortable topic and there is a visible relief to his posture and he straightens and states,

DAVID: *I've always liked sport.*

JULIE: *So, sport has you have connections with your learning or what learning might look like for you?*

DAVID: *We always used to play basketball at school. We played before school, recess and after school. I then went back to shoot hoops.*

David smiles and his painting becomes more rhythmic and mindless, painting over the same spot again and again in vertical strokes.

DAVID: *I don't know why I wanted to do this, maybe because I wanted to improve different aspects of basketball.*

JULIE: *So, for self-improvement? You still do that—play basketball?*

DAVID: *Yes I still play once a week. It's good. It is good to catch up too as I don't see much of my friends that play basketball these days, so it's good to catch up and see them once a week. I think I learn [from this] that being in a team is also important. Having a 'back-up', 'team building' and just ... learning from others as well. Maybe you learn about yourself as well. What you could perhaps say if someone is shooting really well, just for example in basketball maybe if I'm not shooting that well, then maybe I'll adopt his mentality or different style or the way he does it and I might be able to use that'. That teaches as well.*

David indicated a link with the concept of building on knowledge and skills. The connection to constructivism is an important indicator in David's learning. Reflecting on his grandfather and sporting experiences which are collaborative and contextualised are an example of what learning is for David. Constructivism is an important emergent theme in this section of David's narrative. Learning, for David, has not operated in isolation. There is quite a sustained silence.

JULIE: *So, are there any main one or two significant events involving learning? If so, where did it happen and how did it happen?*

David stands upright to talk immediately. He places his left hand on his hip and holds the brush by the tip loosely indicating he is not going to use this to paint for a time.

DAVID: *In year 10 or 11—a visual communication class. We had to just draw a picture in coloured pencils. I could draw and I drew a heavy metal band. I drew a picture of a guitarist. It came out really, really well and I was really happy with it and I had really never drawn with such details in pencils when drawing before, so I just kept doing it. I liked the use of these and I was sort of good at it. It came out the way I wanted it.*

David has an aptitude for painting and this is suggested in the minor/illuminative epiphany above. When telling stories in art he uses form, tone and shapes boldly as a vehicle to express key concepts. When articulating stories he talks quietly. He seldom changes in the tone during the interview. He talks using minimal description and his conversation is serious, sullen and stilted and his movements are restrained. This new topic presents somewhat of a shift (Figure 10.4) and is reflected in the new subject on the canvas. Thick black lines take shape that develop and reflect an unexpected volume which diminishes the spherical shape. Rapidly, the expressive character of colour and shape brings a new code of textual representation. My senses are stirred and the meaning seems dislocated from the former design.

It is interesting to observe that he begins a new element to the canvas by applying black lines and a large green shape. It is dynamic and ‘strange’ and in a stark contrast to the previous feature he has created (Figure 10.4).



Figure 10.4: Black lines and green feature

JULIE: *So, you knew at that point that you were good at it.*

DAVID: *Yeah.*

JULIE: *So, how did you know you were good?*

DAVID: *I don't know [David pulls at his hat again]. I just like it myself and then other people commented as well which helped cement it in my mind and they said, 'That looks good.' So I guess, what some people think looks good other people might think ... [David then shrugs his shoulders.]*

JULIE: *It is a question of aesthetics really isn't it?*

DAVID: *I just thought if these guys think it's good ... they like it ... then ...*

JULIE: *It's funny that we need this reaffirmation?*

DAVID: *Some people like different styles and I guess it is up to you.*

JULIE: *What about, in terms of traditional university?*

DAVID: *What I do here? Folios, I guess at the end of semester when you put a lot of work into it and I guess it does pay off if you get a good mark. What you've got to show and what you've got to talk about. I think that important to show others and yourself what you have become over the years. You can't remember everything that you do so it's good to keep note.*

When David shared his art work with peers they responded positively. By creating and making his ideas public he developed a relationship with an audience. The relationship provides experience in which the audience can observe a mix of colour, texture, ideas and shapes (Eisner 1994). These multiple forms of feedback indicate cumulative epiphanic learning moments. Sharing ideas and making these public is an important theme which supports David's learning.

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At this stage, I became a bit clumsy with the paint and accidentally threw some towards David just missing him. He looked up from under his peaked cap and smiled, indeed almost laughed. He did not move away and was not disturbed at this event. I, on the other hand, apologised a great deal. This was a funny, unexpected moment. I moved quickly and attempted to wipe up the paint and noticed there was some on David. He began to laugh slightly and look down at the floor being cleaned. He turned his lip and his smile created a look of undecidedness. Interestingly, he looked at his painting too, from further back this time. He reviewed his work and looked over the whole picture before him. He added more again. Painting here and there, small additions, particularly to the right side where he obviously decided there was something that needed to be added.

DAVID: *The other day when we did an ICT [information communication technology] subject. We did few images while looking at IT [information technology] and art images and learning about different ideas and ways. They don't really tell you in these subjects how to teach it, they just teach you how to do it. A few people complain about it. I think it's kind of good because then you get your own crafts refined and can think about how you would do it yourself. So, watching the lecturer or the teacher then you can think in your head, 'No, I'll do it this way.' Those subjects were helpful in a way. One of the subjects offered tutes online, like You Tube; that was pretty handy.*

Pedagogical content knowledge is considered important for preservice teachers. As David relates this story he reveals a mindshift concerning pedagogy and content knowledge and I note it as an emerging theme. David stands back again to review work. He points to the bottom of the work

swinging his finger across an imaginary line above the canvas as if indicating there is something missing and he moves quickly to apply paint to the brush and add colour. It is interesting that he has painted from the top to the bottom in a very systematic way. It is a comical landscape; a backdrop to something that is missing in the foreground. David does not add the foreground or middle ground and it remains empty with colourful ‘naive’ mountains in the landscape.

JULIE: *This has been interesting getting to know your thoughts, for instance, the story about your grandfather.*

DAVID: *My dad's, dad was Albanian. He came out to Australia when he was young. I don't know too much about him. He married my grandma and she died when my dad was only seven. So he was reared by his grandparents. Aunty Mary, she used to take in boarders ... she lived in a regional area and other country towns and owned country pubs. She would take in struggling people and help them get their act together. I really respected her for that. She had a daughter. I think she had her when she was very young, at maybe 18 years old or so. She was slightly disabled in some way. She was—like a genius, but didn't have the social skills to go with it. So, she looked after her all her life.*

He pauses and reviews his work from the right of the canvas. While he pauses slightly I can tell he is thinking. I consider the respect David has for family values along with the social and ethical responsibility for those less privileged. Considered a minor/illuminative epiphany, these themes articulated are relevant to the mindshift of David while reflecting and are noted.

DAVID: *I'll just fill up this last space.*

David continues to work for a little while longer on his art work. Once completed, I trust he has become more aware of his achievement while sharing in this meaningful multimodal experience. Eisner (1994) considers sharing experience by showing others, or as he terms it making ‘public’, a meaningful sensory way of illuminating the human and personal experience. ‘In order to achieve a social dimension in human experience, a means must be found to carry what is private forward onto the public realm’ (p. 39). To take this concept further, Eisner points out the cognitive associations and devices that individuals implement to make experiences or concepts public. He terms these devices ‘forms of representation’ (Eisner 1994, p. 39). ‘Forms of representation are the devices that humans use to make public conceptions that are privately held’ (p. 39). I ask David to paint and, in doing so, am asking for a representational form with the distinct purpose of sharing social, personal, professional and cognitive meaning. Art is just the device to make public his experience. The form is not important in this debate as ‘the public status may take the form of words, pictures, music, mathematics, dance and the like’ (Eisner 1994, p. 39). Folios too, as David suggests, are indeed an example of a publicly sharing cognitive and social dimension in his development.

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My art work in response to David



Figure 10.5: *A clear view*, Julie, acrylic on canvas

Historically, we can find development of major ideas regarding the sensory system and intellect. My response for the viewer/reader is to consider the methodology that enables meaningful reflection. I attempt to ask what the role of storytelling is in this process. Maxine Greene argues on this point, and feels that storytelling can add to understanding identity and agency and states, ‘We are finding out how storytelling helps, how drawing helps; but we need to go further to create situations in which something new can be added each day to a learner’s life’ (Greene 1995, p. 41). The intention is to participate in order to see and hear and offer a clearer view of David. My art work is in response to David’s art work and narrative and the energy and learning this inspires using this methodological context.

CHAPTER 11

In the following narrative, we have the story/picture of an Australian female named Lisa. Although she was born in Australia, her family is of Indian descent. Lisa is in her early 20s and arrived in Melbourne from Sydney to complete her teacher education degree. She made this move on her own and found accommodation in a small country town 70 km north-west of Melbourne. Lisa travels each day to university by train. She chose to live in a small community as she thought this might in some way replicate the supportive friendly environment she had left as she planned to meet new friends through sport, church and community activities. Lisa has met many people from the community and has requested her next school placement to be in the town or at least in a nearby rural school. Lisa left Sydney and a supportive close family and community. Lisa is navigating her way and developing firm ideas. What follows is her story of small personal accounts that act as ‘search lights’ to illuminate her learning.

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Lisa

A sense of social justice and activism

Teaching is respectful and requires sensitivity

Persistence

Reflecting on practice

Education as emancipation from oppression

Maturity

Political, social and cultural shift

Philosophy based on research

Risk taking in learning

Metacognition and inquisitiveness



Figure 11.1: *Doing it now!* Lisa, acrylic on canvas

Stories are like search lights and spotlights; they brighten up parts of the stage while leaving the rest in darkness. Were they to illuminate the whole of the stage evenly, they would not be of any use. Their task, after all, is to ‘cure’ the stage, making it ready for the viewers’ visual and intellectual consumption; to create a picture one can absorb, comprehend and retain out of the anarchy of blots and stains one can neither take in nor make sense of.

(Bauman 2004, p. 17)

If seeking to recall learning moments to make meaning of teacher education, then it makes sense to pursue stories as Bauman suggests. This means a commitment to a narrative praxis that is transformative and inquiring. When inquiring into human culture and conditions in this instance, there is a scholarly approach to the ethnographic process, where there is a rigorous circling between articulated stories and artful practice. Coming to understand the participant by observing, listening, recording, drawing on art making and integrally reading gestures to create a ‘holistic picture one can absorb’ (Bauman 2004, p. 17) will rely on selecting from a ‘whole stage’ of experiences or what Habermas terms ‘life world’ (1984). This combination of methods assist the struggle to understand the human condition and forges encounter, thought and actions in a

reflective space that is bounded by social conditions and practice. Insights we can gather from participants become more meaningful and analysis of experience is possible.

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After discussing the processes of the research task ahead, Lisa begins the painting by covering the canvas with colourful pink spray. Lisa takes a brush and applies an overlay of colour to the lower right corner. This is not evident in the final art work as she paints over the colour during the conversation.

The interview begins.

LISA: *I think that I will just do coloured things everywhere and then just prints over the top. I don't really have a plan.*

JULIE: *That's right. It's about the talk. We will do the talk while we are painting. The first thing I want to ask you about is: what is your understanding of mindshift? What is your interpretation of mindshift and what it means to you when teaching?*

Choosing the colour mauve Lisa brushes back and forth on the same spot rapidly.

LISA: *From going to uni to teaching? ... I don't know ... Right now ... I don't know if I am going to answer it right ... but, right now it's okay to fail, but next year you've got to have all these high standards. I don't know. I just think 'mindshift' is between 'doing it now' is like a trial and doing it next year as a professional ... I'm not sure how to answer that.*

Lisa stops to talk. However, as her response progresses Lisa returns to the painting using the same rapid movements. The rapid short movements of brush work are rushed and appear to match the urgency in searching for an answer. For example, she hesitates in her reply and states, 'From going to uni to teaching? ... I don't know ... Right now ... I don't know if I am going to answer it right ...' While struggling and grappling with this question she seeks eye contact seven times (sustaining at times) and returns to the hard strokes placed on the painting. The eye contact and gestures transpire to indicate an appeal for assistance and clarification.

JULIE: *Can you think of a time when you did undertake some learning and you did have quite significant learning? Can you think of any time when that might have happened? It could be at any time when at uni or before uni.*

Lisa looks more at ease with this question; she gathers paint and applies it calmly. Relaxing now, she moves her weight to one leg and her arms hang loosely when applying the paint. She tips some more paint on to the palette, perhaps to give herself a short interval to think and reassess her

painting and the question. She certainly is more settled and comfortable once she begins to talk on the topic of a holiday camp.

LISA: *Any out of uni experiences?*

JULIE: *Or before ...*

LISA: *I think my big learning experience was when I joined a charity organisation,¹ which is an organisation for disadvantaged kids. The organisation run camps; they run holiday camps, which usually coincide with the school holidays. They take kids away if they are from a disadvantaged area or minority groups. I just did my last one in Sydney with Sudanese kids—refugee kids. Or it could be with Indigenous kids. All my other ones have been with Indigenous kids that live out in the bush—or ... well not in the bush, but in rural areas. So, I think that was a huge learning experience for me, because I think just in terms of how, and it's been ongoing, to relate to kids. You think like—be their friend and be cool like them; but that's not really what they respect in the end. I see them valuing the leaders on camp right, and I see a lot of them valuing the more 'nerdy' leader, who they, they have more respect for them.*

Lisa is smiling while stating this, and is slightly embarrassed at disclosing this information. This has been a minor/illuminative epiphanic reflection for Lisa with a strong theme of social justice and this exemplified by her volunteer work and activism.

During the above conversation Lisa is completely settled into the art making. She has reached this stage very quickly. She selects colours, mixes and applies the paint rapidly and I particularly notice she takes great care regarding where it is applied. She seldom looks up and is comfortable with her head down and watches the canvas as if following the lines and the movement of her brush strokes watching for something to appear.

Lisa looks up, she is smiling and laughing. She now holds the palette in her left hand, while painting with the brush in her right hand, and mixing purple and pink as she applies it to the canvas. Her brush and palette are balanced in each hand which in a way indicates she has command of these tools. At times she talks facing me, with elbows bent, arms relaxed, she holds the tools in cupped hands and stands symmetrical when talking. There is a gentle honesty about this gesture.

JULIE: *I wonder why?*

1 Lisa refers here to a national educational charity organisation for disengaged students aged 8–12 years old.

LISA: *I don't know. I kind of like ... [Lisa stops]. But they [referring to the students] are all so ... unpredictable. Because when the 'nerdy leader' is being his true self, they don't always value that either—it just depends. I learnt that ... I don't know ... [pauses as she thinks a little longer] even when ... and this really hurt me at the start, because the kids wouldn't take to you [meaning herself]. Instantly at the start, I felt offended and you can't really blame them and especially from the background that they're from. I learnt that you have to keep showing them love and that's what they will respond to in the end. Even though they will push you away at the start—keep trying with them; and I think that was my big learning was to keep trying with them and not be offended.*

Denzin may suggest this story to be a cumulative and epiphanic process. Lisa indicates a growing knowledge and understanding of relationships as an important insight into pedagogical and metacognitive process resulting from live experiences with children. Lisa, struggling with language and using terms such as 'blame' and 'them' and 'offended' maybe luring us towards themes of respect, resilience and sensitivity.

Lisa continues to paint without stopping. It is a large canvas and perhaps she is concerned that she will not be able to cover all of it with paint. Lisa doesn't look worried and continues to look relaxed as she talks. I notice that each story she offers now becomes longer.

Lisa uses predominantly pink and orange. She continues with these colours; mixing, eventually painting the whole canvas—a wonderful pink and orange blend until it covers the canvas (see Figure 11. 2).



Figure 11.2: Orange and pink are chosen to fill the canvas

JULIE: *So do you mean in a resilient way or persisting?*

LISA: *Yes both. Be resilient—have a tough skin. Don't take it personally and keep trying with persistence and, like, they will come to eventually, it may not be then, that won't always be the case, but even later in life, they will think that person kept ...*

JULIE: [Finishing the sentence] ... *That you never gave up.*

LISA: *Yeah! That was my learning.*

JULIE: *So did that happen to you?*

LISA: *At the start, on my first camp, I didn't know what I was doing wrong. It wasn't with all the kids obviously, just one kid, and I'm really sensitive, so, it really got to me. I don't know but I just observed others and their methods. They were always kind, not that I wasn't kind. I think I just joked with them and then I missed getting that respect from them that they had for their leaders. I don't know. Does that sort of answer your question?*

Lisa's commentary above is told in a relaxed and conversational manner. There is a strong theme of 'persistence' as a preservice teacher within this discussion. I also feel the comfortable environment is enabling a degree of reflection not accessible in regular conversation, presenting a minor/illuminative moment of epiphanic process.

JULIE: *I'm really interested in the most significant moments and what contributed to them and that whole idea is interesting, because I don't know where these instances come from and how you set that situation up.*

Lisa begins to paint and is tilting the brush on an angle to maximise the application of the paint. This movement places large amounts on at a time and she quickly uses all the paint on the palette and moves to pour more on.

LISA: *I don't know. When I was a kid, I experienced [Lisa takes a gasp of air] bullying, as most kids do and being at a school with mainly Anglo-Saxon kids as well as Indigenous kids and being different because I was Indian. And going through that and always having to justifying myself to others, I think I just said, 'That's it! I'm not taking it anymore.' I think it came from family support and we had a rocky upbringing, I guess. It also came from church. I guess I was with great people there and they kept encouraging me to be myself and I just learnt that had to decide that I'm just me, and I'm going to make my own choices and not care what other people think.*

Making her way has included experiences which have shaped Lisa's actions and she has a sense of self-determination and emancipation and this is a strong theme which resonates during the story. She presumes learning involves making socio-cultural adjustments too. For example, she states, 'I'm going to make my own choices.' I am reminded that Maria Montessori argues 'that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being' (Montessori 1967, p. 8). Montessori's (1967) research into the nature of learning in young children indicated from the results of her experiments that, 'not

just school, or educational method, but MAN himself: MAN² whose true nature is shown in his capacity for free development, whose greatness became visible directly mental oppression ceased to bear upon him, to limit his inner work and weigh down his spirit' (Montessori 1967, p. 8). The commentary above has expressed with emotion and is raw. It has been the existence of natural traumatic human encounters which have contributed to Lisa's realisation and learning and therefore I have noted such as a major epiphany.

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The claim made by Lisa resonates and is strengthened by the immediate return to painting. There is a short silence before she settles back into her work and I note there is calm acknowledgement between us of her story and outcome of the life experience.

JULIE: *That was a nice outcome.*

LISA: *Absolutely; to be myself and know that whatever I am it is okay. I don't know how that ...*
[thinking deeply, Lisa pauses and decides not to continue]

JULIE: *When did that happen?*

LISA: [Lisa continues quickly] *That happened when I was in year 11 or 12* [Lisa remembers 'when' it happened], *and I had just actually shifted schools and the judgements made were a lot less. I was in a girls' school and I changed in Year 11/12 to a co-ed school. In the girls' school the teachers knew me and had labelled me. I was the class clown and ... I don't know, I wasn't nasty or rude, but teachers don't always like the loud kids* [Lisa sniggers here as if she has been mischievous], *and so I decided to change schools and at this one I think that no one obviously knew me at this school and it was like a clean slate. I don't know it just changed ... It was people and values and just growing up.*

Lisa's approach to art and her talk here is carefully monitored and slows at times. For instance, when describing herself as the 'class clown', Lisa slows noticeably. Her speech is hesitant and even stops after each statement for a short length of time. She no longer paints and stands still and erect, looking straight at me as she states 'I was the class clown' and there is an emphasis placed on 'was'. It is an admission of 'lived' experience, identifying shifts and changes while

2 The word MAN is reproduced and capitalised by Montessori in the original text. [Montessori wrote in Italian. *The absorbent mind* was based on lectures she gave during the Second World War in India. She delivered her lectures in Italian and her son Mario translated into English for her English-speaking audience. Later she used his translation notes to translate back into Italian. The English edition published in 1949 is a retranslation back into English from this. 'Uomo' in Italian is used much as 'man' is in English to mean either an adult male person or as a synonym for 'mankind' or human beings generally. Montessori in her writings often used the term in this latter sense.]

at secondary school. This claim prompts me to note an important moment, for it resembles a cumulative epiphany. Her hands cup her brush and palette in front of her body in a position that resembles pleading for assistance. Her moves and speech slow and are now more contemplative. She is embarrassed and I nod for her to know I believe her story to be one which addresses the issue and theme of maturation. Once this validation is acknowledged, Lisa returns to paint.

There were other critical words used in this story, such as ‘nasty’ and ‘rude’. During this part of the story, Lisa turned her face closer to the left corner of the painting, even moving around the edge of the table to paint from an angle out of view of the camera and her body shifted side on. I can only regard this movement and emergence back to the canvas with a hint of embarrassment and her art making as her escape.

On the words ‘just growing up’, she glances up and dropping her lower lip, as if feeling a little guilty with the admission.

JULIE: *So, you think you can identify a number of things in the context of where you were?*

LISA: *Absolutely.*

JULIE: *So, you’ve described a number of events. Are there other events, more recent perhaps, that contributed to your learning? You might be able to think through now and have some theories on why this is the case?*

LISA: *I recently, I don’t know if this is relevant. Have you heard of Beyond Blue?*

JULIE: *Yes.*

LISA: *[Some teachers and] I took the kids from a local Primary school to a festival. The whole school attended and we were broken in to three groups and one of the sessions we attended was a ‘Hip hop’ dance session. When we walked in and there were some cool looking ‘guys’ ... or whatever, mostly Indigenous, not all, and they were doing their own thing. They addressed the class—the school and they were saying what we were going to do—like learn to dance and they kept telling us to ‘be confident in yourself’ and all this encouragement. And then they did a couple of dances and they asked us to dance for them. They... and they were cool guys, so the kids instantly thought, ‘Yeah!’ and they took what they said [seriously].*

They were saying, ‘Don’t worry this is just for you,’ and they said, ‘The kid next to you is just as embarrassed’, and [therefore] laid it all out in the open and making it almost ‘uncool’ not to try. Then they asked the kids to dance. They showed us a little

dance routine and broke it down so the kids could do it and they were doing it. Then after a while they asked the kids to do a little dance in the middle on their own and they wouldn't, they wouldn't at all. They kept encouraging them and by the end of the session when they said, 'Would anyone like to jump in the middle and do something, and a shy female student put up her hand and jumped in the middle. She is the most introverted girl—she's so shy and she's in my class; she got up with these cool guys and she and all the kids just came out of their shell.

Lisa continues: It was just from ... Because the guys just made them feel so comfortable. The dance leaders really put themselves out there, because they were doing some uncool dancing and 'dorkie'³ moves and making the kids feel comfortable and with constant encouragement. By the end of it, they addressed depression and anxiety, but only after those kids had a relationship with the guys and felt safe with the guys and felt valued. I reckon they really felt valued.

LISA: *And I was just so inspired by that session. As soon as I walked away, I thought, 'I don't want to be a teacher. I want to work for Beyond Blue.' I really did ... it shaped my philosophy. I just think that this was so important. Those [primary] kids couldn't dance; or perhaps only five out of the 40 could dance, and yet all of them were suddenly trying. Trying to do things that they couldn't actually do well, and I thought if school focused more on the wellbeing of the kids and just reinforcing that it's okay to fail. I mean they [schools] do it but they really need to ... [and Lisa stops; because she is thinking about another issue and states] ... Oh, I'll get to that point in a moment [in a frustrated tone and continues]. If they focused on self-belief, because often kids come from a disadvantaged background ... (and I come from a background of disadvantaged kids or working with those kids), they often don't get all that support from home—they don't get all that positive reinforcement at home all the time.*

[Lisa continues and now her passion is increasingly evident.] Teachers are constantly struggling with kids that come from a struggling background, and so if school was more about developing the child and focused on that first rather than content first, then I think maybe ... [Lisa rushes on to the next sentence without finishing the sentence]—even though wellbeing is in the mission statements. I haven't been in schools to experience this and it is just from my experience, but I think there is a high focus on content and results rather than ... than kids as good citizens—happy people, who know how to cope with life. If we had that sort of focus, I reckon that teachers would have less issues getting

in the way of the classroom. When I saw those kids dancing, when they couldn't dance, then I thought I could try and take this approach into schools. They may try to do maths when they couldn't do maths and just believing more ... if they believe in themselves then they are at least going to try.

Okay, I'm not as idealistic as that. I mean I don't have this false idea that everything's going to be perfect in schools—but let's shift the focus. I really value these activities and that's why I really value the behaviour modification at the school because they actually have—or at least this local school does. In the morning is basically academic work and then in the afternoon they have things like life skills and self-esteem programs and that's how it should be. I just think at the end of the day if kids go through school and they're really smart, they can then still end up committing suicide because they are really unhappy or they may continue to go to school unhappy. What's the point of that? How does that help society anyway? Just because they [students] are smart—I just think there has to be a huge focus on wellbeing, personally, but until I get out there, I don't know ...

JULIE: *...A cultural shift, do you think?*

LISA: *As in the culture of the school? I think so. I don't think that's going to come easily.*

JULIE: *Have you seen people that do that sort of work in schools?*

LISA: *... As in having that type of school focus? No, not in a school, I don't think so. It is often left up to the health teacher because wellbeing is part of health, or it is left up to the welfare officer at the school. I was reading an article on how society in Australia reacts. In Australia, we act at 'point of impact' when something is wrong. We don't act beforehand; we are not good at teaching kids about wellbeing until there is an issue.*

That was in April ... and that's completely changed me. It almost stopped me wanting to be a teacher [and to become a youth worker]. That's the sort of impulsive person I am.

The commentary above captures some important themes in this climactic part of Lisa's narrative. Political, social and cultural ideas flow and merge to substantiate her moral commitment and social position. These are themes to be extracted for it is at the heart of her story and learning. Lisa takes her socio-political standpoint from some relevant research and data. Her reading on the topic together with her life-world experiences makes it clear that student wellbeing and disengaged troubled students have impacted on her critique too. This is evidenced when she states, 'that's completely changed me'—a mindshift and relayed through a major epiphany. The term 'epiphany' is a term not used in common educational language in a serious way because epiphanic moments are often deemed existential or metaphysical phenomena. However, Matthew McDonald (2008)

argues they 'are sudden and abrupt insights and/or changes in perspective that transform the individual's concept of self and identity through the creation of new meaning in the individual's life' (p. 90). He adds, 'Epiphanies are momentary experiences of transcendence that are enduring and distinct from other types of developmental change and transformation' (McDonald 2008, p. 90). McDonald provides insights on the term provided in the struggle to determine the position of epiphanies in research. For example, McDonald provides an account of epiphanies from life stories by Murray (2003), who examined life stories from participants to illustrate epiphanies as valid encounters in self-identity and personal meaning. Murray states, 'The life-story interview is designed to allow the narrator [the research participant] to provide a detailed account of his or her life, starting with his or her very first memory as a child and extending right up until the present day. It seeks to emphasise the participant's developmental sequences, milestones, and turning points' (Murray 2003, p. 103). Matthew McDonald's research implements a table of characteristics developed by Krippendorff (2004) and highlight six core characteristics and which acknowledge epiphanic moments (McDonald 2008). This puts a new 'twist' on the largely ignored and disparate academic literature. When observing preservice teacher development (particularly in the school while on practicum), epiphanies give meaning to the observations that we see in 'real' time and practice. Similarly, it is these types of distinct and contextualised experiences that preservice teachers often display in their shift to professional practitioners.

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With these thoughts in mind, I continue to ask provoking questions that may open up deeper insights of knowing.

JULIE: *Why have you got that sort of personality? How did that happen?*

LISA: *I don't know, I think after realising that I don't have to continue to do what others think and letting other people guide me ... I know I'm a 'risk taker' when that shift happened I realised I am going to do this. I am going to do 'it' and if it doesn't work out well, that's okay. That's why I came to Victoria from Sydney.*

JULIE: *How did you get here? What made you leave Sydney to come to Victoria to do teaching?*

LISA: *It was when I was in New Zealand. My cousin had told me about 'kids' programs/schemes. She suggested that I work with her as they were so rewarding. So I thought yes, I wanted to go because I loved New Zealand. She said, 'See if you can get on a camp with me.' So, I rang and I got to go with her and I just loved it. It was my first experience. Before I did this my first camp, I went to this rural village with her and I arrived in the afternoon and stayed until the following afternoon. It was overnight. I got to know the elder and we stayed with him. He was the social worker of the town. The town was a Maori town. On the first day, we just went to the local pool and that's where I got to meet*

the kids. The community towns are like that, and this was tiny town; it had a population of about 1000. The next day we visited two of the primary schools and just talking to the teachers I learnt that many teachers don't want to teach out in these areas and the kids come from a really 'bad' home life involving drugs and alcohol.

I was really impressed by the teachers that were doing the work there and the kids in the second school. When they realised I was from Australia and co-incidentally I looked like one of the familiar New Zealand singing idols, which was a good talking and starting point to get to chat the students. We stayed at the school only half an hour and at the end the kids commented on a necklace I was wearing and they really liked it. It was just a clay necklace and I told them it was given to me by my mother and it was from India. At the end of the visit after a performance of the 'haka'⁴ they showed me a necklace from Vanuatu. I said, 'That's really pretty,' and they said, 'We want you to have it.' It was so cool that they wanted me to have this necklace from Vanuatu and I was so blown away. They would not let me say, 'No.' So, I wanted them to have mine, but they said, 'No, it is from India and your mother gave it to you.' They insisted and wouldn't take it from me. Here, I thought, are these poor kids with such a generous spirit. I took it, but I ended up giving it (secretly) to the teachers because I felt terrible to take from these kids when they clearly have nothing. They knew where I was from and so when we got on the bus with the elder, he called me 'Skippy'⁵ because I was from Australia. The kids then called me 'Skippy' and ran to the bus. The elder said, 'You should be looking at doing things like this.'

JULIE: *So, that seed was sown?*

LISA: *Absolutely, but I thought this is just one experience. I can't change. I am a real thinker as much as I am impulsive. I think I over-think about things. I think about why I have this experience and why that experience, because everything has meaning. I constantly re-evaluate where I am at.*

Taking risks in order to embark on learning is impressive and well monitored risks are required for learning (Giddens 1999). Risk-taking is an overarching theme drawn from this metacognitive commentary and evident in Lisa's ability to approach new experiences and cultural settings. So too can the story above can signify a cumulative epiphany, where small collections of evaluative moments build to stark realisation. I am reminded similarly, that Virginia Woolf (as cited in Sheehy 1995) called such little evaluative moments, epiphanies 'moments of being, when a shock pulls

4 A Traditional Maori dance.

5 Humorous term for Australians aboard.

the gauzy curtain off everyday existence and throws a sudden floodlight on what our lives are really about' (Sheehy 1995, p. 17).

LISA: *Mmm ... very graphic. The colours are awesome.* [Lisa considers and refers to my painting.]

JULIE: *So is yours.*

Lisa is inquisitive. This theme has been a feature of her approach to teaching and learning. At this point she is observing my artful approach to the work. We are reaching the final stages of the painting. Lisa begins to experiment. Again, she is bold; taking a risk and the inquiry leads her to a new feature in her painted landscape and now, at the concluding stages of her art work, she chooses to paint areas of black on to the painting. At first these black markings look quite unconnected, but looking closely they resemble a network of moments in the shifting space of a pink and orange landscape.

Experimental and mystical, the black features float about on the colourful layer of the canvas (Figure 11.3).



Figure 11.3: Small areas of black are added

Reflective comment

The stories or 'spotlights' articulated by Lisa offer connections to a deeper critique and emerge as thematic epistemological perspectives. The perspectives serve as searchlights to provide moments of being and epiphanies to illuminate the human condition and spirit. The surreal existential nature of epiphanies can often present as tension and, when positioned as in Lisa's story, hold true. The conflicting ethical perspectives highlight a gap in how we contextualise the study of practical, theoretical and artistic use of spoken and written language. By recognising the possibility of linking these complex relevant terms we forge new paradigms of engaging language and learning.

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My art work in response to Lisa



Figure 11.4: *Search light*, Julie, acrylic on canvas

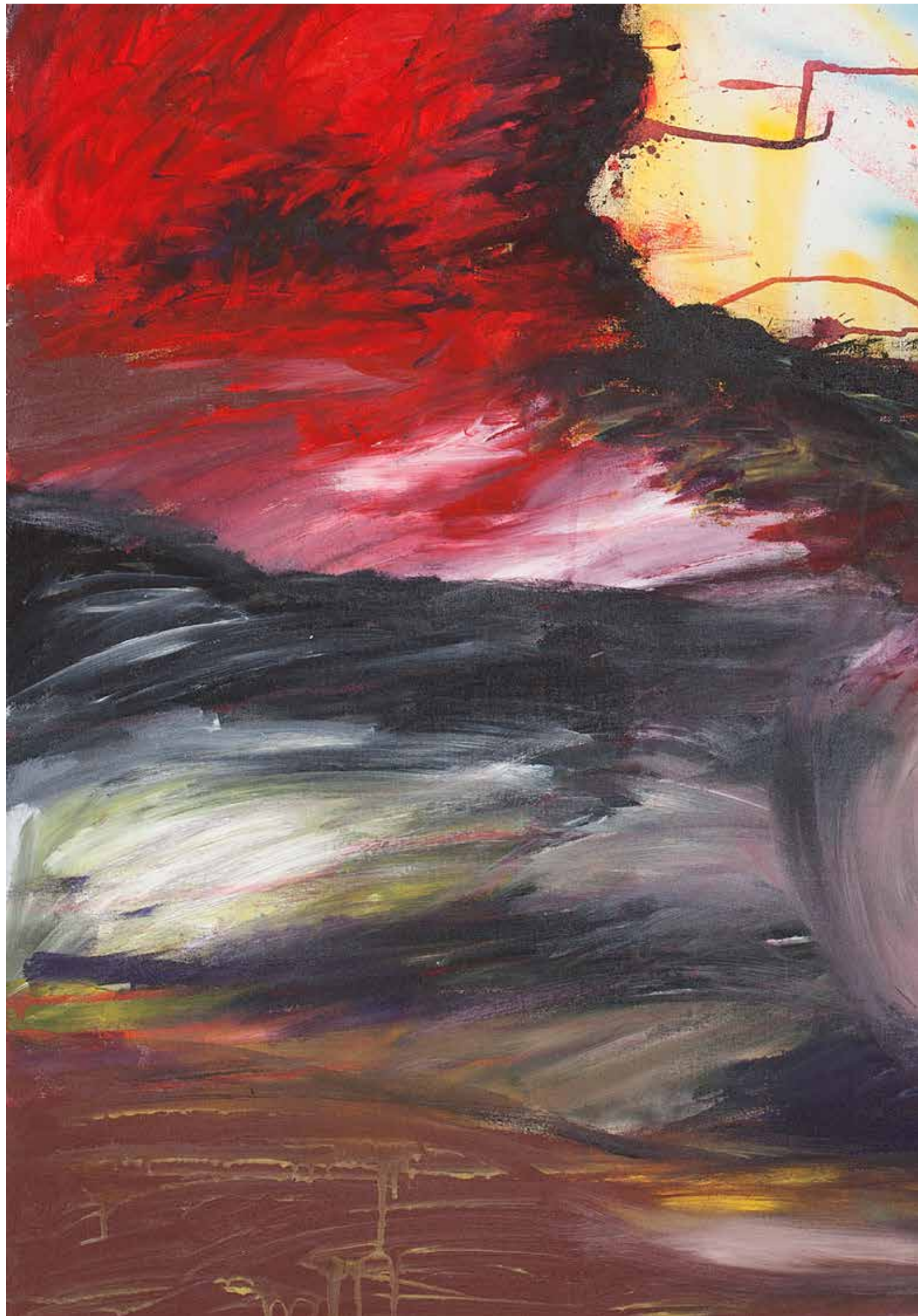
The image above, *Search Light* (Figure 11.4) characterised my own sense of Lisa's narrative and was created alongside her and during my time with her. I had the privilege of hearing her spoken words and seeing her artwork emerge. Lisa is in many ways searching and the moments of learning and general themes have been illustrated in her narrative. The themes that emerged in our time together addressed particularly the notion that teaching requires respect, resilience and sensitivity alongside a sense of social justice and activism.

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CHAPTER 12

Rebecca is in her late twenties and has had a lifetime of hearing loss. She has strategies to assist her to hear in the tertiary classroom and classrooms in the school. She is single and lives independently. She has worked with young children and has coordinated out of school hours care programs. She strikes me as a serious person with firm ideas about learning and diverse abilities in education. Her hair is thick and long and she manages to push it back from her face to reveal a broad smile and blue eyes. She is cheerful, but responds to conversation with short comments. Her eyes are fixed on the person she converses with to watch their communicative body language and lips to assist interpreting their comments. This does not discourage Rebecca from communicating with me.

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Rebecca

Trauma can present conditions for learning

Sociocultural critique and values

Collegiality

Being and feeling secure

Instructional learning

Success

Caring

Student aspirations

Mentors

Family as teachers

Passion

Reflective practice

Knowing students

Teacher as learner



Figure 12.1: *It's like performing... for me it was like waking up ... it's like a drug*, Rebecca, acrylic and ink on canvas

In these interviews the interviewee or artist when painting, express themselves. The value of this artful process lies in the mediational space (Wertsch 1998) and is a deeply implicated act of informing self. 'In Jackson Pollock's words, "Painting is a state of being ... self-discovery" ... "I want to express my feelings rather than illustrate them"' (Barnet 2003, p. 217).

In the following interview, while Rebecca and I will paint, but rather than begin in the studio, Rebecca uses spray paint and begins her canvas outdoors. She chooses yellow and blue and sprays on to the canvas. Once back inside the studio, she then adds inks of various colours, but she does not paint it on with a brush, she pours it from the small bottles. The ink flows in all directions as she grasps the canvas and tips it from side to side. On a process of self-discovery, she has created an effect that holds her thoughts and she observes the canvas without speaking. What then? What is she thinking? Do these forms, images, materials and the arrangement evoke something?

I have added some colours to my canvas too and after a few introductory words about the purpose of the task, we enter back in to the studio and the canvases are placed on the table where Rebecca and I begin to paint. Like the previous narratives, this is an interview that is derived from narratives or storytelling, which is one important focus of ethnographic research (Denzin & Lincoln eds. 2005).

Rebecca's interview celebrates her reflections through emphasising story, gestures, and art. Often termed a 'montage' or 'bricolage' (Denzin & Lincoln eds. 2005), this research pieces together by navigating around these elements, even at times moving between simultaneously to gather ideas and meaning. Here, sensibility and hermeneutics are at the forefront and stand as a valid way to connect and theorise.

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Rebecca tends to repeat parts of the questions during this interview. This gives her time to clarify and reaffirm each question with me because she has a significant hearing impairment. I try to make questions and conversation as clear as possible. I face towards her where possible and use gesture when I communicating during our time together.

The interview begins.

We begin ...

JULIE: *So what I'm going to talk to you about involves the idea of how you got here to teacher education and why you arrived here and the significant learning along the way. Now as we go along—you may want to use these colours or make up more colours. So have a look to see which colours you might like to use ... and add black and white to mix these tones if you want.*

REBECCA: *Okay ... and dark purple.*

Smiling, Rebecca chooses dark purple. She begins mixing colours immediately (Figure 12.2).



Figure 12.2: Colours are added and mixed

JULIE: *Now, the other thing is, you don't have to just use a brush to apply paint. If you want to scrape it on or just print it on with bits and pieces, you can scrunch up paper and paint it on. We don't necessarily know what our work it will look like in the end—it's just time to experiment. [Rebecca laughs.] While you do that, I'm going to ask you questions along the way.*

REBECCA: *Cool ...*

JULIE: *There are some questions we shall discuss around 'mindshift' and I'm not sure, quite sure what you might think mindshift is.*

REBECCA: *Umm, in reference to what? I know what I would call 'mindshift', but I don't know what you would call it.*

JULIE: *What you would call it? What do you consider mindshift to be?*

Rebecca seems anxious to have the right answer. I want to impress on her that the answer should be from her understanding as this is what the research is trying to establish—her ideas. Selecting purple and black, Rebecca creates an image, then selecting white on to a palette she freely blends it to mix on to the same section.

REBECCA: *Umm, probably changing of an attitude, from one direction to another. Mostly I would call it ... but ... are you thinking about educational stuff?*

She is covering over some work that that been created already on the colourful canvas. Broad and wide strokes are applied. She doesn't hold back as she covers the existing painting.

REBECCA: *You have to engage to keep the mindshift. What would you consider a mindshift?*

JULIE: *[Rebecca surprises me by asking me the same question.] Well, I'm not sure. The definition has different possibilities in fact. Obviously there have been a few mindshifts in your experience and mine. You've had to come through all different sorts of learning.*

REBECCA: *Yep.*

JULIE: *Well, if you could think of an instance where you had some sort of significant change or mindshift or ... an experience, can you think of a time when that might have happened?*

Rebecca steps back and focuses on the painting without looking at me. There is no eye-contact.

REBECCA: *Umm, I think probably when I'm faced with a dilemma ... when something that has challenged me, whether it is from in a school context or a values context—my mindshift has really come through personal experiences that have impacted on me in some way. Like the fire in Marysville¹ and being there and not being able to escape until someone says the road's clear until after the fire has gone. [She laughs nervously.]*

1

The small town of Marysville was devastated by a bushfire in February 2009. Part of a larger fire, it destroyed 90% of homes and 34 people lost their lives in Marysville.

JULIE: *So, are you from Marysville?*

REBECCA: *No, but that was where I was on that day. It was a profoundly, traumatic thing. So my mindshift from that would have been from thinking everything's cool and right and now thinking, that everyday counts. What am I doing, just sort of, hanging around?*

Rebecca has used white and dotting techniques. She now uses yellow and orange. She chooses a palette of yellow, orange red and mixes warm tones. Rebecca blends the warm colours until they are almost all absorbed by black (Figure 12.3).



Figure 12.3: Tones are mixed and blend

JULIE: *Can you think of an instance where that may have taken place recently?*

REBECCA: *Umm, No just generally [Rebecca laughs and this laugh becomes a pattern in her communication]. Well, my values, my personal values, I've had to learn to separate in some sense; from the school values that would be presented to kids, because not everyone believes what I believe. Like the school says ... the school says you've got to this or that and ... ah ... I don't know ...*

Rebecca tries hard to think. She looks above and holds her hands up, as if the answer she is looking for may drop from above and into her hands at any moment. However, she has already indicated two emerging themes. The trauma of Marysville remains with her and has shifted her view of herself and her life world. When she describes her mindshift she relives the major traumatic experience of the bush fire 'my mindshift from that [experience] would have been from thinking everything's cool and right and now thinking, that every day counts'. The account presents a major epiphany, and Rebecca thinks deeply about her existence after surviving the fire. She voices a new question: 'What am I doing, just sort of, hanging around?'

Rebecca's next comment illuminates her ideas on personal values and the resistance she must maintain to conform to professional values. This is a new and an emergent socio-cultural theme depicted by Rebecca. I can support this claim whereby this resistance is an ongoing tension which preservice

teachers grapple with during their placements. A cumulative epiphanic moment is encountered as she struggles to find words to continue, so I prompt her here. Subsequently she continues to describe the values she subscribes to and the socio-cultural issues related to this theme.

JULIE: *Do you mean to do things a certain way at times?*

I notice Rebecca has returned to use white in the image. She uses white to mix and shade areas on the canvas (Figure 12.4)



Figure 12.4: White is applied and the tone is lighter

REBECCA: *Yeah, yeah ... So, discipline for instance, having been at a school where I am teaching; I may have a perspective regarding child psychology. I have developed a certain way of disciplining kids. Some schools would not appreciate this perspective. I don't demean them or anything like that, but my method is not to give them three chances. Perhaps I will give one chance and they'll do what I say. I might tell them, 'This is the only time I'll say it,' which is ... in some circumstances considered a bit harsh.*

JULIE: *What about in other times of your life? Maybe go back further?*

REBECCA: *Yeah, well in the beginning of the course, like before I got here, I was part of an 'After School Care Program' and I built it from scratch. I loved it and I love kids and they were a lot of fun and they loved interacting with me and playing games. It was really good, but it grew too big and they had to get someone else to operate it because of the laws, as I was only 15 and I wasn't qualified. So, they had to get someone else in, and I usually get along with everyone. There are only one or two people that I don't really get along with, and she [the new colleague] was the third.*

Rebecca walks away. The story has raised an emergent theme of collegiality and indicates the importance of professional working relationships from Rebecca's perspective, which she outlines below. The event described in her story has impact. A major epiphanic moment produced by a

trauma in her career arises. Although smiling, she abruptly walks to the other table out of view of the camera. This sudden movement of retreat may be for two reasons. Firstly, she physically moves out from the space from facing this part of the story and secondly to collect red paint to add to her picture. She is tense; however, she returns to continue the story, but not before adding to the canvas.

Red is the colour she chooses and she pours it directly on to the canvas. Next, Rebecca adds black over the image. She paints the colours to completely cover the original playful image on the canvas (Figure 12.5).



Figure 12.5: Red and then black cover existing image

REBECCA: *So, it made my life really difficult, I had to leave because I couldn't stay in there. So, my mindshift I actually had was—I love teaching and I knew that eventually I'd get qualified, but it was kind of like a kick in the pants that got me out of there and in the right place. So ... being I guess—being and feeling secure.*

Once again, I am fascinated by her response and the shifting montage here, because she has completely painted over her original image. 'Montage and pentimento,² like jazz, which is improvisation, create a sense that images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite, a new creation. The images seem to shape and define each one another, an emotional, gestalt effect is produced' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p. 4). Rebecca's work is complex and as with music or film uses space to gaze, reflect and capture thoughts. She is recreating and reviewing new perspectives from a minor/illuminative epiphany. This story leads to a new emergent theme of being and feeling secure.

REBECCA: *Do you mind if I mix the colours?*

JULIE: *You just do whatever you fancy with the colours.*

2 Pentimento is 'something that has been painted out of the picture (an image the painter "repented" or denied) becomes visible again, creating something new'. (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p 4).

Rebecca, smiling now, continues with broad brush strokes and uses bold arm movements. She spends some time on this image. The image is lighter than the other images on the canvas. She is particular about the shape and the brush is guided around a bowl shape that has emerged (Figure 12.6).



Figure 12.6: Lighter colours merge

JULIE: *What about earlier on, when you were young?*

REBECCA: *Young as in?*

JULIE: *Your earliest memory?*

REBECCA: *Earliest?* [Once again Rebecca, due to her hearing loss perhaps, checks for the meaning.]

JULIE: *Well, your earliest memory of ... learning, perhaps?*

REBECCA: *I remember learning to tie my shoelace.*

On this question, she moves to focus on the top right corner and applies black from the top corner in a downward movement. Rebecca paints each stroke here in the rhythm to, 'I remember learning to tie my shoelace.' It forms a dark block, which she later lightens with colour to form a 'bowl-like' image (see Figure 12.6).

Rebecca continues to add black to cover the lower right corner. She uses black to cover vast areas of the painting. The ink and light shades of blue and yellow are completely covered (Figure 12.7).



Figure 12.7: Black shades cover areas of the canvas

JULIE: *Ahh, do you?*

REBECCA: *Yes, my sister taught me. It was in Papua New Guinea and we were going out and I was trying to tie my shoelace. She got a piece of string and tied it around my leg and said, 'This is how you do it,' and I did it. I just followed what she did; I copied. Next, she taught me how to count to one hundred. I got to ninety-nine and then said 'Tenty,' and she said, 'No, Rebecca, it's one hundred,' and I said, 'Oh, one hundred and one ... Aww, I can't stop now.'* [Together, we laugh at this story.]

JULIE: *So, your sister was very patient.*

REBECCA: *In most instances, yeah. This is just blobs of paint—now referring to her painting.*

JULIE: *It's lovely.*

Rebecca laughs. I think she agrees. She has produced a lovely piece of work. I am still thinking about the two narratives she has related above. Recognising and valuing instructional learning is evident and an emergent theme. I wonder if she will bring this to her future teaching. She voluntarily begins another story.

REBECCA: *I've got black here. I actually recently painted a table of mine. It had a scratch on it and it. I ... and a friend, and her two kids painted it random colours. She added bits and pieces; after it was finished we varnished it and it's really cool!*

JULIE: *When did you think about becoming a teacher?*

REBECCA: *Umm, I didn't intend to become one. My first experience at uni was ... as a student in a diploma in music. So, I thought I'll just be a music teacher or I'll do something good ... and when I finished I realised ... 'Oh hang on, no-one is really going to employ me because I haven't really got anything to show for myself really' ... except I learnt music. So umm, I started to run my own business ...*

JULIE: *Oh yes ...*

REBECCA: *I began with a program where they [commercial company] support you while you learn business. Although the business and company failed, I had to design a children's music program about the elements of music and teaching kids.*

JULIE: *Ahh ...*

REBECCA: *So, her [the program coordinator] first instruction was about teaching and how to teach. Her idea was ... to go from where they are, then ... then go further.*

JULIE: *Right.*

REBECCA: *That's all the theory I had.*

JULIE: *... So, what do you think of that program?*

REBECCA: *It's good. I still use it.*

JULIE: *Yeah.*

REBECCA: *Umm. Yeah, so I did a program and it was like breathing, I loved it. It was the best thing that I've ever done [Rebecca laughs]. So, when ... the business failed, I was looking for a job. There was one advertised ... in the newspaper and it sounded just right; working with the creative arts department doing plays and working out creative ways to teaching kids and how to use music. I eventually got the job and I loved it. I worked there for six years until I came here.*

JULIE: *So that was really a very affirming career?*

REBECCA: *Yeah. It was really cool.*

Here, Rebecca uses red and moves to the left corner of the canvas. She covers the light areas and the dark patches that she produced earlier. The red is powerful with depth gained by the colours already there. It is a cloudy and messy area (Figure 12.8).



Figure 12.8: Red paint adds depth and interest

This section takes on the image of a provocative ominous cloud hanging. It frames the colourful section and plays with the perspective. It is difficult to know if the view is looking from the inside or outside of the image. Rebecca has reflected on her business experience and through the narrative and has raised ideas about success and what it might look like for her. A relived experience and telling indicate her achievements and the learning, such as ‘creative ways to teaching kids and how to use music’. As a relived epiphany, the experience is something she is able to draw from to gain ideas about her knowledge and future teaching.

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JULIE: *So when's the first time you ever taught something?*

REBECCA: *First time?*

She stops painting to think carefully and once she has the idea she paints again, using the black.

REBECCA: *Consciously ... It'd probably be ... near the end, no ... during school—high school. Umm ... I was good at explaining things even when I didn't really understand them. So, when things happened in maths, and the person sitting next to me didn't understand, I'd just lean over and say the same thing but point ... [Rebecca laughs remembering this experience] I would point to the sum and they'd go ... 'Ahww! I get it now,' they would say and I'd look back at my work and think, 'Oh great, I don't' [Rebecca is still laughing] and they'd understand it.*

JULIE: *So you really ... facilitated?*

REBECCA: *It wasn't really, it wasn't really doing anything much, but I thought I was teaching ... or helping.*

JULIE: *Can you explain why that worked?*

REBECCA: *Umm, I would say that they ... knew how to do it, it was just one small thing that they had skipped or they hadn't really understood. Repeating what the teacher had said made them see ... see the connection between the steps.*

Rebecca is facing me and while explaining she uses the brush to point the steps while talking as if painting invisible marks in the air. The point she makes is that she likes to assist and help others. This is an emerging theme for Rebecca and derived from a relived narrative—a relived epiphanic moment which recognises her caring approach when learning with others.

JULIE: *So, what sort of teacher are you?*

REBECCA: *What sort do I want to be?*

JULIE: *Well ... yeah, I guess so.*

REBECCA: *Is that what you're asking?*

JULIE: *Yes. I am clear again in responding [I forget Rebecca has a hearing impairment at times].*

REBECCA: *I love mixing with kids from different backgrounds, who don't get as many opportunities as they should. I love the disadvantaged students and their backgrounds, because of the richness of experience that they have and that they don't take things just for granted. For those students, it's more ... about a discovery of the world and how it should be. Not how they came to be into a situation which isn't really that good. I want to be a teacher who, umm, can love kids because they're there for any reason [aspirations] and prove that they can do stuff, because so often they say, 'I can't do that, I can't do that,' when really they can.*

Student aspirations are evident in the narrative and an emerging theme for Rebecca. I consider this to be a minor/illuminative epiphany for Rebecca and associated with some concern for disadvantaged students and tension here. Her concerns for the disadvantaged are described thoughtfully and are heartfelt. I feel humbled and I wonder where these ideas come from? Was there someone in her life who has influenced her thinking?

JULIE: *So, was there a formative person in your learning?*

REBECCA: *In a formative way?*

JULIE: *Yes.*

REBECCA: *Yeah ... from, year five to ... year twelve, I had a teacher who was like a mentor. She'd spend one night a week with me ... just hanging out and talking about stuff ... regularly, and it was fantastic. She was a teacher as well. She's moved away now. She was a huge influence on me about what I thought and did.*

JULIE: *That was a great opportunity.*

REBECCA: *Yeah, yeah, yeah. She left when she had her first baby and ... the baby is now 16 [Rebecca laughs].*

JULIE: *Do you still see her?*

REBECCA: *No. I haven't seen her for years. But I've heard of her ... and I hear of her often. So ... I know where she is and what she's up to, vaguely.*

More red is added and the bowl takes shape. A mass of merging colours have developed using wide smooth strokes (Figure 12.9).



Figure 12.9: The bowl, now weeping red, takes shape

REBECCA: *My dad is a ... is a very large influence on me too.*

I note mentors and family members as teachers as important themes here. Rebecca is proud of her family members in this narrative. Confidently, she now uses big sweeping movements. She is stretching over the canvas so, I ask,

JULIE: *Do you want to turn this around? Oh ... beautiful colours ...*

REBECCA: *If I do, I'll, I won't be able to reach.*

JULIE: *You're right? So ... what did your dad teach you?*

REBECCA: *Umm, I guess ... He's got philosophical views really. He taught me how to be responsible and to ... [There is a silence here and she then speaks quietly] ... just to be a person really. It's funny I was looking back at my family—all of us are teachers. Both my sisters, my brother isn't, but my brother-in-law is and my sister-in-law is. My mum and dad are both trained ... it's ... it's crazy.*

JULIE: *Is that why you're a teacher?*

REBECCA: *No. I didn't intend to be one. It just happened.*

JULIE: *Happened?*

REBECCA: *Well; I told about before, with the music, yeah?*

JULIE: *So what are you going to bring to education?*

Rebecca is still working on smoothing the lower right image, then stops to speak slowly. She tips her head on the side, surprised at this question, I think. She begins to explain very slowly and Rebecca resumes at this point using red to continue adding to dark shadows in the painting (Figure 12.10).



Figure 12.10: Red is added to shaded areas

REBECCA: *Umm, I don't really ... know ... yet. In the past I've seen kids open up and ... enjoy ... expanding the way they think and feel.*

JULIE: *So you can facilitate that easily?*

REBECCA: *Yep. I loved ... I did 'After School Care' for primary school students for a while and I loved being able to just ... be part of a different environment compared to the classroom.*

JULIE: *So, how did you know you wanted to be a teacher?*

REBECCA: *It was one of those innate things that I just thought, 'Oh this is it!' This is what it is for you ... It's like performing ... Umm for me it was like, waking up [Rebecca stops and holds her hands out. Holding quite still, she adds] ... and like performing, it's something you do, when you're like ... it's like a drug ... It's like a drug, when you do it. You connect with a child, and it's as if, 'Yes! I got one! I like this—I think I might do more of it.'*

She daubs paint at the canvas. There is tension here. The passion and intensity at this point is evident. Noted as a minor/illuminative moment, it suggests that teaching for her is more than what we consider a career may hold. Passion has emerging as a theme from the narrative. The way in which Rebecca has articulated the story is equally relevant to identifying this theme.

REBECCA: *I devised a method of keeping track of them all and a method of making sure they were all actually engaged in learning. And finding the kids who didn't really enjoy it, and making them enjoy it. That was my goal—everyone has to love the keyboard.*

On the word 'engaged', Rebecca sweeps the canvas with the brush. The sweep is broad and in the rhythm of the articulated phrase, 'actually engaged in learning' (Figure 12.11).



Figure 12.11: Broad strokes blend pink tones

JULIE: *That's very impressive.*

REBECCA: *Yes, and now that I've learnt the theory, I ask ... now what?*

JULIE: *Maybe ... did you already know that theory?*

REBECCA: *Nah. I just learnt it by mistake ... and trial and error.*

JULIE: *Trial and error. So, experimenting? So, you are 'the scientist'.*

REBECCA: *Yep.*

Rebecca has identified an appropriate skill essential for teachers. Reflecting in the classroom is deemed a professional approach to improving on practice and pedagogy. Rebecca appears to be implementing this essential critical practice, but does not recognise it. At this point, Rebecca disappears to open a new pot of paint. She struggles to open it. She is starting a new point of discussion and a new colour.

JULIE: *So, who's helped you in the process of becoming a teacher, along the way?*

REBECCA: *My mum is my editor in chief ... which is good because she doesn't say, 'Oh, write it like this—blah blah blah ...' She says, 'Oh this needs work—I don't understand this. I'm not sure what you're getting at here, might be better to re-phrase that,' but letting me do it myself. So, I still do the work, but she just sort of guided ... 'What is this? I don't get this.'*

JULIE: *Which has been the most significant practicum experience?*

REBECCA: *There've been many ... but probably the most significant, which I'll remember for a long, long, long time is interacting with a boy who had dyslexia. I was teaching English and poetry ... and one boy hated writing. He was in one of my placement schools. We went through one or two of three–four writing styles. I had five in my*

group. I talked to him a lot about his writing and we came to one task, where he had to divide the paper into eight sections.

JULIE: *Oh yes.*

REBECCA: *Later, they were to write on each writing style. They were to turn the paper over and write a sentence about the word that you had talked about or had written on the other side. So, I set the task, and he complained and I said, 'Too bad, it's part of school curriculum' [Rebecca laughs at pretending to sound strict]. So, I had one or two who came up and never finished it. I got distracted and two people came up and said, 'I'm done, I'm done,' and I said, 'Oh, that's great,' and the other people said, 'Can I change it?' I replied, 'Yeah sure, as long as you justify why you want to change it,' and so they did. And the little boy I was concerned about came up to me and said, 'Miss, I think mine ... is it alright if I don't use the last two words; can I do something different?' and I said, 'OK! Why is that?' He replied, 'Well, I think, I think it would work better if ...' 'Oh! Okay, fair enough, yep,' I replied to him.*

We both laughed at this story. It was a positive outcome from the little anecdotal story. Rebecca has taken the time to know her student and therefore could assist him in his learning. To be able to teach, a teacher has to learn (an emergent theme here too) about the student. This means gathering data about each student and teaching and building on skills and knowledge. Knowing students is essential for teachers to understand the needs of the learner. By knowing students (an emergent theme), Rebecca will be able to scaffold learning for her students. Through the experience described, she has a relived epiphanic moment and arguably an important moment in her teaching career.

REBECCA: *And so he went to his desk and came back and said, 'I've finished!' He was the third person finished that day. I read it and said, 'Oh wow, this is really good; this is fantastic!' He had turned a little red. I said, 'You are really good at this,' and he was over the moon, very quietly 'cos he was fairly shy. That's significant—being able to say something to someone who'd never succeeded, 'You're good at this—it is something that you're good at, just keep at it.'*

I built a relationship with him. In the mornings, I would sit next to him, because he didn't want to write. He was a social kind of person and was learning to write the alphabet script in the way that they were. So, we'd sit down and learn the letters together.

She smooths the image of the bowl, taking pleasure at the smooth lines and rhythmic circular motion (Figure 12.12).



Figure 12.12: Brush technique is used to blend the colour

Rebecca chooses white again at this point and this technique really highlights the bowl that has become a central focus for the overall picture.

JULIE: *Do you know that from this side, you've drawn the profile of a woman?*

The profile of the woman was clear and aesthetically beautiful in design. She continued, but the image changed, so it no longer exists (Figure 12.13).

I catch a glimpse of the original design (light blue tones), which remains. Still recognisable, it is revealed through dark edges and somewhat framed by a cave-like border. Similarly too, the face of the woman disappeared. I feel sad that the original images no longer exist (Figure 12.13).



Figure 12.13: Dark colours frame a section of the original image

JULIE: *It's very beautiful.*

REBECCA: *I wanted it to be a mountain, but ... I might, still do that* [Rebecca laughs as we know the interview will finish soon].

As we approach the end of the interview, Rebecca tends to stand back to review her work often. Smoothing paint here and there, she examines her work carefully. The interview comes to a natural end. Rebecca is still smoothing and sweeping parts of the canvas.

JULIE: *It's beautiful.*

Rebecca smiles then laughs and helps me pack up the paints and clear the studio.

.....

My art-work in response to Rebecca



Figure 12.14: *Temporal shift*, Julie, acrylic and ink on canvas

From the beginning, Rebecca's work is not fixed, and as the interview progresses her images seem to become representations of her temporal transformations. Her first image produced was a complete canvas of light and bright shades of ink, spray and acrylic. During the interview, the canvas has been almost covered in a new evocative style, shifting to a more intense and menacing image. Rebecca's work is temporal and completely at the mercy of the process of art making rather than being a final the product. For Rebecca there exists an 'in the moment' state of consciousness and this is characteristically a catalyst for blurring, creating, merging, blending, and bending experiences, which merge with narratives from which she has reflected on her life.

CHAPTER 13

Deidre has a degree in media studies. This is her second degree and she is enjoying her career change. Deidre is interested in teaching young students and intends to find a position teaching in the early years. Deidre is from a Greek background and her mother works in education too and has encouraged her to enter teaching. She enjoys creative writing and media and feels she can use these skills in the classroom. Deidre is small and slim and very talkative. She has energy and enthusiasm which radiates and I notice this at once. Deidre talks openly and is eager to admit she is not an artist.

.....





Deidre

Knowing students

Learning by 'doing'

Early play experiences

Stable, secure environment

Praxis Inquiry

Integrity, 'I' and 'self'

Reflective practice

Student engagement

Knowing students—relationships and empathy

Honesty

Self-evaluation

Rigour

Self-talk and emerging identity

Confidence

Aspirations

Positivity and happiness



Figure 13.1: *One of my students, Deidre, acrylic on canvas*

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) argue that ‘In the early years of schooling, children are constantly encouraged to produce images, and to illustrate their written work’ (p. 15) but point out a common shift and add, ‘By the time children are beyond the first two years of secondary schooling, illustrations have largely disappeared—from the children’s own texts as well as from the texts produced for them (p. 15). So, it is not surprising when Deidre enters the room wringing her hands together. She is nervous. She insists she is not an artist, but is interested in the arts. Interestingly, she is a film maker. Deidre selects a brush and massages it firmly. To assist and to ensure Deidre is comfortable (as with each participant), I explain it will be a ‘chat’ about learning and she comes to understand that the session will be primarily a conversation; just a ‘chat’ to explore underlying ideas that constitute her learning.

The interview begins.

I begin with the routine question, ‘What do you think mindshift may mean in terms of becoming a teacher?’ Obtaining a definition and exploring the term in the early stage is important to the overall theme, conversation, data and development of each interview. As Deidre begins to talk, she also begins to paint. She talks quickly and does not focus at this stage on my guiding question. When she begins a story, I at first think she is ignoring the question and perhaps her behaviour is evidence of some anxiety. But she chooses to begin with the following story.

DEIDRE: *Well, before I started the course, I just had this notion which now sounds ridiculous now that, when I’m a teacher, I’m going to walk in there and I’m going to tell them what needs to be done and if they do it they do ... if they don’t, they don’t* [Deidre laughs at this idea]. *I didn’t know about you know VELs,¹ and progressions points, and PoLT.² I didn’t know that there were so many rules and guidelines, and ... I just thought, ‘No, the kids aren’t going to learn, it doesn’t work that way.’ You’ve got responsibility as a teacher, and then I got this urge and thought, ‘Oh, I’ll be their friend, I’ll be their friend!’ Then, you realise you can’t be their friend; you’ve got to be their teacher. You can be their friend as well once you get to know them maybe ... but if you go in there and say, ‘Hey guys! I’m easy going,’ then they’re going to run all over you. You’ve got to establish a relationship first; that’s my experience anyway.*

Deidre has introduced the issue of student–teacher relationships and this has been a turning point in her learning, particularly in the classroom. Establishing effective relationships for learning is enhanced by knowing students well. An emergent theme for Deidre, this learning has enabled her understanding of the importance of gauging student learning styles, wellbeing and academic progress. This is to be applauded and will assist her in her teaching. This idea has not come without some tension while learning and can be identified as a minor/illuminative epiphany. Deidre continues very quickly, without prompting, adding those thoughts that she feels are important. After a time and once settled, she returns and clarifies her interpretation of the definition of mindshift.

DEIDRE: *So, speaking of a mindshift of a teacher; I think I’ve come from an immaturity, to getting an idea, to ‘becoming of mind.’ Over this last week, I’ve changed because I’ve had my week placement. I have changed my voice; I’m talking like I’ve never spoken before in my life. I’m just ... I’m ... I’m using words like ... I told my class, they were*

1 Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

2 Principles of Learning and Teaching.

going really, really well. When they started acting up³ and I said, 'I'm disappointed in your behaviour' [Deidre makes a gesture of looking surprised]. I've never said that to students before in my life and then all of a sudden, they ... they apologised to me and their behaviour changed.

Deidre looks directly at me and smiles and then tips her head down slightly in a gesture of humility.

While this story was being told, Deidre used the same brush dipping it in a dark colour to draw onto the canvas an image. She tackled this design from a variety of positions moving around the canvas stretched out on the table in front. She moved back and forth to the paint when required. These movements have not interrupted her speech and it is as if she has not noticed what she has painted. Incredibly, while delivering a very animated story, it has not distracted nor has she attempted to stop her art making. She speaks loudly, clearly and at times using her hands to highlight the point she is making while tending to the image she has begun on the canvas. Painting and story carry equal energy here. Painting and voice are engaged in a similar discourse; neither having more weight than the other and each emphasising the story. The message is inscribed in brush strokes. These marks can be described as part of the story and as semiotic units. The brush strokes are applied as textual networks as a means of inscription (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996). The connection between how the paint is applied by Deidre as a semiotic resource for meaning making relates equally to the expressed linguistic message. Kress and Van Leeuwen argue that the boundaries between writing (in this case speaking and articulating stories) and art are no longer as sharply drawn as once were and 'as for the painter or the viewer of a painting, the mode of inscription changes the text' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996, p. 231).

The question about the significance of brushstrokes comes, we think, out of a deeply logocentric view in which everything representational is seen as belonging to the same unified, homogenous, representational system (language or painting) and in which, at the same time, by a deep-seated paradox, not everything within that representational system is given the same, or even any attention.

(Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996, p. 231)

.....

JULIE: *Oh, right! Wow.*

DEIDRE: *We've got this thing called 'Earn 'n' Learn'. Have you heard of that?*

JULIE: *No I haven't.*

3 'Acting up' can be interpreted as misbehaving.

DEIDRE: *Well, basically, by the end of the year, they can make tokens worth 500 'pretend dollars', and if they earn 500 dollars they get to go to a Fun Park; it's called their 'Big Day Out'. So they get money if they're good. For instance, if they get two dollars and they have to write it in their maths book then they get someone to sign it. And then if they get credit too. And if they're bad they get a debt of two dollars. Their goal is, basically to get to 500 dollars. So if they get to 500 dollars the class can go to the Fun Park. And that's what they're aiming towards. From that one week of experience where I've had one week of control, I've learnt so much just by being in that classroom and teaching. I guess that's how I'm developing into a teacher.*

JULIE: *You think that makes the difference?*

DEIDRE: *I think I've learnt a lot. Going into school has, like university, prepared me, and once you're actually in there doing it—I think ... it's hands on. It's hard enough when we really learnt about so much (for instance) behaviour management. Each school's different regarding behaviour management, so I think once you're in there you really get to know all that kind of stuff.*

Deidre describes this activity she is using with the class as an example of her work as part of her inquiry in school practicum and an approach which focuses on linking theory to practice and practice to theory through extended Experiential Learning (Dewey 1938) that is situated in practicum. Deidre describes this as 'hands on'. Victoria University as with many universities, pursues placements to enhance and embed practice and theory within the teacher education experience. Experiential learning is an emerging theme for Deidre and a relived epiphanic moment regarding her learning gained through a narrative.

JULIE: *So, tell me how you got to teacher education? What were the key moments in your learning that got you to your teaching identity?*

DEIDRE: *Uhhh. Back when I was about four years old. I'd play with my toys, and ... I loved the idea of routine, like even back then I like I'd play with my toys and mark the roll, and doing handwriting. In general, I'm just a very routine person. I get up in the morning at five past seven in the morning, and I just have a strict routine. I think schooling has always been very routine for me, and I always enjoyed the routine of it all. Maybe it's because I have had anxiety, I'm not sure, but I just find that routine is very comforting. So as I got older, I liked the idea of having my own group (class) that I could talk to and help them to develop.*

Deidre is delightful as she speaks of early play experiences. The impact of these learning experiences is reflected through joyful reliving of the events. There is a strong connection to the

stable, secure environment in which the experiences took place. Both early play and being within secure structure and boundaries are emerging themes which have been part of the early learning setting in which Deidre gained foundational knowledge and identity and these are evidence of a relived epiphanic learning experience.

There are two developments here. Firstly, Deidre has become very animated and impresses the points above using hand/arm gestures. The impact of the gestures creates features of a linguistic dialogue. Her arms move gently towards me as if she is making an appeal when she states, ‘So as I got older, I liked the idea of having my own group (class) that I could talk to and help them to develop,’ and soon move towards her chest to rest.

Throughout this section of dialogue indicated above and also below, Deidre has painted and stopped many times to gain eye contact. Her movement is rhythmic. She talks, she paints, she stands tall; to gain eye contact and reapplies paint to her brush and artwork—repeating the pattern of movement. Remembering that the canvas is flat and in front of Deidre, the pattern of movement is outlined below (see Figure 13.2).

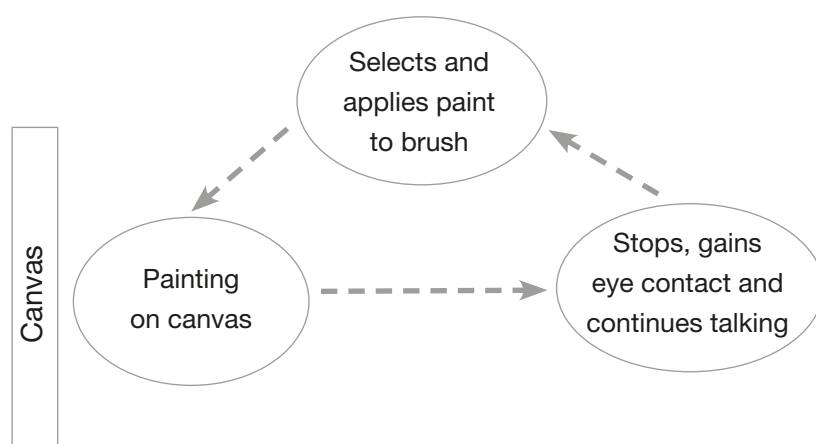


Figure 13.2: Deidre’s movement pattern while painting

The second point to make is that Deidre chooses a new colour. The brush is dipped deep into yellow paint and is thickly applied in a block of colour (Figure 13.3).



Figure 13.3: Yellow paint applied

I notice that while the topic of routine is discussed in her story, Deidre consistently works at this image to form the block of colour. It soon is to become the neck of the figure within the painting.

JULIE: *And who's that group?*

DEIDRE: *Just like having students, and someone not necessarily to look up to me, but just someone; not even as a friend, just having a group that I could talk to and ... help out, and ... and umm, There's been a lot of things that I've wanted to be. I wanted to be a writer, because I was always writing. I think that's my strength, but then you think, 'Is that something to really make money from, or is it a hobby?' Then I thought of something I could do, I mean—I love routine and I like having my own group of kids that I could help and encourage, and motivate. And then I thought of, well I like writing, so maybe I could be an English teacher. But I want to have my own group though; I mean it's primary school, but then I want to do English, so then I took this course⁴ and I could have a choice of both and result to what I want to be, and it's going towards primary school. I'm thinking as much as I love writing, I can always write, but I love primary school; the kids are still at that kind of stage where they're still good and respectful as well.*

Once the yellow is finished, so too is the topic. She tilts her head and makes a quick grimace at the block of colour she has completed and moves to her left to approach the canvas from this new vantage point.

JULIE: *Any other moments that might've ... contributed to why you chose teaching? Are there any things that have been pivotal in this decision?*

DEIDRE: *I need time to think about that—I'm sure there have been.*

Deidre has her face close to the canvas and some details in the image appear black (Figure 13.4).



Figure 13.4: Black is chosen for parts of the image

4 Deidre is completing a Bachelor of Education (P–12) which qualifies teachers to teach in primary and secondary years of schooling.

DEIDRE: *Almost every single member of my family's been a teacher. Apart from my mum and my dad, I've got an uncle, aunties and cousins who are all teachers. My uncle was actually a principal, and auntie's been a principal as well. I don't know, I couldn't say, like I don't believe that it's actually in my blood, but many of those parts [ideas] have been passed onto me, like I've never been pressured to do ... like I've always been told to do what you want and ... so, I honestly think it's been routine, and kids and helping them develop, and seeing them grow ... subconsciously, that does help along the way. Oh, my colours are so dark!* [Deidre laughs]

JULIE: *It's nice!* [I refer to her work]

DEIDRE: *No it's not.* [This time Deidre laughs loudly] *I'll put some pink in there.*

Deidre collects pink paint to apply and places it onto the image. Standing back a little, she observes the shape and colour in terms of the overall effect on the image (Figure 13.5).



Figure 13.5: Areas of pink are applied

JULIE: *I don't usually do this.* [I roll some paint onto my canvas for a new effect]

DEIDRE: *It's good. I like the effect* [Deidre is referring to my work].

She spends quite a bit of time again, working in silence. Determined to lighten the tone of the canvas she selects a container of white paint and adds this to her work. Her head is down low close to the canvas at times and she has selected a roller and has dipped it in red paint to apply to the background and paints around the image she has placed in the foreground.

JULIE: *From working in schools, what do you understand about praxis inquiry?*

DEIDRE: *Umm, what was my knowledge of it?*

JULIE: *Well yes, what did you know, what do you think about that?*

DEIDRE: *Well yeah, every uni class they talk about praxis inquiry* [Deidre laughs]. *Well I think it's umm, very useful; that's my opinion of it. It never really occurred to me before I started*

this course; I never knew what they meant, never heard it before in my life. But those first few instances when we did praxis inquiry, I was amazed by how much I learnt, observing and reflecting, and in my own practice as well. Umm, so what exactly do you mean? I think praxis inquiry is the best way to start anyway and umm ... it's kind of less intimidating. You just kind of observe, but in the end it was about getting in there and ... the best way I've learned it is through teaching, but to get to that point I've had to do praxis inquiry a lot, and I still do praxis inquiry, and I think it just happens, it's just natural.

Learning through praxis inquiry has been prompted in the questioning (and not an emergent theme), but is ongoing over the course of her school practicum and university experience. Cumulative moments of learning through praxis inquiry have produced a *natural* way of learning (and this is therefore included in the emergent themes) and lens for learning for Deidre as she presents a cumulative epiphanic narrative on this topic.

By now, Deidre has slowed down in her speech and her art making. She is more selective. She slows her story to think carefully about her topic and the words she chooses. Similarly, in her painting, the choices she makes are clearly monitored. When choosing colours, she looks at and considers the colours available to her and carefully chooses where to place the paint. 'In the realm of art this is a relatively acceptable point of view.

It means something quite specific to whether a painting is executed in water colours or in oil, whether a knife is used to apply paint or a spraygun (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996, p. 230).

Whatever the form of inscription, it is a semiotic resource as applied to language (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996).

.....

JULIE: *Is there anything further that's pivotal in the way you learn?*

Here Deidre stops. She stands erect and holds the roller vertically in front of her body. It is placed so the paint will not drip while she is distracted from applying the paint. She stands motionless for a few seconds before speaking. She is calm and her speech although fast at times is carefully measured and words are monitored. She pauses ...

DEIDRE: *I'm not sure. You see I like ... the thing is, I like to talk, and I'm opinionated, but that doesn't mean I'm not good to my peers and my kids; it just means that I like to talk about the things I feel every kid has an opportunity to learn. I'll try to do that. See, if I've got a will and an opinion then I'm going to put forward. To be honest, you know, I was okay at school. I had some good teachers and I've had some teachers that I've thought, 'Well,*

that's not right,' and they've had students that were their favourites and I've never liked that. I was never one of those students that, you know, one of the favourites. So that's not right.

The following is a story about her friend.

DEIDRE: *My boyfriend, he had a really hard time at home—primary school and high school. His teacher was referred to as being like Hitler, and it really upset him. So, he just had this opinion that teachers were really bad and, as I was saying, 'After this degree I want to do teaching,' and I was thinking that I want to have kids, and I want to share my knowledge and I want one day for the kids to go, 'Oh, she was great!' I was thinking, 'Oh, I don't want people to think what happened to my boyfriend and, like, teachers are like dictators.' He got laughed at in class and he [the teacher] would say 'Oh that's ridiculous!' He would laugh and the kids would laugh. They were laughing at my friend. And I think, 'That's not right!' and I just think, 'You know what, these people are going to be our future,' and I trust myself. I said I'm opinionated, sometimes highly opinionated. I would like to be the one to bring these kids to the future, because I think I'm a good person. I am a good person.*

The growing serious reflection revealing personal integrity and expectations evidenced when Deidre states, '*I want to share my knowledge*' has implications for Deidre's capacity as a social change agent. She is firm when she talks of 'these people are going to be our future and I trust myself. I said I'm opinionated ... I would like to be the one to bring these kids to the future ...'. The concern and tension in this narrative depict claims integrity of 'I' and 'self' and expectations and these are emerging themes for Deidre and present as a minor/illuminative epiphany at this point which arouses, provokes and awakens her desire for not only the future of her students but her own.

.....

JULIE: *That's really interesting.*

DEIDRE: *These thoughts are all muddled up into one big 'shemozzle' ... they barely come out in English, but what I'm trying to say is, there's quite a few reasons. 'Right the wrongs.' I saw the good teachers and the bad teachers and I thought, 'I want to do that.'*

This is an example of reflective praxis, an emergent theme. Deidre refers to 'good and bad' teachers and teaching. Here, she states that from the experience she is able to analyse/synthesise and make judgements about this from her experiences and this encounter will inform her own practice. I encouraged her to give examples of actual incidents and she indicates this in the following story.

JULIE: *Do you remember what they did?*

DEIDRE: *Yes!*

JULIE: *What did they do?*

DEIDRE: *Just like, I'd say [referring to her own teachers she had when she was at school], 'Oh I've got my drama play on the weekend,' and then on Monday morning they'd ask me 'How was your drama play?' and I thought, 'Oh that's great, they remembered!' and it's little things like that. One of the most ... The highlights of my school, and I don't know why, two things ...*

Deidre has not painted while telling this part of the story. She held up the brush in front of her body and waited before beginning the following plot. When she began to paint, the remainder of the story unfolded. She clearly became more engaged with each piece of the story and began to speed up her speech and, interestingly, paint with large broad brush strokes from left to right across the canvas. She maintained highly animated actions and was excited and she continued on to the next part of the story.

DEIDRE: *... the first one was in grade 5/6 we were doing a media unit, like studying media, and every Monday morning we'd come to school and the teacher would read things from the newspaper, and we would sit there in anticipation. There were many stories, like the 'Big Scandals' and I was thinking, 'What? Are you serious?' It was amazing to me. If someone spotted a UFO, she'd read it to us. She would read about different things and I just thought it was the most interesting work [lesson] and it inspired me to do media.*

JULIE: *Oh really?*

DEIDRE: *Yeah, and there was one more thing—about a teacher I had in the past. I really liked her a lot, and she still teaches at that primary school too. I saw her recently. She is encouraging me to try to apply there. I had anxiety.*

Recognising the value of student engagement is an emergent theme in the previous narrative told through a relived epiphanic learning moment from her past. When Deidre introduces a teacher from her past, slowly her hand touches her heart. She is not aware of this gesture. As if involuntarily checking the quickening of her heart beat, she tells the next part of the story. Her hand moves from her breast and is clenched. She has stopped painting because her hand is clenched. In the other hand she holds a small bottle of white paint close to her breast too. Anxiety shows itself as a restlessness or uneasiness and maybe is connected to a much larger feeling of concern or fear. It is difficult to make a judgement on the amount of emotion behind this story,

but from her actions in this instance she tends to lean towards real concern and nervousness when telling the following incident.

DEIDRE: *When we had swimming, there was a permission letter that was sent home. They asked basically, 'Has your child had swimming experience?' And my Mum said that I was learning swimming, but I'd only just started learning, so they thought I had a confidence that I didn't have. So straight away, they put me in the advanced group. I was a prep ... this is when the 'fear' started. So I was a prep student, and straight away we'd jump in the deep end and I couldn't swim and I'd panic and get anxiety. And every time we went swimming, I'd panic. I couldn't tell anybody about my panic reaction. So, I had this complete fear and I didn't want to go to school and mum would ask, 'Why?' and I would say, 'I don't know.' Swimming was on Tuesdays' and everyone said, 'Come, it'll be fun.' But they couldn't tell that I was scared to jump in the deep end and the teacher didn't know what they were making me do, that ...*

Deidre begins applying blue to the brush and she arranges a block of blue on the canvas. Representing a dress on the image that is emerging, she applies the paint in broad strokes. The brush strokes are applied with some force and the brush is repeatedly dipped in the aqua blue colour as she discusses what I have termed 'the swimming lesson' story (Figure 13.6).



Figure 13.6: Blue is applied roughly with a brush

Early years' experiences and safe and secure environments have once again emerged as important themes as already noted. This is a story which gains emotional momentum and at times Deidre moves her hand to clasp at her chest while at other times she clenches the brush and blue paint bottle tightly while she endeavours to relate a poignant part of the story.

JULIE: *Ahh, so did they not know you or?*

Before I can finish the sentence Deidre continues quickly. She is passionate and the story has an urgency to be told.

DEIDRE: *Yeah, it must've been that, because Mum said, 'Yes'; 'Has your daughter or son had swimming experience?' and Mum said 'Yes,' ... because I had started swimming lessons.*

Deidre emphasises this point twice here. This may indicate the importance of this event. Similarly, she places emphasis on her art. At this point she is angry. The strokes are fierce and her head is down and her face is set above the particular section of the canvas.

She paints, almost hitting the surface each time and making sure she has ample paint on the brush, she regularly weaves back and forth. She only stops to look up at me appealing to make meaning of the story. The pattern on the canvas builds (Figure 13.7).



Figure 13.7: Blue area builds as paint is vigorously applied

JULIE: *Oh yes, because you were starting, I understand.*

DEIDRE: *Yeah, and they just said, 'Alright, we'll just put you in the big group.' I couldn't tell my parents because I thought they'd think I was dumb or too scared. So, I had complete anxiety and that lasted for two years, or one [thinks deeply to remember accurately], no it must've been two years, because when I was in grade 2, I had this fantastic teacher. I'd gotten back from swimming, and I was just so anxious that I was sick, and so I went to tell my teacher that I felt sick. And as I told her, I vomited all over her, and she didn't get angry or upset; she just went, 'It's okay,' and that relaxed me, and then I told her why. She cleaned it all up, and then I told her why I was feeling that way and the reason I felt so sick, and she rang my parents and they picked me up and she said, 'look Deidre's been anxious at swimming lessons ...' and it all changed. My mum was better after that, she was—that moment was a big moment for me.*

This narrative contains a major epiphanic moment for Deidre. She gasps and clutches her chest on the word 'moment' and is slightly bent to be close to her painting. The trauma is evident as she elaborates on the theme of teacher–student relationships and the empathic response each may hold for the other.

DEIDRE: *So, teachers like that really helped me. I still remember how she dropped her roll book. She had a roll book and she dropped it onto the floor as I was vomiting, and she was saying, 'It's okay, it's okay.' Most people would say, 'Oh! That's disgusting! Quick, go over to the bin!' She didn't move me or ... [Deidre slowly stops painting].*

JULIE: *So you're telling me she cared?*

DEIDRE: *She cared, yeah. Yeah, so I really liked her.*

I give time for Deidre to recover after an emotional story. Both of us are silent and slowly we begin to talk—this time, both Deidre and I, to talk about the artwork. This provides a common space. We are both glad of the platform from which we can begin a conversation. Art making can provide a conduit for gathering and rallying thoughts and also for providing a gap for silence.

This moment presents an unexpected development and evidence of the close relationship that is forming. It is for me a stark reminder that the interviewer cannot be neutral (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). However, I am also reminded that one of the reasons this methodology was developed was to experiment with a new type of technique; to break boundaries and disrupt the discourse of the regular structure of interviewing in research.

.....

DEIDRE: *There've been quite a few things that I think have all added up to being both good and bad experiences in primary school and ...*

JULIE: *Thinking through ...*

DEIDRE: *Yes, and rationalising with 'that was good, that was bad', but in the end it couldn't be that bad so I wouldn't want to go back there again, because I want to teach! [Deidre laughs] My boyfriend's tried to do CAE [Council of Adult Education] because he dropped out when he was in year 9 and for a while, I thought that maybe he had like a learning disability or something. He said he was tested for that and they said he had something like dyslexia. He couldn't process his thoughts properly or something ... and so, you know, it would take him a lot longer to understand something and he would get bored in class easily probably because of that. Obviously the class wasn't going to help him because of that, like, 'Oh, you'll be right.' He had one good teacher in grade 5, and he started producing really good work; she went on maternity leave, and he had another teacher, you know, not as supportive and he didn't do as well in the end, didn't go to school [Deidre pauses here for quite some time].*

Deidre has provided a short case and quietly reflects on this story before moving on. Based on reflective practice in the classroom she evidenced that 'rationalising with "that was good, that was bad"' and suggests some critical thinking on this topic and this has already appeared in this interview as an emergent theme. It is a minor/illuminative epiphany situated in the process of this narrative that provokes a tension and a desire to understand and gleaned from the experiences described in the story.

.....

DEIDRE: ... *And I think having routine helps you with anxiety, because everything's in order, in place and it's just comfortable.*

JULIE: *Well, I think generally kids do.*

DEIDRE: *Yeah, and when I said I was having a procedure done on my nose, they said, 'Oh, no.' But I said, 'No, it's a good thing.' I said I was having breathing difficulties and I'm having it done and I was excited, and they started asking me questions and started saying, 'Oh when I was young, I had my tonsils out,' and I said, 'Really?' and just ...*

Deidre doesn't finish the sentence and smiles with shyness and returns to painting as her sentence fades. I awkwardly attempt to continue the sentence for her, as I feel she is uncomfortable as this story was drawn from a very personal event.

JULIE: ... *And that makes connections for students, which is really sensible and also educationally, it's good for them to know of your honesty.*

Honest and open discussion is an emerging theme and valued by Deidre. She moves along to elaborate on this theme, which leads to respectful conversations.

DEIDRE: *I really, really like my kids and the teachers and, and I think they like me. I think it's reached the point where they know—'I'll respect you; you respect me.' And I had to have this talk with them for a while because they were trying to get away with things that they thought I wouldn't know of; like going to the toilet or to have a drink from the taps, but they should do it at recess and lunch. So, if they do go, it's a two 'dollar' fine, and they say, 'Arrghh!,' so they'll try and test me!*

JULIE: [I laugh at the idea of students testing Deidre] *Oh no!*

DEIDRE: ... *'Cause they knew where I stand and I think that developed a good relationship.*

JULIE: *That's right.*

Deidre pauses again. She is reflecting on this statement. It is a moment and claim of evident of her ability to engage self-evaluation. A noble claim contained in the last statement, I presume she is silently reflecting over this development in the narrative.

JULIE: *So, how's the journey been?*

DEIDRE: *I've never found the university like this before. Obviously there's a lot more work outside hours. My previous course in creative writing didn't feel like work. My first assignment*

was an assignment from you, and I got the worst mark I've gotten in my entire history. It was my first assignment and it was the on the topic of diversity, and I've never received a mark that's been so low. I thought, 'I've got to really, really try now to read the criteria very carefully.' So yeah, so it has been the most work I've done in my uni career. It's a lot of work, but I'm learning so much more and [even though] the days have been more stressful. I think once I have my own classroom and I'm teaching, and I'm not being watched by two mentor teachers. I'm in a team teacher classroom practicum and there are other teachers watching me too at the moment, but when I'm not in that situation, I'll be fine. My classroom rules are just not the same as this teachers classroom. I don't agree with them, but I'll have to go with them for now; but I'll be fine once I'm in there.

Deidre has adjusted somewhat to the rigour of university and the academic workload of teacher education and this is an emerging theme, which includes negotiating mentor teacher spaces and opposing ideas.

JULIE: *Does that make a difference, being there in the classroom on your own with the students?*

DEIDRE: *Yes, being there on my own; I know that if I happen to make a little mistake, it's okay to make a mistake and not having to write it down in reflection. I know that I'm really good and I know when I make mistakes, I know when things go wrong and actually, to be honest, most of the time I say, 'I know, I know, I know, I know,' and I don't even have to write them down, I just know. When people say for instance, 'You got them in to a task a little bit too early ...' I know! 'Make sure when you're explaining things, you talk a bit more ... blah, blah, blah ...' I know! When I focus on negative things and say, 'Stop that' or 'I'm not going to continue till people stop talking,' it is far better if I just start the session and they're listening. Now I know that, and as soon as she [mentor teacher] told me, I made changes accordingly straight away.*

JULIE: *So it's really ...* [Deidre interrupts and continues]

DEIDRE: *I think I've developed. Now I can tell straight away when I've done something that's right. I can feel it and I say to myself, 'That went well, I can tell.' When kids are doing their work, I feel like they have understood what was asked of them. I know when I go 'bad'. I know this sounds wrong, but I wish there wasn't a teacher watching me, 'cause there were times when she had to leave the room, and I was just so ... fine with that, but and I shouldn't be fine with that, because if anything bad happens it would not be good, but at the same time, I felt confident.*

Deidre engages in self-talk, which may assist in shaping her ideas and emerging identity as teacher, for example, '... and I say to myself, "that went well, I can tell"' is an indication of her

ongoing reflection and learning and is an emergent theme for Deidre. Not only is there a sense of confidence in her work; she states, 'I felt confident,' noted as an emergent theme. There is a long silence and I notice that Deidre appears to be working on details of her artwork. She is concentrating on the details of the image and reflecting on experiences that have been described. Cumulative experiences have enabled the narrative and learning. They are still resonating in my thoughts. We are both thoughtful and it becomes clear we have both forgotten the question and topic we began.

DEIDRE: *So, what was your question again, I've just completely ... [we both laugh]. It's been really tough but, I knew it was going to be tough.*

JULIE: *It is rigorous. Did you do okay?*

DEIDRE: *Yes. I think ... obviously there are other people that struggle a lot more than others, but I did okay. I'm still struggling with the preparing lessons and everything and, you know, asking myself, 'What would be a good way to do something by using, multiple intelligences?' for instance, and I'm always trying to do that. I'm always using other people's ideas rather than mine 'cause mine always happen to be literacy, so why not use visual instead. So that's what I do. I try to use multiple intelligences. There are many kids at different levels too and you have got to make sure the lessons are for all students because there are a lot of students in the classroom ...*

There is an emergent theme here in the story; it is one of wanting to aspire. Deidre has ambitions of wanting to meet the needs of all her future students. Aspiration is a theme arising from a tension within her, to be able to target learning and teaching and to become a professional practitioner. A minor/illuminative epiphanic moment, Deidre drifts off and moves to attend to painting. There is a sustained silence. I know we are both thinking of the challenges she has described for teachers in contemporary classrooms.

JULIE: *Anything else that you'd like to add?*

DEIDRE: *What's the most significant action? I just thought of one more again.*

JULIE: *What is that?*

DEIDRE: *Over the last two years, I've actually honestly felt happy. Like, I can actually say the people that I've been working with—I laugh with them, and you know when you laugh and just ... I like these people [her pre-service teacher friends and colleagues] and I don't think I ... I've never felt this close to a group of people in my uni life. It makes a lot of difference because I can talk to them. They are all very disciplined and I'm very, very*

close to them. I'm really sad because it's going to be hard to catch up with them once this is over, with all the teaching and ... everything.

JULIE: *Some of them will turn into 'old friends'.*

DEIDRE: *Yes. I laugh when I think, 'Oh, I really like these people [university friends]. I'm laughing and it feels good. It's hard to explain but it feels good. I've never felt this before. I work with really good people.*

Deidre is positive and her happiness is convincing when she describes the pleasurable experiences she had while at university and during teacher education. Appreciating the friendships and moments of joy we finish on a relived epiphanic moment of acknowledging positivity that comes from collaborative learning. We both look at the image Deidre has created on the canvas. There is a pause.

JULIE: *Who is she?* [I refer to the image Deidre has created on her canvas.]

DEIDRE: *I think she's one of my students!*

.....

My artwork in response to Deidre



Figure 13.8: *Disrupting the discourse*, Julie, acrylic on canvas

During this interview, there has been a significant shift in Deidre's relationship to the artful process. Her apprehension and nervousness has shifted during the conversation. She has engaged and produced an image. It is an image projecting confidence and happiness. It communicates her story. The art passes beyond the limits of ordinary text; it is what teachers aim to do and is a highly evocative interplay of communication (Bagnoli 2009a).

Deidre articulates her view of her learning and reveals the cognitive changes and by doing so, delves into 'bigger picture' themes, which include mentors, rigour, emotional and contextualised experiences to exemplify some joyful experiences.

In an attempt to redress what is narrative mode and what is not, Deidre's artful interview allows a freedom for discovery of personal and professional events and anecdotes.

I set out to treat the visual and written literacy equally in disseminating meaning through their unique forms; to take fresh look at the visual (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996), which considers content that is unique and at the same time researches a domain that moves from the traditional thesis.

For me, Deidre's rich stories are filled with ideas which move beyond the limits of a regular interview to outshine traditional research discourse and thesis writing.

CHAPTER 14

DISCUSSION

This discussion chapter sets out to position the reader inside the data as a discussion of the mindshifts, significant factors and impact of epiphanies that are illustrated in the preceding 10 chapters. The previous chapters illustrate the life worlds of these preservice teachers and the researcher's identification of mindshift that emerge through the epiphanic moments generated from the participants' narratives. The chapter also explains the process of identifying the emergent themes in more detail in an attempt to answer the research questions raised at the beginning of this thesis. The research questions outlined in the beginning are as follows,

1. Is a mindshift apparent in preservice teachers?
2. What are the significant factors that enable this mindshift process to occur for the preservice teacher?
3. What is the impact of encountering a mindshift transition for a preservice teacher?

The first question focuses on whether a mindshift has occurred and indeed whether there is evidence that particular kinds of mindshifts did in fact emerge for preservice teachers involved in this research. The second question brings the belief that there are factors that influence the appearance of the mindshift as noted in the voices of the participants in the interviews conducted. Question three seeks to illustrate the impact of the mindshifts on the preservice teachers' personal and professional 'selves'. In summary, the section that follows highlights how the data from the participants' narratives address these three questions and the issues that have been raised inside the questions. In reviewing these questions I return to the data to bring evidentiary moments that are demonstrated in the interviews. In addition I draw attention to the rich art making moments that served as a catalyst to the generation of deep insights of selfhood, otherness, belonging and identity. How these factors impacted on the quality and nature of the ten preservice teachers' epiphanies is addressed in the last section of this chapter.

QUESTION 1: IS A MINDSHIFT APPARENT IN PRESERVICE TEACHERS?

To begin, I offer insights from the participant's stories to showcase significant mindshift encounters as they describe epiphanic moments of learning. There were four different kinds of epiphanies that were evidenced by the participants in this study. In each instance I will draw on several moments from the stories of the lives of the preservice teachers to revisit and capture the nature of these four different epiphanies. The narratives highlighted many epiphanic moments that were identified and reflected upon during the re-reading of the transcripts. In the tradition of Denzin (2001) this study revealed that epiphanic moments exist 'during turning points of interactional episodes' (p. 145). These interactional episodes came to life through the use of art making and dialogue with the researcher. The art-making process was a vehicle to the unravelling of particular experiences. In the unravelling, participants were clearer about those elements and circumstances that informed, shaped and heavily influenced the creation of particular mindsets. The importance of art making as a canvass for personal awakenings is therefore acknowledged and affirmed through this research.

Subscribing to the four types of epiphanic moments (Denzin 2001) of major, minor or illuminative, cumulative and the relived epiphany, it became evident that there were collections of learning moments for each of the participants that were aligned with these different types of epiphanies. The categorisation of these epiphanies as noted above takes four forms: the major, the cumulative, the minor or illuminative and the relived. On thinking about major epiphanies, we could see these as 'turning point experiences' that change a person's life forever. I remind the reader that I am looking for moments when a preservice teacher moves in a direction of change and in so doing does not and cannot revert to their 'old ways'. They are unequivocally changed. Abdul presented a story containing a major epiphanic moment which was characterised by the shock of witnessing some elderly patients dying in hospital. While studying nursing he began to shift his understanding of what was unacceptable as a way in which the elderly and families are compassionately managed at this critical time and he stated,

going in to a hospital and [seeing] people dying and I just couldn't cope with that. And the whole concept of a nursing home, it's not something that I have in my culture, you know. I am from an Arabic background, so we you know don't have nursing homes. And to see these people just lumped in there together was very shocking ... You know, they're human beings and they also have their needs and they actually have their ... they have their needs. [*A little frustrated, he picks up spray and begins shaking the can vigorously.*] You have to respect them for who they are and at the same time you know ... how would you like to be treated yourself? [*Abdul sustains eye contact as if appealing.*] And that's

something that I want to want to bring into education ... I think I relate to children ... because I am the oldest in the family and that's something that I've always had to do—help and assist members of the family.

Having listened to that story and witnessed Abdul's gestures at the time, I noted a connection that transpired from this narrative in his actions while he painted and I noted in his chapter that,

Abdul walks to collect a spray paint container and begins shaking it vigorously. Abdul begins to paint while talking and sprays at the top of the canvas. He leans forward over the canvas as if taking command of the painting. He stops to observe his painting. He smiles now and laughs and states, 'That's a terrible colour ...' The emotional state which had developed during his conversation had not allowed him to notice that he applied a colour he was clearly unhappy with ...

The traumatic account of his disturbing narrative led him to reflect on a connection with education. As the witness to his story, I could only assume from this traumatic epiphanic story impacted on him and forever changed the way he viewed the world and led to a significant mindshift. Abdul may now bring empathy to students and families when teaching. It is a thoughtful new perspective in the development of his view of the world as a preservice teacher.

A further example of major epiphanic moment is witnessed during Rebecca's story. While describing what a mindshift might look like, she provides an example based on a devastating fire. The urgency as she elaborates on her experience states,

my mindshift has really come through personal experiences that have impacted on me in some way. Like the fire in Marysville and being there and not being able to escape until someone says the road's clear until after the fire has gone ... It was a profoundly, traumatic thing. So my mindshift from that would have been from thinking everything's cool and right and now thinking, that every day counts.

The trauma of this fire changed Rebecca's view and she asked herself,

What am I doing, just sort of, hanging around?

She formed new questions to answer and to lead her to a future career and important and meaningful existence. As the researcher and as I witness her story, I am compelled to reflect on this narrative and epiphany and noted in her chapter that,

Rebecca tries hard to think. She looks above and holds her hands up, as if the answer she is looking for may drop from above and into her hands at any moment ... The trauma of Marysville remains with her and has shifted her view of herself and her life world ... she describes ... the major traumatic experience of the bush fire 'my mindshift from that [experience] would have been from thinking everything's cool and right and now

thinking, that every day counts'. The account presents a major epiphany, and Rebecca thinks deeply about her existence after surviving the fire. She voices a new question: 'What am I doing, just sort of, hanging around?'

During the narrative I noted the connections to Rebecca's art work at the time. Her artful actions here provided some further evidence of the major epiphanic moment and I further documented 'Rebecca blends the warm colours until they are almost all absorbed by black (Figure 12.3)' as evidence for the major epiphanic encounter.

I have come to see the cumulative epiphany to mean a depth of reflection by way of a series of events which have occurred. These events have led the preservice teacher to be moved to know her or his world from a new perspective. For example, when I asked Sue why she wanted to be a teacher, she talked of all the people, experiences and moments that had informed her career choice. It was a collection of episodes which she described,

Teaching was always the fundamental thing in the background; it was the common thing that I always resorted back to. But I'd change my mind—I wanted to be a weatherman or 'girl'... and at one stage I wanted to work at a bakery my whole life. But teaching? I think, when I said I wanted to be a teacher, everyone agreed. Everyone said, 'Oh you'd be a fantastic teacher.' That was the start of it, I wanted to be a PE teacher, and everyone agreed and I said ... 'that's what I wanna do'!

Why did she believe this advice? She asserted,

Well, because they're trusted. I mean, I know that they know me ... friends, family ... like everyone that makes up our little town; both my bosses, teachers—lots of teachers.

I noted in her chapter, that aside from talking with teachers there was a series of conversations with friends and family members and Sue found herself presented with a succession of views from others that prompted the shift in her thinking. Cumulative epiphanies are stimulated in such a way. These relationships were important to Sue, and I reflected on the interview and stated, 'These relationships are formative and shape her ideas and mindshift.' Cumulative encounters are important in epiphanic moments of shift.

In a similar way a minor or illuminative encounter can impart epiphanic shifts. The minor or illuminative epiphany, as the third form of epiphany observed in the interviews is revealed by the underlying tensions or problems in a situation or relationship. It is characteristically an 'aha' moment. Insights are gathered. There is a switching 'on' of the button and a kind of knowing that occurs as the preservice teacher, and reflects on the widespread nature of his or her life world. This sense of deep knowing leads to a greater sense of one's professional stance and in turn enables the participants to reach particular standpoints on what it means to become an effective teacher.

I have chosen a section from Lisa's interview to illustrate the way in which the minor or illuminative epiphany is depicted. Lisa exhibited a feeling of disappointment in her professionalism which created some tension for her. We can observe a shift in her thinking when she stated,

When dealing with troubled students, Lisa suggests,

Be resilient—have a tough skin. Don't take it personally and keep trying with persistence ...

I wanted to know more and asked, 'You never gave up', and she replied, 'Yeah! That was my learning'. Lisa proceeded to tell me a story. She had volunteered to assist at a children's camp. It was a program implemented by a charity for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Her short story was an example of a minor or illuminative epiphanic encounter because there existed a sustained tension as she explained,

At the start, on my first camp, I didn't know what I was doing wrong. It wasn't with all the kids obviously, just one kid, and I'm really sensitive, so, it really got to me. I don't know but I just observed others and their methods. They were always kind, not that I wasn't kind ... I think I just joked with them and then I missed getting that respect from them that they had for their leaders.

The tension suggested the encounter prompted some thinking about, as she terms 'persistence' toward finding a resolution. Lisa had revealed that she learned from her observations of others during these difficult times. The tension had created an inquiry and the re-awakening for her after reflecting on engagement with the children and teachers. It is illuminative and a moment which typifies an 'aha' moment. Stemming from the tension which led to a great deal of self-reflection and persistence, this minor epiphanic encounter created a pronounced and professional mindshift for Lisa.

Similarly Deidre had difficulties with aspects of her teaching and planning for the students in the classroom. There was a tension that arose for her when preparing lessons. The tension within the story as described below shows the apprehension which prompted a question, resulting in an illuminative moment. She stated,

I'm still struggling with the preparing lessons ... What would be a good way to do something by using, multiple intelligences ... so why not use visual (intelligence) instead? So that's what I do. I try to use multiple intelligences. There are many kids at different levels too and you have got to make sure the lessons are for all students ...

Deidre's suggestion concerning the implementation of multiple intelligences in her classroom is illuminative, but was prompted only after an underlying tension. The growing concern she had experience enabled the distinct shift in her thinking to what she believes is an appropriate approach for her class planning. Growing tensions, or moments of apprehensions are fertile ground for mindshift and illuminative experience.

Finally, the *reliving* of experience requires remembering, recollection or recalling of an experience. By engaging in the reliving, the preservice teacher begins to understand his or her life as a teacher in the present moment. Relived epiphanies led to moments when the preservice teachers might recognise how they could enrich their lives in a new way.

To provide an example of a lived epiphany, I want to draw on once again an example from Deidre. Deidre is delightful in her accounts and the following narrative reminded me that common relived experiences that are reflected upon often are vital examples of auto-ethnographic research of practice. Deidre stated,

Back when I was about four years old. I'd play with my toys, and ... I loved the idea of routine, like even back then I like I'd play with my toys and mark the roll, and doing handwriting. In general, I'm just a very routine person. I get up in the morning at five past seven in the morning, and I just have a strict routine. I think schooling has always been very routine for me, and I always enjoyed the routine of it all. Maybe it's because I have had anxiety, I'm not sure, but I just find that routine is very comforting. So as I got older, I liked the idea of having my own group (class) that I could talk to and help them to develop.

This was a heartfelt story and charged with emotion and secrets of her private self. My reflection at the time was to indicate that for Deidre where I note in her chapter, 'Both early play and being within secure structure ... have been part of the early learning setting in which Deidre gained foundational knowledge and identity and these are evidence of a relived epiphanic learning experience.

'There are two developments here. Firstly, Deidre has become very animated and impresses the points above using hand/arm gestures. The impact of the gestures creates features of a linguistic dialogue. Her arms move gently towards me as if she is making an appeal when she states, "So as I got older, I liked the idea of having my own group (class) that I could talk to and help them to develop," and soon move towards her chest to rest.'

The gestural content of the narrative provides evidence of the 'reliving' and it is emotive. It was an enchanting account and I will remember this story for it makes me aware of all the untold relived accounts that assist mindshift in preservice teachers. There can be joy or great sadness when reliving events. It is a profound way to connect experience and learning and epiphanic moments. Stable and secure environments suit Deidre, and some of her students too will benefit from such an approach and perspective as she will bring to students when learning.

Upon reflection and review of the interview data, I was made aware that there were many of epiphanies to choose from which provided examples illustrating the types of epiphanies that occurred during the interviews. I chose 104 examples of epiphanic moments from the 10 participants. These examples were selected according to the relevant content or topics of interest

discussed at the time, the passion and manner observed from participants, gestures, artwork and pace associated with the story in which they were delivered. The four examples I have selected above were included here to indicate the typical style, content and topics of the epiphanies. The distribution of the four types of epiphanies collected from all the interviews is included in Table 14.1.

TYPE OF EPIPHANY	TOTAL
Major	11
Cumulative	24
Minor/illuminative	37
Relived	32
Total	104

Table 14.1: Numbers of epiphanies by type

Table 14.1 indicates the number of recorded epiphanies and the number of major, cumulative, minor/illuminative and relived epiphanies. Additionally, data were gathered concerning each participant's interview and the numbers of epiphanies and types of epiphanies recorded. Table 14.2 is one example of how each interview calculated and documented the relevant epiphanies for each interview. Table 14.2 records information regarding Rebecca's chapter. For her, I recorded nine epiphanies that she related during her interview. Information concerning the types of epiphanic moments was recorded too. A summary from all interviews is located in Appendix 1. This collection provides evidence of each participant's epiphanies and how they were documented.

REBECCA	CHAPTER 12—INTERVIEW 9	
NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES	TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
2	Major	Traumatic
1	Cumulative	Series of events
3	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
3	Relived	Recounting many times

Table 14.2: Distribution of types of epiphanies for one preservice teacher

Always the epiphanic moments were made possible through retelling of the stories, which could not occur without a listener. I was the listener and serve as a witness to the preservice teachers' authentic stories as they emerged in word and art. The art making was a primary vehicle for

the epiphanic moment to emerge and while it is a form of self-expression it manifested as an artistic, symbolic product of praxis (Taylor 2000) and process. The witnessing of the emergence of meaning (the researcher's stance), the speaking and the art making (the preservice teachers' stance) coalesced to contribute to and to shape the shift. The reader is reminded in the methodology chapter how the model for this research inquiry was a deliberate combination of story telling, sitting alongside studio practice in art as product and process. My empathic sensing of the artwork, my own making in response to the process and the practice of probing questions all coalesced to generate the mindshift. As an audience member, the witness offered a response to this performative mode so deep knowing surfaced. The purpose of presenting the examples and commentary above in this discussion is to indicate that mindshift did occur. The focus of the following commentary addresses Question 2 from this discussion and centres on mindshift and the factors which enable these kinds of shifts to occur.

If we are to assume that developing mindshift is determined by opportunities, collective moments and experiences, which exist in the lives of preservice teachers, we can already begin to understand how important these factors are in contributing to their epistemological development as preservice teachers. Narratives are deeply entrenched and feature dynamic components to build each story as seen in the visually descriptive chapters that precede this discussion. The second question directly relates to retrieving the factors from the preservice teacher narratives as they occurred in this study. The findings in response to this question are therefore derived from the narrative and visual data. Factors are identified, especially those that demonstrate important components to each individual's narratives while being illustrative of their epiphanic process. The themes, which provide evidence of the factors and people who impacted on the preservice teacher and the matters that shaped their thinking and practice, are addressed in this section of the discussion.

Question 2 concerns and addresses the significant factors.

QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS THAT ENABLE THIS MINDSHIFT PROCESS TO OCCUR FOR THE PRESERVICE TEACHER?

During the interviews, moments of ‘mindshift’ were apparent during the shared encounters. The mindshift and the quality of encounter drew attention to the factors that enabled unique shifts of understanding and meaning for each participant. Through engaging in reflection on action, the participants were able to reveal factors that emerged in their narratives as they presented experiences in the form of challenging or disempowering moments for their learning. These factors provided greater insight and clarity around how the participants came to enter into the teaching profession and to view teaching as a vocation. Factors such as relationships with family members, the nature of participants’ classroom experiences, the quality of mentorship, life trauma, travel, and other spontaneous significant events, were some of the factors derived from stories in the data. These appear as themes and are flagged at the beginning of each interview. For example, Abdul’s story shares an awareness of socio-cultural values stemming from his encounters in Arabic cultures. Likewise, Carl was transformed through travel, which enabled him to encounter other value systems that were then applied to his life and learning. Meredith’s study showcases factors of family interactions and her experience of disability and ‘otherness’. Anne’s story is distinctive too, and addresses deeply personal ideas about relationships, inclusivity and the importance of her need to be inspiring of others. Social justice also features in the story of Lisa, whose ethical and sensitive approach to working with individuals who are the least advantaged shapes her values of activism and social agency. Each preservice teacher participant contributed stories of events, which I have been able to reflect upon to highlight the significant contributing factors for developing themes. A table similar to Table 14.3 was presented in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.2) and such a table is useful as here it assists the reader to gather a picture of some examples of the contributing factors evident from the narratives.

David, in a similar manner to Lisa, is open to new ideas (Dweck 2012) and shows concern for social and ethical responsibilities for family and others. Ivan has ideas which stem from reflecting on realistic approaches to teaching and systems, but rely on creative approaches to secure and re-imagine learning environments. Deidre’s thinking has been shaped by childhood play and experiential learning (Dewey 1938). She values honesty and empathy as qualities she will embody when she is a teacher. Rebecca thinks deeply about ideas of success, caring and collegiality. Family, significant mentors and rural life have shaped Sue, the physical education major.

All the participants show the presence of epiphanic moments, and for each of them this illuminative experience has shaped a deeper awareness of their sense of space and place and being and becoming as they move into becoming graduate teachers working in the field and what their practice might look like in their future classroom. The impact of experiences, relationships with people and places and the life choices we make may hold insights into career paths and what we











NAME AND ARTWORK	FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STORIES OF MINDSHIFT				
ABDUL 	Mentor teachers: Inspiring teachers / facilitators	Cultural background and experience: developing moral and social values	Social justice: Action and integrity	Work and family values	Authentic praxis and critical reflection
CARL 	Travel: journeys of learning and discovery	Risk taking	Work: educational expectations	Self-doubt	Responsibility: for students and others
MEREDITH 	Social justice: ideas about diversity	Family values	Role models	Passions	Advocacy: issues surrounding disability
ANNA 	Relationship building: knowing students	Self-talk in the development of emergent identity	Feeling safe: secure environments	Positivity	Routine and personal organisation
LISA 	Persistence	Sense of activism and an interest in change	Travel and volunteering: for insights into socio-political issues	Respect and listening: to mentors and elders	Wellbeing and holistic approaches
DAVID 	Prior work experiences and learning	Expertise in disciplines	Family expectations	Moments of connecting with 'others'	Responsibility for others less fortunate
IVAN 	Valuing positive and negative experiences to shape learning	Experimenting in the field	Recognising disposition of teachers and colleagues	Knowing students and their culture	Trust in the learning even if it seems irrelevant at the time
REBECCA 	Self-critique: through critical practice	Secure environment for teachers	Constructivism	Understanding and recognising personal success	Aspirations for those with a disability
ANNE 	School placement experience	Passion	Questioning to find meaning about <i>who</i> you are and what sort of teacher you are	Relationships to enhance understanding self	'Being'
SUE 	Persistence	Parents who are teachers	Stepping up to understand self-efficacy	Examining cultural 'norms': habitus	Taking monitored risk and reflecting after feedback

Table 14.3: Factors contributing to mindshift, as emerging from preservice teachers' stories

might become when engaging with the world. I shall point out some specific data that may assist the reader to consider the factors that may illustrate such transformative moments of mindshift.

The following analysis presents common events, experiences and domains, which arise as central to exposing shifts in thinking. For example, Ivan highlights the impact of assessment tasks set by educators as a factor in enhancing or diminishing preservice teachers' notions of self-efficacy and competency. He states,

During this course, it was in second semester of second year and we were studying all about art and art education. I don't know whether it was because I didn't quite get what they were assessing for, but I got really harshly marked for it. I just thought to myself, 'You know what, maybe I'm in the wrong course here; maybe I'm not doing it right?' I just I felt like I'd really missed the mark and therefore maybe I was going to be missing the mark as a teacher.

Ivan adds,

I think that the main thing I keep in mind whenever I'm teaching a class is just how the students see me and, am I the sort of teacher to them I would have liked? Try to be the sort of person that I would have loved to have been taught by when I was that age.

What we can take from this story above is that negative feedback from assessment and grading is a significant factor that can enable a mindshift to occur. When assessment tasks are poorly constructed, communicated, conceived and unclear to students, it is likely to lead to negative preservice teacher experiences, which the preservice teachers can reflect and learn from but may lead to confusion and retention consequences. Ivan's experience also signposts a need for educators to build in clear structures that enable preservice teachers reflect and to deconstruct negative feelings associated with achieving low grades. Creating dialogue that opens up opportunities to discuss strategies for achieving better grades is an important step to achieving student success. Success is built on success. Ivan's story serves to alert us to the fact that significant factors may and do enable the mindshift processes to occur and these do not always have to be positive in nature.

Meredith, when being reflexive on her secondary schooling experience, discusses particular factors from her school life that fuelled her passion for teaching art. When asked about important times or learning moments that enabled a mindshift process to occur, she tells the following story.

In high school I surprisingly, loved art history, because every week we would learn about modernism ... post-modernism or pop art. Every week we learnt about a different movement and I felt like I actually knew something, because I knew the genres and where the different movements came from and why the painters painted what they did and everything. I think that was a big transition for me, because you have to have a

passion for something if you want to teach ... You really have to have a passion for teaching. But I think when you have a genre, or a subject that you like to teach, you would give that 100 per cent.

The reader is reminded after Paulo Freire (1978) who contended that teachers play an important role in creating classroom environments, that these same teachers have staggering capacity to promote critical shifts in every learner's gaze. Meredith's art teacher provided her with exposure to new forms of knowledge related to art history and art movements and it was this experience that ignited her passion to become an art teacher. In this example we see how Meredith became aware of the importance of having inspirational teachers who create inspiring curriculum and stirring schooling encounters. Importantly, she comes to realise that teachers must not only have a passion for the subjects they teach but exhibit motivation for their discipline to create an exciting environment when working with young learners. Deidre's story also highlights the factors of stimulating teachers, who not only take notice of their students' lives, but also facilitate 'awe' 'wonderment' and create 'amazement' in the classroom teaching, learning and pedagogical practices. Deidre offers evidence of the huge impact that her grade 5/6 teacher had on rousing her interest in the world. Her response to her teacher begins when she is asked about her weekend and is described below.

'Oh I've got my drama play on the weekend,' and then on Monday morning they'd ask me, 'How was your drama play?' and I thought, 'Oh that's great, they remembered!' and it's little things like that. One of the ... highlights of my school ... was in grade 5/6 we were doing a media unit ... and every Monday morning we'd come to school and the teacher would read things from the newspaper, and we would sit there in anticipation. There were many stories, like the 'Big Scandals' and I was thinking, 'What? Are you serious?' It was amazing to me. If someone spotted a UFO, she'd read it to us. She would read about different things and I just thought it was the most interesting work and it inspired me to do media.

Seemingly simple ordinary experiences can present as major factors for the extraordinary seeds of major cumulative, epiphanic or illuminative mindshifts. Deidre's captivating account is able to take us back in to the classroom. Her artwork and story are innocent and lasting. It may be how the factors are conceptualised, internalised, imagined and interpreted by individuals, which moves one to experience a mindshift that serves to kindle the shift into the passion that it eventually becomes. Deidre's narrative and painting are seemingly simple and as evidence remind us that it may be a simple moment, which can and does have the impact of epiphany which may often influence our life choices. Many similar short summaries exist in all interviews and all have moments that transpire to indicate the contributing factors for each unique personalised mindshift. These moments are often buried deep in the narratives and require quality of attention to the complexity of the engagement, encounter and the art making.

Sue's engagement with school experience affirms the influence that teachers can have in formulating the life choices around career pathways and employment trajectories of their students in future years. Sue recollects,

It'd have to be a number of experiences. I've had good teaching experiences. [She stops on this point and refers to her painting now.] I don't know what that looks like—

Sue is from a close family and grew up in the country and adds,

I think at a small country school the teacher's always supportive, and the teachers always know you and know everything about you and ... I don't know ... it just helps—it makes you feel important and not alone.

Abdul's story about his Arabic heritage draws our attention to the challenges he faces as a result of his parents' inability to speak English. He too shares the belief that teachers are important 'connectors' in creating a positive school experience and in enabling the student to feel welcomed and affirmed in a school community. For Abdul, having a teacher who displayed an interest in him increased his desire to want to attend to school each day.

I wanted to get into education I guess ... I think I relate to children ... because I am the oldest in the family and that's something that I've always had to do; that is help and assist members of the family ... When I was growing up you know ... my teachers were everything because there was a first language barrier between my parents, and I, and the school, so it was very hard for me to get along with my parents on that same level as I could with my teachers. But, my teachers were always there for me and so when I went to school it was who I was.

In this instance, having teachers who provide young people with hope and opportunities for equitable access to learning facilitates and sustains that student's sense of belonging and willingness to be part of an educational setting. Sue and Deidre's reflections collectively and individually highlight a need for teachers and academics to generate opportunities that allow for meaningful relationships to exist. For Sue, Deidre and Abdul, having a caring and highly motivational teacher enabled them to have a greater clarity and sense of purpose in pursuing a teaching career pathway. Having strong mentors in the form of teachers also supported them in feeling a strong sense of acceptance and belonging in their school community.

Using accounts of social capital theory (Putnam 2000) we can make sense of the ways in which social forces provide a basis for preservice teachers to feel better connected to their communities. The importance of belonging to a community and having strong community connections was also seen as an important factor that precipitated a mindshift process to occur. Lisa's story is set out below to show how her involvement in a charity group altered her perceptions of disadvantaged

learners. A direct result of this mindshift led to a deeper awareness of how to relate to young learners from diverse backgrounds. She explains,

I think my big learning experience was when I joined a charity organisation,¹ which is an organisation for disadvantaged kids. The organisation run camps; they run holiday camps, which usually coincide with the school holidays. They take kids away if they are from a disadvantaged area or minority groups. I just did my last one in Sydney with Sudanese kids—refugee kids, or it could be with Indigenous kids. All my other ones have been with Indigenous kids that live out in the bush—or ... well not in the bush but in rural areas. So, I think that was a huge learning experience for me, because I think just in terms of how (to relate), and it's been ongoing, to relate to kids.

Lisa's story also emphasises the power of working with communities that have a social and moral commitment to improving the collective conditions for all. Being present among individuals and organisations who hold to a moral and social commitment also contributed to preservice teachers re-examining taken-for-granted assumptions of privilege and power. Putnam (2000) argues that social networks contribute to the personal or public good they are also characterised by rules of conduct for bonding. Social networks nurture and open up possibilities for positive social, political and cultural affiliations within the community. For preservice teachers like Lisa, working with local community members gave her the opportunity to do good deeds for others.

Teaching is a privileged space that brings with it responsibilities when working with young people in regards to them becoming and being mindful citizens. It is through modelling and good teacher practices that teachers are able to make a difference to the lives of young people. Abdul makes a strong point on the theme of moral and social commitment and states,

Be conscious of maybe the people around you and the world. And I think you have a responsibility. I honestly believe a teacher is someone who could have the morals and the judgements of someone who's been given this gift.

For Abdul, as a result of deep reflection is able to describe mindshift for him. He is able to describe some of the insights regarding the contributing factors and connections to mindshift.

The mindshift is definitely gradual. I don't think you can just wake up and say, 'I want to be a teacher' or ... there has to be things that have happened ... along the way; like little things that you may not even notice, that just help you decide ... this is how you're going to behave; this is what you're going to do; this is the mindset you're going to be in.

It appears that families play a key role in assisting preservice teachers to engage in mindshift processes. For participants like Abdul and Meredith, family values and cultural background was

1 Lisa refers here to a national educational charity organisation for disengaged students aged 8 to 12 years old.

seen to largely influence the establishment of world views. Many of the preservice teachers, for example, David, Lisa and Sue, discussed how their relationships with parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives, helped to determine their decision to become a teacher. David is struck by the selfless acts of his aunt and how this family member displayed a social and moral commitment to helping others in need,

She would take in struggling people and help them get their act together. I really respected her for that. She had a daughter. I think she had her when she was very young, at maybe 18 years old or so. She was slightly disabled in some way. She was—like a genius, but didn't have the social skills to go with it. So, she looked after her all her life.

Through his observations and interactions with his aunt, David may come to understand matters of inclusion and social justice. In this case, it is the way in which he tells this story that enables me to think he already has a deep capacity to consider of the needs of others less privileged. It seems he is a strong advocate for others less advantaged as he reflects on his aunt's interaction with her disabled daughter and the way in which she cares for her. This I think is also apparent in his painting and the way in which relates this story is sensitive and respectful and heartfelt.

The examples and excerpts above are relevant as they tend to lead to insights and values of participants as they develop as a fourth year preservice teacher. The way in which they view the world can be linked to Bourdieu's notion of habitus. Many of the stories and ideas raised in the data suggest other key themes that have impact on the way in which mindshift enables the way in which they construct their learning and ideologies. For instance, some stories indicate the presence of moral and social commitment and the desire to work with others while gaining transformations and mindshifts. In this sense, I define the idea of having a moral and social commitment as a selfless act which positions the 'other' above one's own perceived needs which impact on participants' understanding and future teaching.

Many stories relate in the broader idea of shared contexts and understandings. The construction of shared perceptions, commitments and understandings add to the learning of preservice teachers as this shared knowledge provides a viewpoint from which we are able to perceive ourselves in social contexts. This is what Habermas, (1987) terms 'life world'. Individuals who have a strong sense of community connection are more likely to have a stronger sense of wellbeing and belonging. Life world is a key theme from the stories from the data and impacts on the performance and future professional experience of the preservice teachers. To add to these key themes I consider the notion of selfhood and the nature of ideas of teaching and learning as important in my response to the third question, which addresses the concept of impact.

QUESTION 3: WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF ENCOUNTERING A MINDSHIFT TRANSITION FOR A PRESERVICE TEACHER?

In this section I elaborate on the quality and nature of the impact of waking up to the mindshift for the preservice teachers. I focus on the key motifs that transpire from the emerging data. The analysis in this section is logically drawn from themes indicated in Appendix I and 2 along with my insights from their commentaries and the art works. There are several key themes that answer the question, ‘What is the impact of encountering a mindshift transition for a preservice teacher?’ The preservice teachers’ responses allude to the nature of teaching and learning, having a moral and social commitment, life worlds, family and habitus and notions of selfhood as impacting on the evolution of quite distinct mindshifts in their lives. These overarching topics will form the basis of the following commentary. Their stories will illustrate the quality of the impact of having had a mindshift and how this mindshift has changed the life worlds of the participating preservice teachers.

ELABORATION OF KEY THEMES FROM FINDINGS

Elaboration on the five key conceptual ideas drawn from the emergent themes is presented in some detail. Each key theme and related concept is probed in an ever deepening manner. The elaborations that follow consider the quality of feeling and the impression that this theme has made on the preservice teacher’s perception of his or her mindshift.

The key themes are:

1. The nature of teaching and learning
2. Moral and social commitment
3. Life world
4. Family and habitus
5. Selfhood.

After delving into the data, I present the five key themes with some poignant reflections to evidence moments of transition moving from the world of the beginning student of teacher education to becoming an understanding and knowing professional practitioner.

1. THE NATURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

C. Wright Mills’ (2000) sociological imagination holds true to the notion that in order to really see one’s place in the world and individual must have a cultural, historical, critical and structural lens. The nature of teaching and learning is far richer when we are able to review pedagogical process

using such a lens. This research affirms constantly the importance of reflective connections, creating a space in which preservice teachers can take on overview of the various components of the nature of their teaching and learning to understand how these moments and components contribute to shape their professional identity. Loughran (2006) argues that it is this developing and responding to insights generated through teaching and learning programs and practice that preservice teachers are better able to know themselves. Knowing of the self is the quest for all human beings. By daily reflecting upon and exploring the nature of this process one is able to steadily develop a clearer understanding about how as a preservice teacher one can deeply know oneself. Prior educational experiences are platforms for examining beliefs and personal mindshifts. Our educational experiences also shape who we are and who we become in the future. The stories that follow expose some of these revelatory moments in teaching and learning where by the participants highlight the impact these insights had on their future professional practice.

From the data discussed here we see that the approaches, settings and resources experienced by the participants varied in each case. The stories reveal approaches that illustrate some highly valued moments of learning. By virtue of capacities and circumstances, some stories acknowledged unfortunate educational experiences they faced at school or university. At times they reluctantly related stories, but often acknowledged and critiqued the teaching approach and learning gained because of the fortunate or ‘unfortunate’ experience. I will relate specifically to two stories. The first is from Meredith. She recalls a time when her autistic brother seemed to be receiving more attention than she was in their primary school. Meredith became resentful at the extraordinary assistance he was given by the teacher (and her mother). As she grew, she adopted a new perspective and this has shaped her teaching and learning approach. She states,

In the end, it's my mum's decision, how she deals with his disability and all I can do is be a support for her. I think that's exactly what teachers are; they're a support system. They're there to just catch you and be there for you, talk to you and give confidence. Obviously teaching the curriculum, but teaching in ways that support the child in being confident to learn.

Carl in comparison discussed a mindshift which exhibits his incredibly sophisticated ontological understanding on the notion of destiny and this has become central to his theory of selfhood. This insight also has a significant place in the classroom as he offers suggestions for teaching and learning. We see this when he affirms the kind of learning that he wants in his classroom,

You want them to learn from what you've done, but you don't want them to be you. You want them to create their own path and destiny.

In a similar way, I found David's insights thought provoking. I became intrigued with the manner by which he was able to connect the pedagogical realm to his sense of self from his learning and

teaching experiences. His story reveals insights about his self that can be seen as extending to and framing his sense of educational space and identity. He explains,

At high school I was always the artist or the drawer. I used to do the school newspaper. I used to do caricatures of the teachers and things like that. I was always known as the kid who draws. In a way the last couple of years ... well, the reason I wasn't ... Well, I could have tried harder. But looking back I knew I just needed a folio to get into what I wanted to do in my area.

David also experiences fear in the school environment. His recollections illustrate how his school experience impacted on the construction of his behaviour and identity,

When I was 13, I was very conscientious at school. One day a kid got expelled. On one occasion at school he pushed me and punched me to the playground and I stood up. All these other guys looked, but I didn't even touch him and after that they put me in the hallway (as punishment). I think that was pivotal! ... Every time I saw him I was a bit nervous and scared. I knew that he was friends of these other 'big' characters, so that made me a bit scared.

David's insights showcase the role of friendship circles in establishing notions of identity and belonging. It was apparent that at the age of 13 his school space was fearful for him and this *fear* is at the core of his sense of his work as a teacher. As I move back in to the data and reflect myself, I can't help thinking that teaching and learning at school were in this preservice teacher's estimation confusing and confronting experiences (academically and socially); they helped shape his sense of personal identity and are counterpoint to his ideologies and hope for the future. I mention this because later in the interview he proceeded to provide a narrative that described a kind 'aunt' who takes in disengaged adults at her boarding house. From my perspective, his manner is gentle and when I reflect on his artwork I experience a calm and peaceful tone. When revisiting the confrontational experiences from his schooling, David uses this occasion of art making and discussion, to draw on the core sense of what it was that was happening to him.

The following encounter with Deidre and her art making illustrate how she has firm ideas about teaching and learning, and admits she is willing to observe and learn from others. Her approach has 'paid off.' While Deidre was in her placement she critiqued the code or rules established in her mentor teacher's classroom. She claims,

My classroom rules are just not the same as this teacher's classroom.

Deidre considers the difference between the methods she has experienced in placement and has now blended the mentor teacher's management code with her own ideas. She can now imagine what she may like to create. Images flow and a new set of professional practice codes have evolved for her classroom activity. The impact of such phronesis guides her future ideology and pedagogical practice.

Deidre's observations and insights have coalesced and she has gathered ideas about codes of conduct for teachers and classrooms. Her swimming story that follows is another example of her ability to determine how her approach to classroom practice and assessment might look for her students on her emergence from her preservice teaching preparation.

When we had swimming there was a permission letter that was sent home. They asked basically, 'Has your child had swimming experience?' And my mum said that I was learning swimming, but I'd only just started learning, so they thought I had a confidence that I didn't have. So straight away, they put me in the advanced group. I was a prep ... this is when the 'fear' started. So I was a prep student, and straight away we'd jump in the deep end and I couldn't swim and I'd panic and get anxiety. And every time we went swimming I'd panic. I couldn't tell anybody about my panic reaction. So, I had this complete fear and I didn't want to go to school and Mum would ask 'Why?' and I would say, 'I don't know'. Swimming was on Tuesdays and everyone said, 'Come, it'll be fun'. But they couldn't tell that I was scared to jump in the deep end and the teacher didn't know what they were making me do ...

Deidre's anxiety as outlined here and the fear noted by David are not regarded as positive emotions, but these two stories do serve to illustrate the manner in which so-called negative encounters can and do inform our selfhood. Deidre indicates that her anxiety continued for many years. The classroom teacher Deidre had was unaware of her anxiety condition. The anxiety abated and was resolved after a lengthy stressful period only when the teacher showed an empathic approach. This example illustrates purposefulness from the reflection on histories in the preservice teacher's preparation as Deidre's narrative indicated. She had been profoundly shaped by this physical education experience.

As indicated in the beginning the thesis, this research has the potential in showing how we can shape educational approaches in teacher education and in professional classroom practice. By adding stories that relate to thoughtful approaches to the field of contemporary pedagogical theory, the study has presented multiple meaningful insights. Anxiety and fear as noted above are emotional realities that inform the work which sets out to give preservice teachers occasion for 'exploration' of their selfhood. The aim of every pedagogical encounter is always to contribute to greater knowledge of planning to improve teaching and learning practice in teacher education.

2. MORAL AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

The second key theme that emerged is encapsulated under the title of moral and social commitment. This is an overarching theme that emerged as a platform for examining the variety of mindshifts and aligns strongly with the 'why' of participants' choice of teaching as a career pathway. Using accounts of social capital theory (Putnam 2000) we can make sense of the ways

in which social forces provide a basis for preservice teachers to feel better connected to their communities and the stories that follow confirm this. Positive notions of wellbeing, community and social inclusion existed for each of these participants. Their stories reflect that these ideas have influenced individuals who exhibited a strong sense of community connection and may be more likely to have a stronger sense of social groups and ideals that constitute belonging. Robert Putnam (2000) argues this point of view when he states that ‘social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”’ (Putnam 2000, p. 18). He adds that there are many forms of social capital and constructs and draws attention to the characteristic of ‘civic virtue’ for the civic good; a commitment to the civic good is more likely to evolve in the presence of communities or networks that include such supportive groups as family, friends, colleagues or ‘committee’ members. The data presented in the preceding chapters and the appendices further evidences that when preservice teachers form relationships with community members and interact with purposeful communication there is a greater likelihood of developing a social and civic commitment. Lisa relates a story in which her civic commitment and virtue emerges inspired by a charity group she joined to assist others and to gain experience as a preservice teacher. She identifies her insight as a learning moment in the story that follows:

I think my big learning experience was when I joined a charity organisation², which is an organisation for disadvantaged kids. The organisation run camps; they run holiday camps, which usually coincide with the school holidays. They take kids away if they are from a disadvantaged area or minority groups. I just did my last one in Sydney with Sudanese kids—refugee kids, or it could be with Indigenous kids. All my other ones have been with Indigenous kids that live out in the bush—or ... well not in the bush but in rural areas. So, I think that was a huge learning experience for me, because I think just in terms of how, and it’s been ongoing, to relate to kids.

Lisa’s story, as those of other preservice teachers highlights the connection between real life exposure and the establishment of a social and moral commitment. Her story also illustrates that there is always the social condition that can and should aim at improving the collective condition for all. Just as Putnam (2000) argues that social networks contribute to the personal or public good, they are also characterised by rules of conduct for bonding of the people in that society. Social networks nurture and open up possibilities for positive social, political and cultural affiliations with community. For preservice teachers like Lisa, working with local community members affords her the opportunity to do good deeds for others. Service to others is identified

2 Lisa refers here to a national educational charity organisation for disengaged students aged 8 to 12 years old.

as a way to contribute to the personal and public selves of being valued. Abdul identified strongly with the notion of service. He described his learning from his early school, career and community experience and described these as ‘awakenings’ around moral judgements that are especially a result of his social affiliations. He states one should,

Be conscious of maybe the people around you and the world. And I think you have a responsibility. I honestly believe a teacher is someone who could have the morals and the judgements of someone who’s been given this gift. But at the same time not all teachers are the same and some think differently.

Being present in the moment enables praxis and Abdul has been inspired by working in a variety of global and social environments. He is mindful of his learning and urges teachers to consider new ways of teaching and being present to students in their care. He emphasises ways that permit the emergence of new parameters, new senses and new points of view. He is open to growing and developing his mindshift; to become conscious of ‘fixed and growth’ mindsets (Langer 1997; Dweck 2012) that bring about transformative change or shift.

Within the mindshifts there are embedded deeply held perceptions, value based commitments and taken-for-granted understandings. Many themes showcase experiences where assumptions and perception are distinguished because of the presence of life worlds. It is apparent from this research that the life world is nurtured by the prevailing characteristics of the community and society in which inhabitants live and choose to draw on for guidance and meaning. Life world has been included in this research as a key and the following section is an elaboration and commentary on the pivotal role of the life world in establishing a sense of connection to the profession of teaching.

3. LIFE WORLD

Life world presents complex ideas, and is a topic which is founded in communicative processes. Habermas (1987) argues that life world adopts assumptions and conventions that are shared by others within a society. The ‘stance’ and action which one displays may be determined by communicative and normalising processes. In this instance, humans respond to problems or issues stemming from alignment to a particular ‘life world’. Lisa related a story to tell how she feels to be apart from the others and how she once challenged the ‘norm’ of her life world. She distinguished this as an annoying episode, which may have challenged her life world logic by a constant *impulse* to think. During the interview she became frustrated at this intrusive personal expectation and stated,

I can’t change. I am a real thinker as much as I am impulsive. I think I over-think about things. I think about why I have this experience and why that experience, because everything has meaning. I constantly re-evaluate where I am at.

Like Lisa, there are examples from the data that illustrate how preservice teachers connect to their social life worlds. Feedback from peers was a theme that emerged during interviews. The preservice teachers developed relationships with peers and spoke about how this reinforced a personalised understanding of work, school and community. This act of engaging with the life world consciously had the potential to develop aspirational solutions and can evoke personal responses from which we view others and ourselves. Life world is closely connected to self-perception, which when stimulated, developed critical thinking identified in the interviews with the ten preservice teachers. Experiences that Anne relived led to a critique of a life world on the issue of peer pressure, which she recounted,

I think there is a lot of peer pressure and it's just hard to break through that ... I think maybe one has to grow out of that stage. I think you also learn a lot about who you are through having close friends and relationships. You learn about 'you' through relationships, because I guess you've got to let that other person know who you are, so, a lot of yourself comes out.

On the topic of life world Rick Roderick (1986, p. 155) states,

Habermas' own theory of social rationalisation depends on the relationship between communicative rationality (characterized by the modern distinction between the value spheres of science, morality and art) and the 'lifeworld' In this usage, the lifeworld is that pre-reflective web of background assumptions, expectations, and life reactions that serve as a source of what goes into explicit communication while always itself remaining implicit.

Looking back on Anne's story and art work, I am now reminded of Roderick's notion of communicative rationality which illustrates the complexity of the pre-reflective web. Anne's story illustrates her attempt to grapple to understand assumptions and expectations about her world. She claimed and argued,

drama brought me out of my comfort zone and maybe it's because of that, I now feel I really want to give that idea to kids perhaps and show them that they can excel perhaps. I just want to show kids what I learnt in a way. Yeah! That's how I understood the world. It was all about 'hands on' learning, magical learning and creative learning; expression and self-expression including, painting and things like that ... I just know so much more—who I am. How to teach and just more about everything, you know? And all the people in my course—I know more about them too.

Preservice teachers reflected often from their own complex experiences which denoted life world space, while acting and connecting with others as the actors within that space. David's moment in his encounter provides some additional insight when he states,

It's about different experiences. It's about the way you think about things a bit differently after you learn something more specific ... I think it is just trial and error or maybe try one way and if that doesn't work try another way and maybe keep trying. Maybe ask the people you can't really connect with 'Why?' Yes! Seeing different things.

Here we acknowledge the constructions of shared understandings, development of self-critique and viewpoints which consistently inform the manner in which the preservice teachers emerge from a way of belonging to a new insight or mindshift. At times during the flow of reflective commentary, I found they were compelled to examine their assumptions, expectations and life consequences. The families and habitus impacted very strongly on their choice to become a teacher and the impact that families had on this decision will be examined in the next discussion.

4. FAMILY AND HABITUS

The impact of habitus and family experiences provided an insight into explaining the way in which the preservice teachers learn about the world. Habitus is described by many researchers; however, I have chosen to use Bourdieu's statement. He suggests the notion of habitus 'designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a disposition, a tendency, propensity, or inclination.' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 214). Family and habitus were closely linked and are factors which impact on the preservice teachers from the data in this study. Through stories and matters that shaped thinking and practice, habitus and family are identified and elaborated in this section of the discussion.

Examples of this habitual state is provided in the response humans have to encounters, relationships and activities which may determine the way engage and move within our world. I have included family in association with habitus as many of the preservice teachers presented family members in a way which cannot be overlooked. I have therefore raised family (in which I included extended family members too) as a notably important part of habitus.

At first glance, it may appear that family and friends and community culture seem similar in many ways for each participant. That observation is true; however, the data show that there are also very different preservice teacher experiences that inform their knowledge of their world and of others. Processes for examining the insights differ for each preservice teacher. Some may view the nature of knowledge through the lens of history for example, while others may gain their understanding from religion or more abstract fields such as the Arts. These factors in addition, do shape preservice teacher practice. An adaptation for categorising features shaping *habitus* might include connections that distinguish and shape each of the preservice teachers and their encounters with people, places, purpose and personality. By developing a framework (Arnold et al 2012) which elaborates on the habitus of preservice teachers can see examples of some of the

agencies that help to shape preservice teacher thinking and learning. Through undertaking this research it is now clear that each participant preservice teacher will have unique personalised encounters and histories. Using features of Carl's habitus, we can see categories of information emerge that can be drawn upon to examine four arenas of habitus (Table 14.4).

EXPERTISE	FIELD/WORK	EXPERIENCES	FAMILY	HISTORICAL
Administration	Literature	Travel	Partner	Religion/school
Motor bikes	Paid employment	Parenting	Sibling	Friendships
Reading	Education: parents are teachers	Educational	Son	Learning from others
Philosophy	Network	Friendships	Father	Self-directed learning

Table 14.4: Funds of knowledge / habitus model

Table 14.5 moves us deeper in to the world of Carl and illustrates how complex habitus can be when further features of habitus might include friends, varieties of places and purposeful encounters across a range of social contexts. These criteria impact on Carl and ultimately shape his experiences and mindshift. Each preservice teacher in the study will have a unique set of complex encounters that feature in their notion of habitus.

PEOPLE	PLACES	PURPOSE	PERSONALITY
Friends	Business workplace	Self-directed learning	Interpersonal
Partner	International travel	Religion	Disposition
Son	Interstate travel	Interests/hobbies	Collaborative
Father and family	Home school etc.	Paid work	Confident
Teachers/colleagues	Local community	Social mobility	Flexible

Table 14.5: Further details of Carl's habitus

This approach (Arnold et al 2012) presented serves to act as a template-of-encounter to explore the current work. By placing the preservice teacher's experiences at the centre of the habitus we can generate a summary of their environments and the impact of the people and places in the life of the preservice teacher. By presenting such a rubric to preservice teachers we can encourage them to self-critique to gain meaning through interpretation of their own individual and collective

social practices, contexts and constructs. Understanding of social practice and these complex connects affect the preservice teacher productivity, participation and may serve to assist them to understand their life world (Putnam 2000). Hooley's framework serves to challenge students to review and rethink their learning and has been adopted in teacher education courses at Victoria University in Melbourne. Reviewing the life world and constructing meanings using such a tool may assist in knowing what makes us think the way we do? It may provide us with a way to consider what Bourdieu (1989) refers as a phenomenon of connectedness with the social practices of individuals being transformative. He suggests, 'By a series of common-sense constructs, they have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily life. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it' (Bourdieu 1989, p. 15). During David's interview he considers 'searching' for ideas about career and his future. He begins to connect with the key individuals from his daily life to ask advice on a career path. In the following excerpt he describes whom he spoke with and the experience he gained for determining his decisions about his future,

Well, my dad's got his own business and a lot of his friends own their own business so I spoke with them and asked them if they had any ideas or if I could give them a hand with advertising and designing their own leaflets for their business. So, I got experience like that.

The preservice teachers have at times in the interviews noted the people in their world, the quality of place and the construction of social arrangements and capital which have had impact on their personality and career progressions. They have arrived at a sense of selfhood that will be examined in the next section of the discussion.

5. SELFHOOD

Selfhood is constructed and distinctly draws from a first person perspective. This phenomenon is dependent on more than self-awareness, selfhood emphasises access of first person state and perspective (Zahavi 2005). The notion of reflection is central to insight and selfhood. Reflection on action and self-understanding is so intrinsically related, and embodied. Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests,

Analytical reflection believes that it can trace the course followed by a prior constituting act and arrive ... at a constituting power which has always been identical with that inner self. Thus reflection itself is carried away and transplanted in an impregnable subjectivity, as yet untouched by being and time. But this is a very ingenuous, or at least it is an incomplete form of reflection which loses sight of its own beginning (p. x).

Reflection as the data shows is bound to life circumstances and self-embodied perspectives of selfhood and the research method unreservedly offered an occasion for the preservice teachers to

‘distance’ themselves to enter a reflective space and in doing so, reflecting on some larger insights about themselves. We see this when Abdul speaks of his ‘aha’ moment as a preservice teacher in the placement classroom,

I think being in a class for the first time where you are in control. You know you can think of it as in the physical sense—it is the actual practicality of it. You might be ready mentally, about being a teacher because you can, for example, analyse things and try to get information from that, but it’s not until the day that you’re experiencing in your actual placements that you know that you can actually become a teacher ... So many things can communicate the idea that you can be the teacher ... When you communicate with them in the classroom ... Then you just know it.

Abdul may feel a sense of perspective of embodied understanding. Anton (2001) suggests the,

body occupies an existential center, entities light up with evaluative meanings in terms of my once-occurrent participation in existence. Regardless of the cultural variations regarding the ultimate objects of concern as well as differing levels of evaluation, to be human, at all, is already to evaluation, to be concerned over and reckon with the disclosed world (p. 23).

Abdul is gaining some sense of experience and possibility. He draws on the practical, intellectual and the emotional senses and perspectives of self-hood which ultimately emerge from his classroom encounters and interpreting on what is one’s self and what is one’s capacity to self-reflect.

Henry Venema (2000) suggests that Ricoeur believes ‘the act of interpretation opens reflective spaces that takes linguistic distance from experience in order to better understand experience’ (p. 6). Venema (2000) contends that the act of ‘Telling and retelling re-enacts a symbolic connection to the world’ (p. 2). Venema takes Ricoeur’s philosophy further by suggesting that selfhood and identity can be seen as being the same. Given this study is largely an interpretive symbolic process it to aim to ultimately provide the participants and other in to deeper ways to ‘understand how we participate in the world’ (Venema 2000, p. 2). The data illustrate how the application of a symbolic interpretive vehicle may offer a hermeneutic process for enabling the 10 preservice teachers to clarify a view of their selfhood in the art making and through the interviews. Interpreting experiences in this way regarding mentors has an impact on Abdul and this is evident when he admits he admits that,

for my whole life, I’ve had people to look up to and at the same time I think ‘OK maybe I could set an example?’ And as I was saying, it’s that whole concept of opportunity and responsibility. I genuinely believe that I think I can give something back to society who made me who I am today.

His interview is evidence of the hermeneutic interpretive processes. The making of the image too, is a symbolic interaction, which enables the matter of reflection to mainly metaphoric and less literal. The images as data are by definition always metaphor, they are visual and are accompanied by reflections that are thoughts, which are spoken and heard in the studio or research space. Deirdre, had many moments she had experienced and the impact projected for example when she painted a figure of a young girl in her painting and when asked about it she stated,

I think she's one of my students!

The painting presents a unique and playful figure, sparked by an internalising impact of her story and emergent ideologies from her work in teacher education. The interpretation of the figure she describes, as 'a student' is data that from the researchers point of view, dispels any belief that that the written form is only one way of documenting and making sense of epiphanic moments, that occur for preservice teachers when they engage in reflective places. There are symbolic, descriptive, epistemological and ontological ideas which overlay the figure from the commentary and issues that have arisen.

The art forms did not merely arrive, but are part of Deidre's reflective experience, learning moments (themes) and epiphanies. All the themes in some way are acknowledged within the process and the painting. The use of art making has an impact as a vehicle for unearthing, scaffolding, critiquing and making sense of elements which have shaped identity and mindshift for the preservice teachers; art making elevates the key findings of this research. In the case of Deidre, it is the reflection on the knowledge enabling her to think differently that cultivates and culminates in a shift.

While Carl worked on his art, he made comments about the importance of time and space to reflect. He had concerns regarding the opportunity for this to happen,

It's one thing to talk to people and get their ideas ... but it's always another thing to actually have the time to read and sit and reflect.

Artful practice referred to in the preceding thematic discussions has impacted on the process by enabling a reflective space which allows multimodal narratives to emerge which are symbolic. The art making along with the enacted text is beyond mere spoken words and written commentary. The data shown in this section and elsewhere in the thesis illustrate how the enactment with the image adds capacity to the narratives, which hold symbolic, epistemological and ontological connections to the preservice teachers' experience and their world. Deeply involved in this process, Deidre discusses epistemological ideas about her learning during her interview and art making. In the following commentary she shares an insight into selfhood and present state of thinking. It is an evaluative comment, which has an impact on her mindshift. She draws on a first person perspective concerning the development of her classroom praxis.

It's a lot of work, but I'm learning so much more and [even though] the days have been more stressful. I think once I have my own classroom and I'm teaching, and I'm not being watched by two mentor teachers ... I'll be fine. My classroom rules are just not the same as this teacher's classroom. I don't agree with them, but I'll have to go with them for now; but I'll be fine once I'm in there [as a graduate teacher].

From this researcher's point of view these preservice teachers narratives of self, identity and action in the context of praxis are linked and the basis of the hermeneutic analysis that occurred. As Ricoeur indicates, the hermeneutic process makes very clear the insights made by the preservice teachers' in to their ethical and moral decisions associated with their teaching identities and their interactions with personal and challenging experiences that led to mindshift. Whether the outcome is good or bad the self is not easily separated from philosophical and ontological dialogue.

Metacognition and thinking dispositions are shown to impact on the formulating of identity and selfhood for Rebecca as she considers her thinking processes,

I think probably when I'm faced with a dilemma ... when something that has challenged me, whether it is from in a school context or values context—my mind shift has really come through personal experiences that have impacted me in some way.

Thinking dispositions have the potential to enhance cognitive abilities, such as creativity, inquiry and critical thinking (Perkins, Jay & Tishman 1993) and are shown here to be productive and to cultivate learning activity. Perkins, Jay and Tishman (1993) argue a 'thinking disposition' can be attributed to enculturation and assumed to be central to productive intelligent behaviour which can be cultivated in student learning. Similarly, Bourdieu (1989) suggests that disposition can develop in social settings and are,

objectively encouraged by the fact that social space is so constructed that agents who occupy similar or neighbouring positions are placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, and therefore have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing practices that are themselves similar (p. 17).

Links are made to the questions of mindshift in the study. When David describes moments of alienation through work experiences, he develops an evocative commentary indicating his in/ability to connect with 'others' who experience isolation. He is empathetic as he introduces themes related to his grandfather, aunt and regional and county Victoria.

My dad's dad was Albanian. He came out to Australia when he was young. I don't know too much about him. He married my grandma and she died when my dad was only seven. So he was reared by his grandparents. Aunty Mary, she used to take in boarders ... she lived in a regional area and other country towns and owned country pubs.

These are stories of exclusion. In a similar way, he is enabled by the space of the studio and his artwork—a landscape, I consider may represent and reflect on his empathetic disposition towards others. David's relatives differ from him and have different interests from his, he has still been influenced by them and has taken on their empathy towards others and practice of taking responsibility for others who are less fortunate.

These key themes outlined emerged by implementing a hermeneutic approach founded on critical interpretive interactionism (Denzin 2001) and this research provided a space to observe the extraordinary connections that manifest. Interpretive analysis of the data has provided exemplars of reflection that stood out that were illuminative and required some form of reflection. This reflexive stage appears important in extracting the key themes and findings. The hermeneutic approach had the effect of unmasking what it was that had made a contribution to the sense of what is knowledge for the preservice teachers.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

In this method of stories and artful practice, the preservice teachers accessed learning and this contributed to their revised sense of self and identity. Often overlooked, the visual form is a valid text. The art became a means of praxis: a way of their reflecting and self-knowledge. The studio gives a true opportunity to be reflective and at the same time loosens up pathways of modes of understanding and method. As the researcher also sits alongside the participants, working 'with' and not 'on' the preservice teachers I developed awareness of my own epiphanic encounters. My own epiphany lies in the details of method and the acknowledgment that such a method affords researchers a manner in which to develop an acute reflexive awareness of the ten preservice teachers' praxis.

The discussion and the model presented in this chapter also provide me as a researcher with a new sense of relationship with students and the way in which learning emerges from spaces and takes place. I am left, however, wondering around the concerning question as to 'Where else in the process of becoming a teacher can students have this level of reflective encounter, opportunity and space?'

CHAPTER 15

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to trace the mindshift in preservice teachers' learning during their final year of study in readiness for a career in teaching. It is evident from the data that professional decision making for the preservice teachers in this study is influenced by five key factors. These factors emerge from and are derived from the preservice teachers' lived experiences. These factors arising from the study include [1] the nature of teaching and learning, including content knowledge and approaches the preservice teachers have encountered while in educational institutions; [2] the presence of a moral positioning and social commitment toward education and public good; [3] many unique and varied lifeworld experiences; [4] having developed strong connections to family or sense of habitus as well as [5] possessing notions of selfhood. These factors have been traced as all contributing elements to the shaping of their mindshifts in these preservice teachers.

Art making was the vehicle for collecting data and identified the epiphanic moments of transformation. These epiphanies are multiple, personalised and unique to the individual, and the studio and art making became a space for examining both 'process' and 'product' in a vital manner. The thesis illustrates that space for reflection is clearly important in bringing about shift.

The making of art enriched the narrative data that were at the core of the interview. Both the participants and the researcher engaged in and explored the experience of deepening insight and identifying the mindshift during the process of artful practice, which is a clear way of deep knowing. The art making was a way of externalising the internal reflective process.

We each made art. It was created and importantly recognised by the group as such (Shirato & Webb 2004). Additionally, new knowledge that emerged did so in the form of five key themes; each of the themes was seen to impact on the personal and professional selves of these 10 preservice teachers. By tracing their learning and their perceptions, the data also highlighted key moments attributed to the role of place and space in meaning making. Ultimately, this thesis illustrates that there is a need for new forms of learning spaces, which could and should be created to enable this level of reflective practice to occur.

Chapter 1 led the reader in to the world of inquiry and offered background that led to this research question; Chapter 2 provided the reader with insights and as a review of literature situates the

reader in the complex field of art and mindshifts. Chapter 3 provided insights into the new and emergent creative methodology and identified the analytical process of investigating the data, which brought the reader to an informed space so as to know how to read the interviews. These interviews and the stories and art making followed and were places from which the journeys of the ten preservice teachers unfolded.

The intention of the study was to facilitate dialogue with an emphasis on the visual image alongside the conversation. The thesis was structured where possible with equal emphasis on the art works and the dialogic exchange. The image was seen to be at the core and not a mere adjunct to the work. The main body of the work is Chapters 4 through to 13. Here, the reader is introduced to participants and may come to know them through their life stories. The art-making method assists the reader in this process of knowing the individual narratives more intimately. Through the images, the researcher is able to gain richer insight into the data, data themes and epiphanic moments. The commentaries that follow also draw the reader's attention to the colours, style and vibrancy of each image. Through the vehicle of art making, the observer comes to see how the inner voice of each of these women and men stand authentic and proud.

With the gradual appearance of some 102 epiphanic moments, several were selected and categorised and these provided a basis for exploring the mindshifts. These epiphanies provided opportunities to capture important and complex moments as they arose. For me, there were many baffling moments to untangle and I elected to organise these as part of the data. I coded those which were relevant at that particular stage. I literally 'hung on to these moments' to distinguish and scrutinise as best as I could. The goal of the work was always to show the meaning and the shift that emerged and that was true and related to the context and moment for each preservice teacher.

Chapter 14 is the discussion. The 358 emerging themes identified are listed in Appendix 2. Reviewing this data during the analysis focused on grappling with new issues and key themes. Analysing the enormous amount of data resulted in identifying five key themes, which have been presented. This stage of the process allowed me to stand back and see what the encounters and exchanges had created in the form of a thesis. This thesis presents some new ideas and a new way of knowing, which is now quite familiar for me.

METHODOLOGY AS INNOVATION

As noted above the aim of this research was always to find a way of tracing mindshift in preservice teachers. In this way the activity was to disclose and understand more fully the manner in which this group of ten preservice teachers reflect on and develop their understanding of the professional transition and personal identities. As we worked together I felt I began to know them and the nature of their uniqueness and primacy of the individual's learning. These preservice teachers' abilities

to describe experiences enabled the epiphanies to arise and are comparable to ‘aha’ moments. I found this akin to storytelling and artful praxis. There lies this thesis’ contribution as an artful methodology. While this methodology is an extraordinary vehicle for gathering reflective data both through conversation and images, the question remains of how artful practice foregrounds the space for dialogue. It seems this is a space for engaging artfully to give voice and image that inform the preservice teachers’ existence of self, experience, presence and essence of being.

The contribution of the methods shown here inform the field of art as research whilst at the same time provide a spirited encounter and as such is useful for researchers. As was my experience using this method, learning moments were articulated and visualised. I now see a collection of moments through the visual art that has happened, materialised and transpired in a new form of knowing. This was clearly the case during the first interview when I began to paint alongside the preservice teacher. I felt part of a transformative space capturing learning moments as they sprang forth at the time from the preservice teachers. It was essential to make the marks quickly (See Fig 15.1). The image often centred on engaging with the narrative *content* as well as focussing on the narrative *patterns*. Some accounts rose steadily, whilst others were sequential accounts that eventually blossomed in to a larger chronicles and critique. This painting began as a representation as an expressive ‘splash’ of events and mirrored the rhythmical telling from the preservice teacher. Each move became deliberate and unique. The effect of the method directed my artful practice and attention to the telling of stories. Each painting reflects praxis and debuts the many ideas and epiphanic moments that burst forth to transform future practice.



Figure 15.1: Learning landscape, Julie, acrylic and ink on canvas

As ethnography and as a member of this group of co-creator participants, this method and product examines and foregrounds my unique experience of thinking and traces various thought processes particularly closely. As a teacher the artwork allows us to view evidence of preservice teacher developing new ideas and thinking. Kincheloe argues ‘Via the view of a different context, we gain profound new insights into the ways particular cultural networks help shape the production and reception of artistic work’ (2003, p. 9). If one chooses such methods there is a chance to be part of a network that encounters new ground.

MY OWN KNOWING, MY LEARNING, EPIPHANIES/MOMENTS

Epiphanies led to meaning making regarding personal and professional perceptions. Personal and professional accounts were no longer linear and at times became ‘blurred’ as multisensory human activity. Although the features of the method were difficult to distinguish at first as the narratives emerged and progressed the process of my understanding gained momentum. During the gathering of emerging themes, art and gesture art, the shape and deeper features of the method appeared.

The creative method was illuminative for me in deepening my knowledge of the preservice teachers while serving to my ‘knowing and nourishing [of] oneself’ (Craft 2000, p. 110). I had hoped that taking an artful approach might provide opportunity for participants and me to acknowledge and emerge from the reflective and creative experience in a similar yet uniquely individual way. The insights I gained from this methodology were cumulative and epiphanic as it tended to lead me to notions of art and new perspectives on ethical and democratic practice. These notions have emerged over the time of this study and highlight the importance of methodology, which recognises key features of collaboration, dialogue and praxis while working with participants. As teacher I have gained clear steps and decisions about engagement and fostering relationships, sharing ideas through art, created the agenda and time and space for imagining rich ideas and stories. As Dorothy Heathcote reminds me when critiquing my work,

Are we being creative when we drive forward through an impasse? And does this impasse summon old knowing in a moment of illumination which throws a switch and suddenly two knowings fuse, because we will abandon one path and find another, seemingly at a tangent to the first? Being interested in teaching and therefore learning, I have an investment in seeking how we teachers may help ourselves to be creative thinkers and doers.

(Heathcote 2015, p. 31)

This work has become a creative new path having implications for an artful, reflective and dialogic style of work, which is an imperative for contemporary teacher education. New ideas about narratives, dialogic practice interweaving of social methods must look closely at understanding human experience. Engaging in this creative path across disciplines means both challenges and dangerous encounters for those that see the arts as a perilous pathway. Framed within the existing bounds of teacher education, the model shared here provides opportunities for new pedagogies in Australian contemporary teacher education. This means positioning and posing democratic and inclusive structures for both teacher educators and students. If we are to teach well, we must inspire and be conscious of what Bourdieu (1993) calls the ‘fields of cultural production’ within our social practice.

The research process had many dimensions, and I was particularly interested in the development which was unique to these preservice teachers in relation to the contextualised learning that

contributes to deeper thinking processes which often revealed common themes, culminating in the five key themes indicated above. While observing preservice teachers during their classroom placement which provided rich and lived experiences there were other extraordinary experiences that were *not* always observable, but accumulated through unpredictable learning moments. Preservice teachers in the process of learning as exemplified in this thesis have come to their own 'aha' or 'light bulb' moments which are reached unexpectedly when reflecting on such encounters. They too, come to a personalised sense of recognising the transition, which has a great impact on their learning. In the classroom, art can provide a nexus for reflection. Reflection is the assessment of strengths and thinking about aptitude and capacity as teachers. Encompassing and inclusive talk can guide and critique future practice.

The importance of reflecting on experiences can be acknowledged as a learning protocol and facilitator of knowledge. Reflecting on the nature of teaching and learning, moral and social commitment, lifeworld, family and habitus and selfhood are showcased and highly valued as firm contributors to the education of preservice teachers. Given this evidence, it may indicate that preservice teachers need to have the capacity to explore their sense of self and at some stage this should be done at university through inquiry and reflection. The implications of these highly valued concepts are associated with preparing for work in future research.

NEW KNOWLEDGE

This study indicates through its findings and theorising that there are significant themes that have emerged and these have been elaborated on in Chapter 14. However, here are some further significant indicators of new knowledge that require consideration. In considering this point, the following commentary places particular emphasises on the value of new knowledge concerning reflective practice, innovative methods in teaching and learning, participatory research, artful practice, learning spaces, models of teacher education and relationships.

This thesis takes a serious stance to highlight the large contribution that reflective practice can offer preservice teachers in teacher education. Accessing this type of knowledge is useful for tracking signature pedagogies of preservice teacher in the development of acquiring professional identity. Knowing how to respond and to consider preservice teacher environments is the challenge for teacher education. Creating environments to further enrich reflective practice is vital and palpable.

This study provides new knowledge which looks closely into a way of accessing an innovative method in teaching and learning to reveal the visual, gestural and narrative data as a nexus. It demonstrates one new way to engage in creative praxis for the teacher and learner in pondering and unmasking meaning and understanding. Additionally, there have been substantial multimodal encounters which have remained determined to research evidence of thematic dimensions of

mindshift in these ten preservice teachers. Drawing on these spirited encounters was in some ways a comfortable yet disciplined method which invited the engagement of the learner, teacher / researcher and reader. The method allowed for the crafting of new knowledge. As a vehicle for the work, the conversations truthfully conveyed the motivations, attitudes and aspirations, which implemented a qualitative method designed to support a complex framework for ‘theory building’ (Aspland 2013, p.19).

Participatory Research in this thesis provides thought for new knowledge to inform about opportunities of ways in which to work with students/preservice teachers/researchers learn together. While there is an appreciation of various understandings and ideas that speculate on previously held assumptions about preservice teacher education, the new learning from this research argues that moral and social commitment, lifeworld experiences, family and habitus and presence of selfhood are also key contributors to mindshift in preservice teachers.

There is no appropriation of methodology, however, artful practice in this instance is conceived as a conduit to new way of knowing that is a blend of art making to evoke shifts, or mindshifts, that inform the world of these ten women and men. What is innovative in this instance is the awakening of the stories and the attachment to the dormant desire to paint. Art making and the aesthetic awakening drive the meaning making as each canvas becomes complete. The work is meaning making through talk but the process and canvas are the space from where the story is to be seen. The image remains. It remains as a source for all but especially for the preservice teacher to return to. While the reflection through talk has ended, the image remains.

This thesis prompts new ideas and calls for new settings and spaces to align with learning. The setting for this research demanded close and purposeful encounters with students. The studio gave an outward sense of freedom and security from which to observe and work. The studio’s spaces are often essential to certain types of arts-based learning, but not so common in teacher education settings. Unobstructed spaces can be used to loosen up pathways for quality learning and reflection. Teacher education requires students to reflect, yet the environments we put our preservice teachers in often hamper the very conditions required for the deep reflective thinking we want them to demonstrate. This research has furthered the sense of the value of the studio and it is an integral part of the planning for this research method. The studio allowed the researcher to work alongside to develop reflective practice and artwork and an acute reflexive awareness of the preservice teachers’ praxis and gain a sense of relationship. Where else can teachers and students have this level of encounter?

The studio as a research space made possible the work in the preceding chapters and gives true opportunity for me as researcher and the ten preservice teachers to be wholeheartedly reflective. As teachers, we can create spaces to facilitate our students’ learning. Safe, comfortable and secure environments are part of teachers’ work. We want to observe our students closely to determine

development. So often, we miss the important moments of learning. These moments are important and I have come to know this through the artful practice described. Drawing on Heathcote, I am reminded that,

As teachers we make nothing tangible. We plant ideas, offer models, create links with seemingly disparate notions, differences and likenesses, patterns and formings often comprehended through the tasks we perforce invent to enable understanding. We have one huge problem. We are rarely there when growth from a seed we planted is recognized by those we work with. (Heathcote, 2015, p. 31)

This thesis emphasises new knowledge concerning learning environments for preservice teacher education. In particular, acknowledging from the stories, the impact of supported placement in schools. Extended time in schools as learning spaces, inspire preservice teachers through and partnering with professionals. The stories resonate and indicate that teacher education models which take seriously school practicum experience praxis are valued by preservice teachers. This may not be new thinking, but organising systems to meet these needs require realistic new ways of looking at preservice teacher teaching and learning. SBTE is one of many relevant ways to build on engagement for providing these opportunities for future teachers.

Additionally, new knowledge from the thesis requires acknowledgement concerning the importance of relationships. Stories highlighted opportunity for relationships which draw on expertise of people rather than institutions was evident. It appears that preservice teacher mindshift and learning depend on family members, critical friends and relational encounters. Often people rather than institutions are important.

Institutional responsibility should acknowledge quality approaches and teaching styles, moving beyond the traditional classrooms and methods. In summing up, I would like to conclude with this erudite contribution from Heathcote. She states,

So we need a wholeness in our teaching personae as well as an enthusiastic interest in the curriculum ideas that we use to engage our students. Teaching personae need attention. Schools are like beehives and the cells and types of workers within are many and various. Some teachers are good lecturers and synthesizers. Some work mostly 'creatively' as private tutors. Some are creative listeners who give inspiring feedback. Some are hunters and guides—research fellows. Some are outsiders who do not aspire to be teachers but bring talents, attributes and knowledge that those within the beehive have long ignored. And some are journeymen, solid and reliable and information planters. (Heathcote, 2015, p. 31)

APPENDIX 1

EPIPHANY TABLES

ABDUL	CHAPTER 4 – INTERVIEW 1	
NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES	TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n2	Major	Traumatic
n5	Cumulative	Series of events
n5	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n3	Relived	Recounting many times

MEREDITH	CHAPTER 5 – INTERVIEW 2	
NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES	TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n2	Major	Traumatic
n3	Cumulative	Series of events
n3	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n3	Relived	Recounting many times

SUE	CHAPTER 6 – INTERVIEW 3	
NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES	TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n0	Major	Traumatic
n3	Cumulative	Series of events
n3	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n2	Relived 1	Recounting many times

IVAN	CHAPTER 7 – INTERVIEW 4	
NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES	TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n0	Major	Traumatic
n1	Cumulative	Series of events
n3	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n2	Relived	Recounting many times

CARL	CHAPTER 8 – INTERVIEW 5	
NUMBER OF EPIPHANIES	TYPE OF EPIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n2	Major	Traumatic
n2	Cumulative	Series of events
n6	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n3	Relived	Recounting many times

ANNE	CHAPTER 9 – INTERVIEW 6	
NUMBER OF EIPHANIES	TYPE OF EIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n0	Major	Traumatic
n2	Cumulative	Series of events
n3	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n4	Relived	Recounting many times

DAVID	CHAPTER 10 – INTERVIEW 7	
NUMBER OF EIPHANIES	TYPE OF EIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n0	Major	Traumatic
n3	Cumulative	Series of events
n2	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n3	Relived	Recounting many times

LISA	CHAPTER 11 – INTERVIEW 8	
NUMBER OF EIPHANIES	TYPE OF EIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n2	Major	Traumatic
n2	Cumulative	Series of events
n5	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n3	Relived	Recounting many times

REBECCA	CHAPTER 12 – INTERVIEW 9	
NUMBER OF EIPHANIES	TYPE OF EIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n2	Major	Traumatic
n1	Cumulative	Series of events
n3	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n3	Relived	Recounting many times

DEIDRE	CHAPTER 13 – INTERVIEW 10	
NUMBER OF EIPHANIES	TYPE OF EIPHANY	DESCRIPTION
n1	Major	Traumatic
n2	Cumulative	Series of events
n4	Minor or illuminative	Underlying tension
n4	Relived	Recounting many times

APPENDIX 2

THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS

ABDUL	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Journey
2	Inspiring teachers / facilitators
3	Influences or factors of pressure that affect aspirations
4	Opportunities / challenges for students of diverse backgrounds (access and success)
5	Cognitive and affective learning
6	Reflexivity
7	Life and cultural experience in developing cultural values, action and integrity
8	Social justice
9	Positive experiences brought him back to university
10	Cultural capital and language barrier
11	Teachers are mentors / respect for teachers
12	Critical thinking
13	Positioning of power
14	Reflecting on and in practice
15	Developing consciousness toward identity
16	Responsibility of morals and judgement
17	Family / childhood play
18	Teachers as collaborators and learners
19	Feedback, support and networking with others
20	Early play
21	Ontological and epistemological connections in learning
22	Authentic praxis
23	Feedback as learning
24	Critical reflection

ANNE	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Placement / experience / being
2	Learning Styles
3	Mentors
4	Teachers knowing students
5	Success in partnerships
6	Inspiring teacher
7	Teachers as role models
8	Observations of teachers and experiencing
9	Accepting others / inclusiveness / social justice
10	Transferring knowledge
11	Passion for teaching
12	Maturing and ongoing reflection
13	Who you are, and what sort of teacher you are?
14	Relationships to enhance understanding self
15	Metacognition and reflecting on one's own learning

DAVID	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Reflecting on resilience
2	Self-directed / aspirations
3	Work experience—and the paradox
4	Prior experience in the field
5	Open to new experiences
6	Friendship
7	Learning about indigenous
8	Connecting with 'the other' is about problem solving
9	Parent aspirations
10	Justice and fairness
11	Constructivism
12	Making your achievements and ideas public
13	Pedagogical content knowledge
14	Family values
15	Social and ethical responsibility for those less privileged

LISA	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Sense of social justice and activism
2	Teaching requires respect, resilience and sensitivity
3	Persistence
4	Reflecting on practice
5	Education as emancipation from oppression
6	Maturity
7	Political, social and cultural shift
8	Philosophy based on research
9	Risk taking in learning
10	Metacognition and inquisitiveness

REBECCA	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Challenges present conditions for learning / mindshift
2	Time should not be wasted
3	The role of the lecturer
4	Social critique of values
5	Self-critique or critical praxis
6	Collegiality
7	Secure and safe environment for teachers
8	Instructional learning
9	Constructivism
10	Success
11	Humour
12	Caring
13	Student aspirations
14	Mentors
15	Family as teachers
16	Innovative curriculum and classroom research to improve outcomes
17	Experimenting and experiential learning
18	Teaching critical literacy
19	Knowing students / small group work / praise
20	Teacher as learner

IVAN	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Expectations of teaching
2	Family values, culture and learning. Parents are teachers
3	Mentor teachers
4	Persistence and resilience
5	Experimenting in the field
6	Linking theory to practice in schools
7	Discipline knowledge and disposition
8	Discipline, skills and core knowledge
9	Integrated and self-directed learning
10	Building relationships with students
11	Knowing students and their culture is important
12	Learning from mentors
13	Preservice teacher narrative
14	Imagining and re-imagining
15	Safe and secure learning environment
16	Self-doubt and critique
17	Realistic approach to systems and structures in place
18	Resilience
19	Trust in the learning even if it seems irrelevant at the time

MEREDITH	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Being
2	A feeling of being comfortable with self when in the classroom; classroom experience
3	Prior learning
4	Passion
5	Proficiency (funds of knowledge or expertise)
6	Diverse ethnic background
7	The role of the teacher as facilitator
8	Rich early educational experiences
9	Nurture and care
10	Family
11	Positivity
12	Empathy
13	Role models
14	Realistic expectations
15	Inclusiveness

CARL	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Family and expectations
2	Self-doubt
3	Role models (father)
4	Risk taking
5	Travel and self-discovery
6	Mentors
7	Responsibility
8	Community involvement
9	Caring and integrity
10	Compassion
11	Understanding educational theories
12	Lecturers / teachers
13	Metacognition: Self-monitoring learning

SUE	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Shaping self
2	Social mobility
3	Learning by experimenting with experience and artful practice
4	Persistence (to perfect the flower print)
5	Competition
6	Safe and secure setting
7	Reflecting with significant others
8	Parents are teachers
9	Stepping up
10	Family develop independence
11	Bestowing of responsibility
12	Cultural expectations
13	Risk
14	Flexibility and resilience
15	Social and professional networks
16	Expertise and being considered an expert by others
17	Reflecting on practice after feedback
18	Authentic teaching responsibility
19	Professional development plans and ongoing experience

REBECCA	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Trauma can present conditions for learning
2	Sociocultural critique and values
3	Collegiality
4	Being and feeling secure
5	Instructional learning
6	Success
7	Caring
8	Aspiration
9	Mentors
10	Family as teachers
11	Passion
12	Reflective practice
13	Knowing students
14	Teacher as learner

DEIDRE	
THEME NUMBER	THEME
1	Knowing students
2	Learning by 'doing'
3	Early play experiences
4	Stable, secure environment
5	Praxis Inquiry
6	Integrity—'I'—'self—expectations'
7	Reflective practice
8	Student engagement
9	Knowing students, relationships and empathy
10	Honesty
11	Self-evaluation
12	Rigour
13	Self-talk and emerging identity
14	Confidence
15	Aspirations
16	Positivity and happiness

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