

# **Emotional work: applying reflexivity in teacher practice**

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## **Declaration**

I, Jean Hopman, declare that the PhD thesis entitled 'Emotional work: applying reflexivity in teacher practice' is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, 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.

Signature:



Date: 15 June 2017

## **Abstract**

Teachers' work involves an emotional struggle, which is becoming an increasing concern due to recent public interest in teacher attrition and emotional exhaustion. The project aimed to explore the emotional work of teachers while also investigating ways to support teachers in this work.

A group of six teachers at a Victorian government secondary school over a two-year period participated in the project. The research was underpinned by the theory of bricolage where the whole of something can only be understood through its parts and the parts can only be understood in reference to the whole. The nature of conscious and unconscious thinking and feeling and how the two are intimately enmeshed and compel us to act in certain ways is explored. In considering conscious and unconscious thought, emotion and action, an image of the self made of parts emerges; the unknown self, the acting self, the told self, the collective and others. All of these parts of the self, bridge the internal with the external. Through narrative inquiry and action research methodology we told stories of our professional world and through the development of a reflexive collaborative inquiry process we explored emotional consciousness and how it impacted on our teacher agency.

Eight emotions were found to be prominent in our working lives; the pleasurable emotions of contentment, happiness and love; and, the unpleasurable emotions of defeat, frustration, worry, anger and sadness. These emotions were often experienced in complex clusters and influenced by institutionally derived emotional rules. In every story told there was a struggle to fend off defeat that threatened from tension between expectations, limitations and assumptions. The collaborative inquiry process that evolved through the action research became a reflexive tool that could facilitate professional learning through illuminating unconscious worlds and provoke a shift in being.

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This work is dedicated to my boy, Noah.  
You have been my inspiration.  
All my love.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Beginnings

I started this research because of a particular experience early on in my teaching career, which led to a conversation that I had some years later. It was the conversation that got me wondering about the connection between unconscious thought and emotion in a relational space.

I was teaching a year three class at a private grammar school and I had a particular student, Steven, who frustrated me no end. At the time, I felt he might have been the laziest person I had ever met. He refused to put pen to paper. He was an intelligent boy with no sign of any learning difficulties. Rather than work he preferred to call out across the classroom, fling his writing implements around and make fart noises. His classmates would sometimes engage with and even encourage his behaviour, but for the most part they found him irritating and immature and distanced themselves from him. He was rather overweight for his age and always looked scruffy with his shirt hanging out. The school had a fairly strict uniform policy. It seemed as though I was constantly reminding Steven how to dress himself, how to behave in class, how to get along with his peers. Sometimes he would return from the bathroom with an odour and I had to counsel him on the importance, and technique, of wiping one's bottom properly. I was patient with him and although frustrated I still spent a lot of time trying to cajole him into action. We had some fond moments throughout the year — moments where we shared laughter together — but at the end of the year I saw little to no progress in Steven's academic, social or personal development. I felt he was my first failure.

About eight years after I shared a classroom with Steven I had a conversation with a teacher colleague who had also taught Steven in those earlier years. My colleague and I were talking about the close relationships that we develop with our students and I labelled this closeness as a kind of love. I had loved all of my

students, including the ones that were sometimes difficult to teach. Then it occurred to me that I had loved all but one, Steven. I talked about this with my colleague who told me that although Steven was difficult to teach she still had loved him in a way.

The incongruence between how my colleague and I felt about Steven baffled me. Why was it that I could feel love for all of my other students, even the ones who were difficult to teach, some who were much more difficult to teach than Steven, but not Steven? I reflected upon these questions for some time. I talked more to my colleague and others who had also taught Steven and it occurred to me that my colleagues all spoke of Steven in a similar way — they spoke of their frustration yet fondness of him. Steven had a level of helplessness that was beyond expectations for his age. His other teachers described teaching Steven as like ‘mothering’. The process was exhausting, much more than the usual teaching that might go on between teacher and student, but they still felt a kind of love for him. It was in this realisation that I made a connection. The year I taught Steven was also the year I discovered becoming a mother was an unlikely path for me. A dawning came over me that what Steven was demanding of me was a kind of ‘mothering’; a nurturance that mothers might give much smaller children.

Why he needed and demanded this level of nurturing had to do, I believe, with his family situation. He was the long-awaited child born to an up until that point childless couple. I had a good working relationship with his parents but in interactions with Steven and his parents I could tell that he was their prize; their coveted baby that would always remain so. He fulfilled this role and as I was responsible for him at school that year he demanded me to respond to his position as ‘the baby’; however, I could not. I was in the process of coming to terms with the possibility of never being a mother, I carried immense loss and grief and had to distance myself from ‘mothering’. I was a teacher not a mother. I had to protect myself from any feelings that might be associated with mothering, such as love, that would exacerbate the feeling of loss. While I could love my other students because they needed me to be their teacher, I could not

love Steven because he needed more. Also, he represented that long-awaited baby that, at that point, I believed I would never know.

For eight years after teaching Steven I carried around feelings of guilt of him being my only failure; a failure in the sense that I could not progress him, could not love him, and could not be a mother. It was not until I had learned the reason I was unable to love Steven, through reflection and multiple discussions with colleagues, that I was able to forgive myself. I also wondered if I had had these realisations while teaching Steven whether or not the outcome would have been different. Would I have been able to love him realising that I did not have to play the role of mother? Would I have been able to progress him academically? Would our teacher-student relationship have been different? Would I have found other ways to understand my own grief and loss? I could not turn back the clock, but could explore emotional consciousness in the experience of other teachers.

## 1.2 The puzzle

The story of Steven highlights that while I felt certain things about my relationship with him, such as guilt and frustration, it was not clear to me what undercurrents drove those feelings, so how at the time could I do anything about it? Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) assert that honest social action requires interrogation into:

understanding of “what is” (What is actually happening?); understanding of “what ought to be” (Where should that lead?) and understanding of how to transform “what is” into “what ought to be”.

(Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.4)

At the time, I was unable to understand ‘what is’ the nature of my relationship with Steven? The only way I was able to learn something about the roles that Steven and I were playing, or resisting, was through the conversations with colleagues, which was, in a way, a ‘transformative partnership’ (ibid). The story led me to this project and the questions that drove it:

*How can emotional consciousness impact teacher agency?*

*How can professional collaboration facilitate reflexivity?*

Somewhere along the research journey I realised that questions did not fit neatly into this research because there cannot be answers; ‘One view of the world cannot confirm another’ (Bruner 2004, p.702). There was something to wonder and the questions are ‘wonderings’ (Clandinin 2013). This research sought to understand seven teachers’ experiences, myself included, within the boundaries of the research wonderings, and thus the project aides the search for new understanding but the search does not end with this thesis — there will be more to add (Kincheloe 2005). With this in mind, the research questions were more like a research puzzle (Clandinin 2013). Puzzles can be pieced together in different ways and through my interpretation this thesis has formed a particular configuration.

Through the research project these questions grounded the puzzle and led me to understand that emotional awareness is the doorway to understanding oneself and one’s motivations. Emotion is complex because pleasure and unpleasure exist cohesively. ‘Unpleasure’ is uncommon in English language use but is a coined psychoanalytic term that means the inverse of pleasure. Emotion was typically experienced in clusters and combinations of contentment, happiness, love, defeat, frustration, worry, anger and sadness. Such emotional experiences were framed by emotional rules that had implications for teachers’ work. The collaborative inquiry process, which was one of the outcomes of the project, helped illuminate these implications.

### **1.3 The aim**

The original aim of the research was to explore teacher emotion and whether reflexive practices assist in building resilience and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The impetus was Watt and Richardson’s (2008) alarming statistic indicating that 28% of pre-service teachers enter the profession on the path to burnout, more recent research suggesting the problem is not abating in Australia (for example Buchanan 2010; Buchanan et

al. 2013; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty 2015; Schuck et al. 2017), and the Safe Work Australia report (2013) which ranks teaching as the fifth highest profession inducing warranted mental stress claims. As well, many early career teachers are reporting a 'sense of helplessness' (Buchanan et al. 2013, p.124).

A connection between burnout and wellbeing might be made if a person's wellbeing is perceived as the union of a person's emotional state and the ability to act and reach their full potential. Burnout might be perceived as the opposite of wellbeing where burnout is a union of emotional exhaustion, disconnection from one's work and low self-efficacy (Brown 2012). There has been increased interest in understanding the consequences of teacher wellbeing in regard to teacher attrition and burnout (for example, Brown 2012; Howard & Johnson 2004; Moè, Pazzaglia & Ronconi 2010; Parker et al. 2012; Pietarinen et al. 2013; Schaefer 2013; Spilt, Koomen & Thijs 2011; Watt & Richardson 2010). While initially teacher wellbeing was a central focus of the research, this subsequently shifted through the research process because it became apparent that teacher agency and emotion are intimately connected and both play an important role in overall wellbeing. The aim therefore became more about exploring teacher emotional consciousness and whether or not reflexive practices assist in building teacher agency and consequently their emotional wellbeing.

I argue that teachers live in tension and negotiating this tension is a struggle. Reflection is an important part of teacher's self-understanding but 'repositioning of the self' may be limited by external factors that are outside of the teacher's control (Moss 2013; Webb 2005). 'The teacher' discourse may influence teachers to act one way or the other without understanding their motives. Zembylas (2003, p.227) notes that 'the culturally and politically constructed teacher self [who] negotiates [their] discursive constructions' requires a deeper understanding that their emotions have powerful qualities which may give rise to resistance. Teachers are often expected to hide or fake their emotions to stay on script (Hochschild 2012; Stebbins 2010; Taxer & Frenzel 2015; Winograd 2003). In other words, teachers have to work within a set of sometimes conflicting emotional rules which exacerbate their 'emotional work'.

## 1.4 The context

The research took place at an urban co-educational Victorian government secondary school where six teachers agreed to be part of the project. I refer to my work in the school as fieldwork (Bogdan & Biklen 2007). I approached the particular school because I already had an established professional relationship with the principal and we spoke openly about the project proposal so that the aims, expectations and motivation of the research were clear (Lincoln & Guba 2011; Schwandt 2000).

Six teachers from the school volunteered to participate in the project where each teacher and I had multifaceted roles. I am a researcher conducting a research project on behalf of Victoria University. I am a teacher with seventeen years' experience in a range of primary, secondary, alternative and higher education settings. I am a postgraduate student of psychoanalytic theory. I am a student undertaking a doctorate of which this thesis is the result. I lived my roles throughout the project like Humphrey (2007, p. 23) who detailed her experience as a union activist, an academic researcher, a 'coming out' lesbian and a social worker, where she occupied the hyphen between insider-outsider. In every position, there is an element of both inside and outside. For example, at the school I was an insider because I am a teacher, but I was also on the outside as a researcher; to 'occupy the hyphen' means 'to appreciate one's uniqueness as an insider-outsider and to cultivate the art of crossing-over between life-worlds' (ibid). There was an ever-present push and pull between roles.

Each teacher also brought an assortment of roles to the research including the role of researcher because they were part of a participatory action research project. They were researching themselves and their process of transformation. I will refer to the teachers, who are also researchers, simply as 'teachers' and the researcher role is implied. If I need to differentiate between the teachers

that participated in this research and other teachers I will refer to the teacher, or teachers, as teacher collaborator/s. I will refer to myself as 'researcher', though the teacher and student roles are implied.

The only reason to devise this approach is to be able to talk about my role as distinguishable from the participating teachers due to the further responsibility I have in developing, implementing, analysing and reporting on the project.

Participatory action research is a collaboration where many voices should be considered in the push and pull over the path that the project follows, so there is an issue of ownership (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2007; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). Likewise, narrative inquiry involves issues over ownership of each story shared because it is also a story interpreted, and what is presented in this thesis is a collaborative effort (Clandinin 2013). Given my ultimate responsibility, and that only I potentially gain a qualification from the production of this thesis, I take ownership of the research, though the teacher collaborators and my supervisors are investors and in part underwriters.

## **1.5 The benefit**

The project needed to be of benefit to the school and the teachers that participated in the project (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2007). The collaborative inquiry process that evolved through the action research project could contribute to the teachers' compulsory requirement of professional learning hours as determined by The Victorian Institute of Teachers (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015a) and benefit the school and the teachers. Furthermore, the project offered the teachers time to collaboratively inquire into their practice, which they reported was often difficult to grasp. All teachers reported positively about their participation in the research and spoke of a 'transformation' to varying degrees.

## **1.6 Complex words**

There are some language issues that need to be addressed. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012, p.125) have 'argued for a discourse that recognises complexity but does not mask it such that it is no longer understandable'. Some

of the words I use are complex. They can have multiple meanings and be interpreted in multiple ways. The concept behind complex words can shift without realisation so I have outlined the concepts behind specific key words to maintain their meaning consistently throughout the thesis.

**Unconscious:** in this thesis, the term unconscious refers to any mental content of which one is unaware as opposed to conscious mental content of which one is currently aware (Rycroft 1995). The term is developed throughout the thesis. 'The unconscious' refers to the dynamic system that renders some mental processes unconscious (Freud 2005).

**Defences:** psychoanalytic theory typically assumes defences of the mind are at play as a form of self-protection; rather than allow anxiety (see 'anxiety' below) to take hold and become overwhelming, unconscious defences are employed to eliminate threat (Freud 2005; Frosh 2012a; Hochschild 2012; Hollway & Jefferson 1997; Hollway & Jefferson 2013). Defences can sometimes hinder a person's agency (see 'agency' below) because once employed defences remain fairly consistent, and if they become unwarranted can sometimes stifle progress and creativity (Frosh 2012a).

**Anxiety:** anxiety is beyond typical worry and in psychoanalytic terms is inherent in being human. Worry is usually attributed to something that is known; however anxiety is a feeling of dissolution of the self where the aetiology is unknown to the person experiencing it and provokes defences to prevent the dissolution of the self (Hollway & Jefferson 1997; Rycroft 1995).

**Emotion:** emotion is the interrelation between a person's pre-dispositional way of displaying and understanding emotion, how one feels at any particular time, and the emotional incidents that are socially constructed within a social, historical, cultural and political backdrop (Brenner 1974b; Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015; Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson 2009).

**Emotional consciousness:** emotional consciousness is the dynamic of the unconscious where the content can shift and become conscious (Frosh 2012a).



It is the shift from unconscious to conscious in respect to emotional content that I am concerned with in this thesis.

**Agency:** agency is more than how one acts, and includes how one is consciously motivated to act, as well as having some understanding of the unconscious habits of mind that lead to action (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). The inverse of being agentic is to be unagentic as Locke (2011) suggests.

**Reflexivity:** this is a process of making meaning through interpreting personal actions and thoughts in relation to the actions and thoughts of others (Frosh 2012a). Specifically, it is an act of investigation into oneself, including underlying values, beliefs, thought and emotion, that is an iterative process of action, whether it leads to replication or change. There is an intention of action from reflection (Stîngu 2012).

**Self:** refers to a person that derives a sense of identity from the experience of oneself among others and their action (Fromm 2003; Frosh 2012b; Rycroft 1995). The 'self' is dynamic.

**Collective:** I use this word to describe a group of people that endeavour together. For example, students, teachers, support staff, administrators and parents could be considered a school collective. Alternatively, the teachers within a school could be considered a teacher collective or teachers in general could be a wider teacher collective. The people in a collective are also 'others' and through relationships with others the 'self' is positioned (Frosh 2012b).

**Space:** this refers to a relational space that connects people together. While people are individuals, a person derives a sense of self from relating to others (Fromm 2003; Frosh 2012a; Rycroft 1995). There is an 'intersubjective' space between people (Winnicott 1969).

**'The teacher' discourse:** this is the organisation of meaning that determines the language and visual representations associated with an idea of 'the teacher'.

For example, Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p.13) describe a discourse of ‘fear’ which they needed to explore ‘to emphasise the organised way in which meanings cohere around an assumed central proposition, which gives them their value and significance’.

## 1.7 How to read this thesis

While I have attempted to clarify my position in relation to the above list of words, it is not to say they are ‘defined’. This thesis itself is an example of complexity. It is broken up into parts, chapters, sections, paragraphs, sentences and words, yet all these parts are connected in various ways. You can connect a word, such as ‘emotion’, to a particular chapter but it belongs to all of the other chapters as well. It is difficult to find ways to talk about something that is complex because it can only be understood in light of its parts but those parts are symbiotically related and cannot be entirely considered independent of one another (Cochran-Smith et al. 2014; Kincheloe 2001a). These parts need to be considered as parts but also as a whole. Complex systems are not fixed; they can come together in multiple ways, and are dynamic (Cochran-Smith et al. 2014; Kincheloe 2001a). Complex systems respond to what is needed.

There are three significant parts to this thesis; 1) the unconscious, 2) the emotion and 3) the collaboration. All three are necessary in teacher practice. The title of the thesis prioritises ‘emotional work’; however it is noticeable that ‘the unconscious’ is addressed before ‘the emotion’. I have ordered the thesis in this way because a thesis is predominantly an intellectual endeavour and intellectualising disconnects experience from emotion (Hollway & Jefferson 2013). Part One, *The unconscious* serves to frame experience so that emotion can be inherently associated. The emotional experiences of teachers are what this project ultimately aimed to explore.

*Chapter Two* details the conceptual framework that underpins the research. It introduces psychoanalytic theory and some defining concepts, primarily that there exists unconscious mental activity that drives our action and that all action, conscious or not, can be interpreted as communication (Behrendt 2012;

Elzer & Gerlach 2014; Rycroft 1995). The chapter draws on the work of Freud (2005) to highlight that part of a person's world is unconscious and compels the person to act, but how is unknown to the actor. The chapter highlights that when something once unknown becomes known, it might feel like a collision. A collision of sorts, like when someone is in shadow and suddenly the sun starts streaming through the clouds 'hitting' them with warmth and light. The light was always present and part of their world but the feeling and the depth of significance was unclear. Something becoming known occurs in a relational space where the self and other interplay.

In *Chapter Three* the idea that there are multiple selves is introduced, starting with the unknown self and the acting self. The chapter reviews the act of teaching through these selves and details the agentic teacher self, the reflexive teacher self and the teacher collective. 'Others' become an important focus of this chapter building on 'the teacher' discourse. I make a case for reflexivity and agency being two sides of the same coin, and while both are desirable attributes of teacher practice they are actively discouraged by professional norms that breed unconsciousness.

*Chapter Four* highlights how the self/other interplay is expressed and lived through story. The self evolves through story but the story of the self is enmeshed within a collective of life stories (Bruner 2004). In this chapter, another self is introduced — the told self. The self/other interplay is defined through the co-existence of the unknown self, the acting self, the told self, the collective and others. The project was always an 'action research' project and it eventually also became a 'narrative inquiry'. Action research attempts to change three things: "practitioners' practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practice' (Kemmis 2009, p.463). The 'action' of the project is detailed through how the teachers were recruited, issues of confidentiality, a process of piloting the project, background and debrief interviews, and a process of 'collaborative inquiry'. What I mean by 'collaborative inquiry' is made clear in this chapter.

Narrative inquiry is ‘a way of understanding experience narratively’ (Clandinin 2013, p.9). In trying to capture teachers’ emotional experiences I also had to capture their stories. *Chapter Four* connects action research and narrative inquiry with the metaphor of teaching as acting where each person has a script for their life story that they act out. To understand others’ stories, a person’s own story has to be understood because interpretation is filtered through it (Clandinin 2013, p.55).

I argue in *Chapter Five* that the self/other interplay occurs within a frame of emotion which is a social, historical, political and cultural experience. The chapter also reviews how the academic literature frames the emotional teacher. The difficulty of naming emotion is flagged because it can be defined and named in many ways, some of which minimise its complexity. For example, fear is a name given to an emotion but fear can mean many different things to different individuals and collectives. The chapter introduces the idea of collective emotion and draws on Hochschild’s (2012) work to show how emotion is acted in relation to emotional rules that are influenced by ‘the teacher’ discourse. I argue that the process of a teacher acting an unnatural script of emotion forces some emotion to be unconscious and leaves the teacher in emotional tension.

### **1.7.1 ‘Everything’s ethics’**

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2007) remind us that ‘everything’s ethics’ and that ethical consideration is not as simple as checking off a list — it is enmeshed in any research. Without ethical inquiry the research may be an attempt to reach a predetermined end point no matter what are the consequences. This project evolved and changed over time. There were always little surprises catching me off guard and requiring me to rethink my approach, attitude and feelings associated with the research. Drake (2011) states that even though research might be thoroughly planned, a researcher must be prepared for changes and problems that may occur in the natural course of the research and that ethical re-considerations will follow. To be open and on the lookout for these aberrations means that there can never be a checklist of ethical compliance.

This ethical position was central to every element of the project and has been intimately woven into this thesis. It was not until I was in the research process that I realised my story and my experiences were just as important to the research — not only to note but to explore and understand — because anything learned from this project was filtered through me (Clandinin 2013; Creswell 2013; Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p.4; Rogers 2012). *Chapter Six* details the processes employed, such as transcription, feedback interviews and something I have called fieldwork supervision, to inquire into me and my own story as well as to ensure the rigour of the analysis — because ethics is everything.

*Part Three* features analysis and discussion of the conversations I had with the teachers and shows that teacher wellbeing is a byproduct of the relationship between emotion and agency.

*Chapter Seven* outlines my thematic analysis of the emotions experienced by the teachers. I used Nvivo (NVivo 2015) software to help categorise the fragments of conversation into themes. Eight notable emotions were identified: defeat, frustration, worry, anger, sadness, contentment, happiness and love. This chapter highlights that an emotion is not experienced in isolation; emotion is experienced in constellations. It identifies that defeat was a powerful emotion experienced by the teachers and often permeated the experience of other emotions. A list of the teachers' emotional rules is outlined and it is argued that these rules interfere with the natural balance that is typically struck between pleasure and unpleasure. The chapter also details the limits of thematic analysis to gain insight into unconscious emotion, in particular love, which I argue was pushed deep into the unconscious by the teachers involved.

The limitations of thematic analysis led to narrative inquiry. *Chapter Eight* presents a story from each of the teacher collaborators, including myself, featuring a struggle, and argues that the teachers' struggles feature four interlinking components: limitations, expectations, assumptions and emotion. Emotional tension is bound up in tension between limitations and expectations. Each story features a script that was underpinned by 'the teacher' discourse, which influenced the teacher's assumptions about the setting, their role and the

roles of others. The teachers' stories show that they were living in 'shadow' from each other.

*Chapter Nine* captures a 'shift' or transformation, which I refer to as a script rewrite. The chapter details the script the teachers were living and how that script shifted through the collaborative inquiry. To take on such a challenge to inquire into one's own emotional consciousness through participatory action research '...requires not only insight and courage, but a profound and deep regard for the moral consequences of our decisions in whatever role we act...' (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.10). The teachers that chose to participate in the research did so because they care about their students and their school by also caring for themselves and how their agency impacts on the school collective. The chapter outlines the reflexive content the teachers uncovered through the collaborative inquiry process. It identifies a point of consciousness for each teacher allowing them to rewrite the script.

I was interested to explore the possible benefits of merging psychoanalytic and educational theory regarding teacher practice to design an action research project that may make explicit reflexive practices within a school through a collaborative inquiry process. *Chapter Ten* details this process as a space for the teachers and me to come together as a collective and share, as well as inquire into, our stories. Research happened on two levels. I was conducting the research that led to this thesis while our teacher collective was conducting research into oneself and the collective others. The chapter outlines how the collaborative inquiry process unfolded through three cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart 1982). The result was the development of a process with certain stages to support the teachers in a reflexive undertaking. The stages are: sharing, identifying strengths, perspective and inquiry.

Psychoanalytic theory is concerned with normal mental functioning as much as pathology (Brenner 1974a; Frosh 2012a). I was not 'digging' for problems, or pathology, or proposing solutions. *Chapter Ten* also addresses this issue. While I was not digging for unpleasure, in some way unpleasure is what surfaced. I

argue that this is because some stories are easier to share than others and through the creation of a safe space to explore anxieties and the specific development of the collaborative inquiry process, the teachers desired to share what was typically difficult. The chapter also highlights the teachers' reflections on the collaborative inquiry process and what it meant to them as well as how it impacted on their action and wellbeing.

## **1.8 'The teacher' discourse**

Teaching is an emotional endeavour (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009; Truta 2014; Winograd 2003; Yin et al. 2013; Zembylas 2007b). An understanding of the teachers' experiences was filtered through a wider discourse regarding 'the teacher', where there is a 'community consensus regarding what is "real", useful and has meaning (Lincoln & Guba 2011, p.116). To gain an understanding of 'the teacher' discourse, from the outset three approaches were used: firstly, to look at conversations with the teachers and piece together an introduction for each teacher which gives insight into their understandings of what it means to be a teacher as well as their role; secondly, to look at digital societal perspectives; and thirdly, to briefly analyse the related academic and professional literature.

Before the teachers are introduced some demographic detail is provided: 1) four females and two males participated; 2) the teachers ranged in age from 22 to 57 with a mean age of 34 years; 3) experience ranged from a first-year teacher to 32 years of teaching experience. Five of the six teachers were within their first five years of teaching; 4) subject specialties included English, English as an additional language, languages other than English, philosophy, general science, physics, mathematics, business management, history, art, physical education and drama; 5) before beginning teaching three teachers had careers in publishing, insurance and public service; 6) four teachers obtained an undergraduate degree in the fields of arts/commerce, business, creative writing and science and two had a Bachelor of Education. Additionally, one teacher had a Diploma of Teaching, one a Master of Teaching, one a Master of Science

and two were studying for a Master of Teaching; 7) two teachers had taught at other schools; and 8) two teachers had leadership responsibilities.

The following introductions were put together either from the teachers' responses to the question, 'how would you describe your teaching practice?'; or from conversation in reference to the teacher's personal attitude toward their own teaching practice or teaching practice in general. Material relating to teachers speaking about specific incidents or conveying feelings about specific incidents was not selected for these introductions. The quotes were then woven together by me and shown to the teachers at a one-to-one meeting where they provided feedback.

Repetitions, 'you know', 'right?' and 'um' were excluded from the transcript data to ensure that telltale signs of habit would not expose the teacher's identity and secondly, because often spoken word does not flow well in a written context. If the transcript data was maintained verbatim — my own speech included — it would not be very articulate. These same conventions apply throughout the thesis. Also, as I worked with a small group of teachers I have allocated each teacher with a non-gender specific pseudonym. These names are used through most of the chapters although some chapters use a different nominal scheme in an attempt to protect identity.

### **Alex**

I'm a really hard worker so I put a lot of hours into my teaching. I am constantly trying. I think that a teacher is really just a student, or good teachers are students. I feel like you can train to be a teacher but then to be a teacher of each individual student requires individual training. Each student requires a whole new psychology and a lot of self-reflection. I think teaching is so much more than what it seems. I would say that I develop really strong relationships with my students. One of my classes thought that I must hate teaching them because they can be a difficult class but the truth of the matter is they are probably my favourite class. I don't have a loud booming voice and I don't punish a lot of students but I am nurturing. I get through the content well and I'm quite confident with my subject areas.



**Ash**

I'm not a chalk and talk type of teacher, there is an element of that but I mainly try to be creative and get the kids to be creative. I think the subjects I teach are exciting, very exciting. I'm fairly casual in my approach with the students but I prepare fairly thoroughly. I like to have the answers to questions at the ready. Most importantly though is that the students are engaged.

The attachments that develop with students makes me enjoy my job. Most of the job is giving and doing something for other people but you also get something out of it. The caring can be the best part of the job but it can also be the worst. I'm doing something for them and they're getting something out of it. I like the kids and I like being able to have a joke with them and I do feel like they like me as a teacher too.

**Chris**

My expectations change and then I have to change my teaching. I am always creating new units of work because it gives me satisfaction to create. The needs of the kids are most important and we have to do as much as we can to enhance and support them through each stage, which is rewarding. I love each stage. I do everything I can but it is up to the students to learn, a teacher can't take all the responsibility. But it is my job to find ways to enthuse the kids in the first place.

Professional conversations are important too. I'm always learning from my colleagues that have amazing teaching practices. Being in a classroom can sometimes feel like you are on a rollercoaster depending on what's happening around you but it's my job to make the classroom a calm place. I sometimes think teaching is like being an actor. You have to use your voice in certain ways. This job has so many parts to it. It's much larger than simply educating.

**Drew**

I'm really passionate about my subject areas. I'm a pretty optimistic, dynamic sort of person and I do a lot of good work with colleagues in my faculties. I don't want to sound up myself but I think I am an innovator and can be an inspirational teacher. There are so many corners that you can cut, but it just wouldn't be me if I cut the corner. And it pays off though. The kids — they're

really engaged. Some of them are growing in leaps and bounds in terms of their learning and skills. The harder it is to teach a student, I suppose, it is worth it because the rewards are even more. Teachers have multiple roles, you're not always just the teacher, sometimes you are more like a parent but I think those relationships are what makes the work feel special. Sometimes it feels like the nurturing in you comes out and you feel like you need to defend and protect your students.

**Jordan**

I really enjoy teaching. I find it really rewarding teaching different kids. I'm loving it. I think I'm a pretty easy-going person but I do set high expectations for my students. I set goals at the start of each of my lessons and students have to assess that goal at the start and then at the end they have to reassess where they're at. I love seeing progress in the students. Getting good results. I love giving students opportunities to learn but also to experience different things outside of school too. I saw my teachers as friends as well as mentors and I hope I am seen that way too but having said that, our main business is teaching. I think some teachers can be lazy. They just don't discipline the kids or check that they are even doing their work. I don't like seeing that.

**Terry**

My favourite thing is sitting down with a student and having a conversation. Those moments of connections that you make with your students are the poignant moments. It is a very personal profession I think. My identity shifts too with the conversations that I have with other teachers and students. The professional conversations that I have with other teachers inspire me too.

The ultimate aim is to get your students to pass and while that's what I want to happen, failing some students and being frustrated by that process, is part of the process of caring about your job. There are a lot of ups and downs and there is actually no end to the job. We've got to meet students where they are, in terms of their needs, which is partly dictated externally by a curriculum, but they'll find their own path too.

The above introductions give a sense of how the teacher collaborators perceive 'the teacher' discourse and feel in relation to their work. Jordan and Chris talked

about 'loving' aspects of their job. All teachers discussed an element of enjoyment, excitement or passion, or an element of their work being their 'favourite' thing, which also indicates the sense of reward. Jordan, Drew and Chris specifically talk about the act of teaching being rewarding. The introductions convey a perception that reward stems from the relationship with students, which Howes and Goodman-Delahunty's (2015) and Keller et al.'s (2014) research supports. For example, Terry says, '[m]y *favourite* thing is sitting down with a student and having a conversation', and Ash comments, '[t]he attachments that develop with students makes me enjoy my job'.

The teachers describe themselves as a 'hard worker', an 'innovator', 'caring' or 'setting high expectations' and their work as a 'rollercoaster', as having 'ups and downs', or an enactment of creation. Drew states, '[t]he harder it is to teach a student, I suppose, it is worth it because the rewards are even more'. Priestley et al. (2012) assert that a teacher's willingness to enact change, to endeavour, is likely influenced by personal biographies. A sense of reward was also intimated through relationships with other teachers — Chris, Drew and Terry all mentioned the positive impact teacher colleagues might have on them. They talked of doing good work with colleagues, learning from them or being inspired by them. Jordan, on the other hand, noted that some teachers can be lazy. Nonetheless, both student and teacher relationships can be rewarding, though student relationships seem to be more significant.

The teachers' introductions also show what the teachers believe is expected of them. Alex suggests that teachers might need to have a 'loud booming voice', which is the only reference to a physical characteristic. Both Alex and Terry indicate that teachers should also be learners, continually changing and adapting, which is also mentioned by Chris and Ash. A level of adaptability is touched on in Drew's comment 'teachers have multiple roles'. Other expectations included: 'having the answers', 'getting good results', 'get students to pass', 'disciplining kids', 'protect students', 'enthuse the kids', 'enhance and support [students]', 'nurture', 'meet students where they are' and 'make the classroom a calm place'. The concept of teachers being expected to keep the classroom calm is supported in academic literature (see Hochschild 2012;

Winograd 2003; Yin et al. 2013). Additionally, '[t]eachers are responsible for the failure of students and schools to meet testing targets' (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.55).

The teachers expect to be 'giving'. For example, 'giving students opportunities to learn' or 'giving and doing something for other people'. De Marzio (2007) and Ramvi (2010) concur, describing teaching as a 'service' or 'therapeutic'. So, in summary the teacher collaborators reasonably feel that they are expected to be adaptable, flexible and giving of themselves to 'enhance' yet 'protect' their students, which they see as a considerable endeavour but worth the reward.

These introductions provide the teachers' perception of what is expected of them. But what is expected by others? Kelchtermans (2009) and Price and McCallum (2014) identified that the scrutiny of the highly public image of the teacher by staff, students and parents impacted on a teacher's self-concept and consequently their wellbeing. There are a set of norms and common knowledge that are drawn on to inform the teacher about how to 'perform' (Edwards in press; Kelchtermans 2009). It is the community at large that influences the teacher discourse. Following Drake's (2009) use of Google, to get a sense of the popular view on the 'shortage of mathematics teachers', on Friday 8th May 2015 the word 'teacher' was entered into the Google search engine to capture how the environment, or in this case digital society, defines a teacher. This was around the time the fieldwork with the teachers was coming to an end. A variety of links to websites from across the world, but mostly Australia and the United States, appeared. Three news reports were headlined; 'SA primary school teacher sacking for taping students to chairs was harsh, Fair Work Commission says' (ABC 8 May 2015); 'Teacher student sex - laws under the microscope' (Macdonald 2015); and 'Teacher arrested after burning 'I love mom' into kid's arm with Tesla coil' (Matyszczyk 2015). The latter headline came from the United States while the two former headlines were from Australia.

When the list of news headlines was expanded, many similar headlines were listed. Just under these headlines were a selection of images depicting 'a teacher' — all were early to middle aged females, Caucasian, attractive, trim,

conservatively dressed and smiling. Using the link to further images most were similar to those already described, with a few minor variations in gender and more substantial variations in ethnicity. In the nineteenth century, female teachers were expected to exemplify the image of the ideal woman; nurturing, restrained and patient (Winograd 2003). In the story about Steven I used the word 'mothering', which was used by my teacher colleagues. We were all females, so the word 'mothering' was perhaps reasonably applied but perhaps the reason most of my colleagues have been female is a response to 'the teacher' discourse. 'Mothering' is gendered and suggests who teachers are, what they are, and how they should act. It is of concern that the internet images appear to reinforce nineteenth century stereotypes.

The two collections, news headlines and images, seem to be at odds. The news headlines paint a picture of the 'teacher' as being a sadistic, perverted and irresponsible person, which is at odds with the teacher collaborators' commitment to 'enhance', 'nurture' and 'protect' students. On the other hand, the images on offer depicting a friendly, happy and somewhat aesthetically pleasing person do not represent the diverse group of teachers with whom I worked. The news headlines are chosen based on the interests of readers, whereas the images depict existing perceptions of what a teacher should be like. The teacher collaborators are trying to live up to such expectations by being supportive, a friend and nurturing. The news headlines and the images send conflicting messages to teachers; the headlines indicate public fear of pedophilia and abuse, which prompts teachers to distance themselves from their students, despite strong teacher-student relationships being productive to learning (Stebbins 2010). A teacher keeping their distance is not really conducive to the warm, caring, nurturing relationships also expected of a teacher.

The word 'teacher' captured by the internet outlines two ways in which the public may think about teachers: 1) the reported actions of teachers, and 2) the general public's perceived expectations of what a teacher is or should be. Both perceptions seem extreme and narrow. In addition to this confused societal framing of a teacher, the academic and professional version in some ways is

not much clearer. For example, in an Australian professional teacher magazine Brunton (2008) articulates that a teacher:

facilitates rather than directs learning; asks questions; provides choices in rich learning experiences; challenges thinking through higher order questioning; promotes higher-order thinking; provides feedback related to learning; plans for the needs of learners; [and] listens to learners.

(Brunton 2008, p.25)

Moss's (2013) chapter in a textbook for pre service teachers suggests people that are enthusiastic learners with a passion for humanity and making a difference to future generations are drawn to teaching. These two examples capture the word 'teacher' in two ways; the first outlines the pedagogical actions of teachers and the second has a more human and relational focus.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching is currently responsible for allowing prospective teachers to join the Victorian 'professional' teacher community through a registration process, which is aligned with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and Section 2.6.1 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) (The Act). The Act states that a person is not eligible to be employed by a Victorian school unless they are registered or permitted to teach by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. It also provides a definition for the word 'teacher':

- (a) means a person who in a school, undertakes duties that include the delivery of an educational program or the assessment of student participation in an educational program; and
- (b) includes a person employed as the principal or the head of a school whether or not that person undertakes the duties of a teacher if the person has been employed as a teacher in any school prior to being employed as the principal or the head of a school; and
- (c) does not include a teacher's aide, a teacher's assistant or a student teacher.

(*Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) s.2.6.1)

While people who teach in Victorian schools must obtain registration through the Victorian Institute of Teaching there are varying forms of registration; provisional registration or permission to teach may be granted instead of full registration. All of the teacher collaborators were registered teachers with full registration and one teacher had permission to teach. The above definition does not include the relational element of teaching that the teacher collaborators mentioned. It highlights an 'educational program', 'assessment' and 'student participation', which Kemmis (2009) and Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) call the 'doings' of practice. Kelchtermans (2009, p.258) states 'any attempt to conceptualise teaching needs to include a concept of the teacher as a person or his/her sense of self'. Yet teachers have to choose between a detached competent professional identity or being the warm caring friend (Hargreaves 2001; Shapiro 2010).

Teachers' work is framed by the ongoing drive to quantify and measure 'education' (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.53). In the 'professional' teacher discourse there has been increased focus on the importance of 'quality' teachers on student learning (for example, Collins 2011; Crossing 2011; Hattie 2004; Jensen et al. 2014; Lovat 2010; Page 2007; Wasson 2011; Weldon 2015). But what is a quality teacher? Hattie (2004, p.31) suggests that expert teachers stand out in 'the way they represent their classrooms, the degree of challenge they present to students and, most critically, the depth of processing that their students attain'. Again, the focus is on the 'doings'. There are other components to teacher practice. There is 'relating', which shapes and is in turn shaped by practice, as well as the 'thinking' and 'saying' which motivate and justify practice (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Kemmis 2009). The 'relating' element of practice is what the teachers themselves have prioritised and the 'thinking' and 'saying' is directly influenced by 'the teacher' discourse where each element is intimately enmeshed with the other. The teachers have a desire to meet the expectations emphasised by 'the teacher' discourse, which then impacts on how they relate and act in practice, and in turn feeds back into 'the teacher' discourse.

Teachers may find themselves in a 'struggle to reject normative discourses' and 'find their own voice' (Zembylas 2003, p.229). Part of the struggle is to maintain an harmonious sense of self in a climate where teachers are expected to adhere sometimes to unrealistic and conflicting norms. The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct (The Code) (2015b) acknowledges that there is no definitive boundary between personal and professional conduct — personal conduct outside of the professional environment still needs to be 'professional'.

Hochschild (2012) emphasizes the dangers of a worker wholeheartedly identifying with their work; without a division between private and public self there is a risk of burnout. Shapiro (2010, p.616) described how 'I began to sense that the longer I was a teacher, the less I might feel like a full human being. My professional identity was eclipsing my humanity', highlighting that understanding one's emotional self is an integral component of making sense of one's professional self.

Teachers have conflicting scripts that they have to perform. On one hand, there is a large list of 'doings', which pleases the public because a teacher acting 'professional' instills confidence in their performance. On the other hand, there is the warm, nurturing and self-giving script, which is somewhat contrary to the 'professional' script, which pleases the public because they can be engaged in the performance. So, while teachers want to be engaging and relationships are important to what they do, 'the teacher' discourse requires teachers to follow the 'professional' script at all times. How can teachers negotiate the tension?

I am not suggesting that there is an easy solution to the conundrum or that I have found one. The intention of this thesis is to gain an understanding of how these emotional experiences impact on the six teachers' work and whether implementing a reflexive process to explore emotional consciousness is helpful in managing the tension. Alex, Chris and Terry all made reference to teaching being 'more than what it seems', or having 'many parts to it, or having 'no end'. In a sense the job is boundless and consists of complex parts that are not always visible, but Jordan states 'our main business is teaching'. The 'teacher discourse' had caused confusion for the teachers where 'our main business is



teaching' is as clear as mud. If teachers cannot be clear about what is expected of them, how can they be clear about how to perform?

The conclusion of this thesis shows how the teachers' and my own emotional experiences together tell a story of the struggle inherent in teaching and through the reflexive process of the collaborative inquiry we experienced self-transformation. Through emotional consciousness our script shifted and was rewritten. This thesis is a story about seven teachers' worlds coming together; histories were re-lived and futures were forged.

## **PART ONE**

### **The unconscious**

## Chapter 2

### Making sense of people's worlds

This chapter unpacks the conceptual framework that underpins the project. Through metaphor, 'a world' is a person's reality that intersects with others' worlds. These intersections create spaces of shared reality through complex relationships by which a sense of self is merged and emerges through psychological, psychoanalytic and sociological theory. The chapter also introduces the idea of *unconscious worlds* that are differentiated from but still part of a person's world. A world has both a conscious and unconscious element that interact and influence the way a person might make sense of their world. A person's unconscious world may compel one to act in certain ways but why one is compelled in such a way may be unknown. The chapter argues that unconscious aspects of a person's world prevent them from seeing how one relates to their world completely and that moments of consciousness, when something becomes known, might feel like a collision.

I begin with an example of such a collision with the words of Chris:

I was having a big discussion about the [overseas] excursion ... with the year elevens and we were talking at a different level [a mature level] and I was thinking, 'these are the older kids.' Then [a student's] mum came in and we had a chat. ... She put her arm around me and said, "will you look after my little boy?" It suddenly hit me, yes, he's [still] a child (Chris).

The above excerpt is an example of the complexity of social reality. Noonan (2008) highlights that assuming, without argument, that an event is some independently real entity and the people involved are objective and rational variables that can be easily studied leads to an extremely narrow reality. For example, using only the signifier 'students' offers a narrow reality and does not capture Chris's reality of the year eleven students being mature almost-adults, and the mother's reality of the student being a child. Both realities vary yet co-exist. Realities are relative to the beings that live within them and need to be

understood relative to something else; for example, languages, and social and cultural practices. Relativism rejects one universal truth.

Smith (2008) writes that relativism should not be thought of in terms of truth but an acknowledgment of our finite condition of being in the world. One's history of experience determines a finite way of being so that reality is bound by that history (Gadamer 2014). At the same time, a sense of history evolves through interaction and relationships that foreground all future experiences (Clandinin 2013). For example, Chris is not a parent but has a sense of what it means to parent a child through the experience of being a child. Chris's reality is bound by a history of experiences that impact on Chris's understanding of year eleven students. Chris stated, 'and then it hit me'. There was an actual point of impact and acknowledgement of a shared reality that evolved. The value of that reality is relative to those that experience it; there can be multiple realities or worlds that co-exist. The layers of complexity that abound and subside in people's inner worlds and their relationships with the outer world are neglected in terms of a fixed or definite overarching reality (Noonan 2008).

Social reality is dynamic (Noonan 2008). A new way of being and interacting with the world 'hit' Chris. Chris was already responsible for mature almost-adult students but became, through acknowledgement, a teacher also responsible for the prized children of others. Winnicott described this shared reality as transitional space; it is relational space but it does not exclude a concept of the individual and how individuals rely on each other to create a shared reality (Hollway 2011; Winnicott 1969). Chris and the student's mother were outsiders to each other's positions because Chris was not a parent, but the student's mother was; yet they both became insiders to a unified nurturance of the student. They occupied the hyphen between insider-outsider (Humphrey 2007).

Another way of thinking about the dynamic shift for Chris is that not only did Chris's way of being and experiencing the world transform in an almost imperceptible way, so did Chris's knowledge about year eleven students. Chris's knowledge was being socially constructed.

Schwandt (2007) explains that social construction is a process of knowledge building initiated within human relationships:

We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience. Furthermore, there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but, rather, against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth.

(Schwandt 2007, p.38)

I neither align with what Schwandt (2007) calls 'radical constructivism', where the individual is completely responsible for constructing knowledge, nor 'strong social constructionism', where everything in the world and about the world is a product of social interaction. Rather, I support Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg's (2011) suggestion that knowledge is constructed in complex ways, some of which are conscious and others that are unconscious, and to understand the construction the invisible has to be uncovered, which can lead to social transformation.

For example, I am suggesting that Chris's knowledge and the mother's knowledge was not constructed within Chris, the mother, and the students individually, neither was it completely constructed externally. It was constructed through a relational space. Chris drew on 'the teacher' discourse to make sense of the students but there were other discourses influencing the relationships; for example, a discourse around parent-child relationships, a discourse on late adolescent males, and a discourse on male-female interaction. Chris's knowledge about students expanded, because while the students are almost-adults, the awareness that they are also children came into consciousness. The relational space was not just simply shared — the people within the space were relied on to craft a new way of being.

Meanings are made through interactions with others within an historical and cultural backdrop (Bruner 2004; Creswell 2013). The discourse on year eleven

students and parent-child relationships developed within a historical and cultural backdrop. For example, 'the teacher' discourse dictates that there are boundaries between 'nurturing' and 'professionalism' and may have influenced Chris's, the mother's and the student's understanding of teacher-student relationships and how teachers 'ought' to make meaning of their students. 'The teacher' discourse is maybe what compelled the mother to approach Chris in the first place. What I have outlined is one element of Chris's relationship with students and a parent, but it is connected to many other elements, and forms the knowledge base on which Chris builds teacher-student relationships.

Knowledge is fluid and can never be definite but is always evolving because sense making is never complete (Brown & Heggs 2011). Knowledge is an assumption that may seem like truth but might also be revised or even dismissed (Giddens 2013, p.3). Assumptions about year eleven students framed how Chris interpreted action and relationships, which in turn fuelled further assumption. Not that these assumptions were unfounded but they were an incomplete picture. Brown and Heggs (2011) describe a hermeneutic circle where one is cyclically conditioned by the interpretation of experience. The experience leads to an explanation, or what I am calling an assumption, that then feeds into future assumption-making processes. So, any single piece of knowledge is an assumption that sits somewhere on a continuum which Brown and Heggs (2011) describe as being interpreted by someone as closer or not to a truth. For example, at one end of the continuum might be 'year eleven students are children', whereas the other end of the continuum might be 'year eleven students are adults'.

The significance of the specific lived experience of Chris was consciously recognised and could be described as a moment of 'perezhivanie'; that is, the emotional element that influences how one makes sense of a lived experience where there is an 'indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics' (Vygotsky et al. 1994, p.342). There is always potential for points of difference between personal and situational factors but for unity (perezhivanie) to occur the points of difference need to be recognised. Sometimes the difference remains unconscious, which prevents comprehension

of the situation. For example, the discussion Chris had with the mother could have been insignificant to Chris and the year eleven students could have remained almost-adults without noticing the students being someone's children. *Perezhivanie*, moments of felt consciousness, occur in a relational space.

Correlating these ideas with this research suggests that each teacher and I came to the project with a relational reality that was based on knowledge built from perception and influenced by history and culture. Furthermore, our coming together would expose a shared reality belonging to the future.

Like Vygotsky's '*perezhivanie*' suggests, knowledge and emotion become entwined, and so there are multiple disciplinary perspectives I could have drawn on, for example a psychological or a sociological perspective. The problem with drawing on either is that a psychological perspective would most likely focus on personal characteristics, potentially excluding the situational, and a sociological perspective would most likely draw on situational characteristics, potentially excluding the personal. To overcome potential exclusions, the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis came together through *bricolage*. The *bricoleur*, according to, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) is the researcher that adapts or utilises what is available to create something new. A *bricoleur* will extend and define oneself by inventing or piecing together, again much like a puzzle, new tools or techniques as is required by the wonderings of the research. *Bricolage* is a 'critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach to inquiry' (Rogers 2012, p.1).

Kincheloe (2001a) captures the sometimes pejorative attitude toward *bricolage* where the *bricoleur* can only grasp theory superficially because they are spread thin across multiple domains. Rather, 'we tend to be "blinkered" by our disciplines' (Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007, p.20) and *bricolage* actually highlights the 'fictive and imaginative elements of the presentation of all formal research' (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg 2011, p168). For example, Pitt and Brushwood Rose (2007) believe that the concept of emotional intelligence is seriously flawed, but to ignore it would be to ignore the frequently accepted discourse of teacher emotion. *Bricolage* embraces the complexity of research

and the need for an interdisciplinary approach. 'Inquiry methodology can no longer be treated as a set of universally applicable rules or abstractions' (Lincoln & Guba 2011, p.97). In this sense, I am a bricoleur. The intersection of where the disciplines merge is the frontier for new knowledge (Kincheloe 2001b; Lincoln & Guba 2011; Wong et al. 2014). Theories from sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis have been drawn on to operationalise the necessary concepts.

There have been examples of successful mergers between psychodynamic or psychoanalytic theory to understand teachers' emotional experiences. For example, Zembylas (2007b) attempts to transcend psychodynamic and sociocultural theory; Stebbin's (2010, p.162) intended to 'explore the ways that feminism and psychoanalysis might be brought into conversation with one another'; Hollway and Jefferson (2013) describe a psychosocial approach to qualitative research where psychoanalytic theory underpins the coming together of the individual and the social realm. As a bricoleur command over my means of production is not a given; the bricolage operates through the bricoleur (Johnson 2012). The research wonderings have been co-constructed and re-constructed to find 'new ways to understand the complications of social, cultural, psychological, and educational life' (Kincheloe 2005, p.327). As Cochran-Smith et al. (2014) explain:

Taking complex systems apart results in losing key aspects of how they work and what makes them work in the first place since unexpected consequences can arise as the result of the interactions of parts.

(Cochran-Smith et al. 2014, p.6)

Considering the teachers and their experiences as part of a complex system requires the psychological and social aspects of the teacher and the collective to be considered. It is psychoanalytic theory that pulls the two together, although there is sometimes a resistance to psychoanalytic theory. For example, Stebbins (2010) describes a feminist resistance to psychoanalysis and Zembylas (2007b) warns about the risk of an individualistic focus, disregarding social, cultural and political factors. Recently there has been a



renewal of interest in psychoanalytic theory with a level of sophistication and openness that allows psychoanalysis and social science to exist symbiotically (Frosh 2012b).

What specifically does contemporary psychoanalytic theory bring to this project? As Hollway & Jefferson (2013) explain it affords a way of understanding people:

... whose inner worlds cannot be understood without knowledge of their experiences in the world, and whose experiences of the world cannot be understood without knowledge of the way in which their inner worlds allow them to experience the outer world.

(Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p.4)

It not only allows exploration into these inner and outer worlds but also recognises that people are positioned in these worlds through relationships with others (Frosh 2012b). As noted above, reality is bound by history and psychoanalysis offers an opportunity to look back as a way to move forward through inquiring into people's narratives (Bruner 2004; Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007, p.4). Psychoanalytic theory also opens avenues for reflexivity (Frosh 2012b). Reflexivity is not only relevant to the research topic but also for me to be as researched as the teachers, given that neither can 'tell it like it is' due to a '... less clear-cut, more confused and contradictory relationship to knowing and telling about themselves' (Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p.3). Psychoanalytic theory also allows the exploration of the emotional connection to social events through relationships (Frosh 2012b).

A relational space requires an understanding of 'the self' and 'other' interplay. A sense of self emerges from action and interaction with others. But while a sense of self does emerge it is at the same time being forced to fit a frame that is based on relational negotiations with others (Frosh 2012b). For example, Chris made assumptions about 'mature year eleven students' that did not necessarily reflect what the 'other', in this case the year eleven student, may have understood about himself. The year eleven student's sense of self develops

through the 'year eleven student' discourse that is fed by Chris's assumption that he is an almost adult and his mother's assumption that he is a little boy.

## 2.1 Unconscious worlds

Freud's (2005) theory of unconscious thinking explores the space between conscious and unconscious ideas and what one is compelled to act out. The existence of unconscious thought can be debated because 'no one can catch [unconscious thought]' (Frosh 2012a, p.38). How can an individual contemplate something they are unaware of? Through psychoanalysis unconscious thought can be collaboratively contemplated. Unconscious thought is made up, for example, of memories, information, skills and wishes; which in temporal terms ranges from past (memories), present (information, skills) and future (wishes) (Rycroft 1995). A useful example of unconscious thought surfacing is the following excerpt taken from a conversation I had with Ash regarding an uncomfortable feeling in relation to an experience at the school. This fragment of a story happened over some time, it did not flow continuously. The series of three periods (...) indicates either silences, reiterations, or conversation withheld to protect Ash's, or others', identity. This convention has been used throughout the thesis.

Jean: Can you think of another time when you felt that sort of rejection?  
Ash: No. Not really ... . When I was younger I was ... . Certainly through my 20's I felt, yeah and I think growing up ... I was very sensitive to others' opinions of me ... and I think I had a tendency to feel rejected just because I was always on the outer ... . You know what ... — that was all high school. All high school I was feeling that so I'm wondering now that I'm back at a high school. ... I'm back in high school being rejected!

In the first instance Ash had no explicit recollection of feeling rejected but memories surfaced that brought unconscious thought forward. It would not have been easy for Ash to relive those experiences of rejection. Frosh (2012b) highlights that psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalysis offers a threat to ease-of-mind and that while it might seem appealing to turn away from this

threat, it is in confronting it that the critical element of psychoanalytic theory comes forth. Ash confronted the threat to ease-of-mind and came to understand something deeper about oneself and their relations with others. The teachers and I confronted uneasy feelings by exploring what lay beneath. As Frosh (2003) suggests:

We are not just what we seem, even the simplest of us, but all have something else within, something secret out of which our desires emerge, something which, in the last resort may make us unpredictably tricky and intense.

(Frosh 2003, p.3)

It is the unconscious activity that motivate us in particular ways but conscious and unconscious ideas exist cohesively. The mind keeps a proportion of mental activity unconscious to protect human beings from thoughts and feelings that would otherwise be too overwhelming. While unconscious thought may be repressed, as in withheld from consciousness, 'the repressed does not constitute the whole of the unconscious' (Freud 2005, p.49). So far, I have mentioned unconscious and conscious mental processes but Freud described a third type of consciousness — preconscious. Unconscious material is content that remains hidden, whereas conscious material of the mind is what one is currently aware of, which is not to say it will always remain so. For example, when Ash was younger and experienced feeling 'on the outer' it may have been a conscious idea when it was being lived, including the feelings and thoughts that accompanied the experience. Over time, however, the memory of feelings related to that experience and maybe even part of the experience itself became unconscious. The experience still took place but the awareness of it had changed until our discussion, when the ideas resurfaced.

The difference between preconscious and unconscious is related to the ease of the shift from preconscious to conscious or unconscious to conscious.

According to Freud the shift from preconscious to conscious is fairly straightforward and uninhibited. But the shift from unconscious to conscious is inhibited because the mind has defences employed, such as repression, to

prevent the unconscious material from becoming conscious (Brenner 1974b; Freud 2005; Frosh 2012a; Rycroft 1995).

When I use the word unconscious in this thesis I am implying both unconscious and preconscious content. It is not within the scope of this research to determine whether what becomes conscious was either preconscious or unconscious; the focus is on what becomes conscious.

Freud used narrative to share his experiences with unconscious mental processing. He looked at specific cases and told the story of that case. The shift from unconscious to conscious is a complex one that involves an imagined recollection of memories that do not just belong to the past but are constantly reconstructed and reimagined. Ash first thinks of being younger, then a young adult and then back to adolescence, and was likely connecting these unconscious memories to the current situation. The memories themselves were not necessarily unconscious but the connection between these separate experiences, together with the emotion and thinking that connected them, were unconscious. Memories are not linear — they are iterative and open to shifting and changing (Bruner 2004; Clandinin 2013). Similarly, Chris's statement at the beginning of this chapter also highlights once unconscious thought suddenly 'hitting' Chris. It is unlikely that Chris had no knowledge that the year eleven students were once children, and are still children to their mothers, but it was not conscious knowledge until 'the collision'.

Our memories being filtered through imagination and relationships is precisely the reason Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p.3) point out that research participants cannot 'tell it like it is'. A lived experience is constantly being reimagined through sharing with others. So, narrative inquiry and participatory action research were drawn on to investigate this research puzzle. These two methodologies come together to explore the past, present and future of the participating teachers. The narrative inquiry captures their memories and the action component grounds the memory in the present and drives future action. In a way, the teachers and I were 'telling it like it could be'. We made meaning from lived and told stories but through the sharing of these stories we also

made judgments about future action and ways of being (Clandinin 2013; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). Further specifics of the methodology are discussed in *Chapter Four; Merging narrative and action*. For now, what I wish to highlight is that psychoanalytic theory can take us further than exploring the re-construction and co-construction of storied experiences that shape future action but can also allow us to take a closer look at what lies beneath the surface in the unconscious worlds (Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007).

This chapter outlined the ontological and epistemological commitments of the project. The research took place in a relational space — a space of shared reality that encompasses being and knowing constructively. Within this shared space there is an element of self that is unknown, and cannot be fully known, but impacts on how we act in the shared space. In turn, how we act in the shared space influences how others act as well through various discourses. The cycle continues in a relational dynamic where our way of being, knowing, and acting constantly shifts. This chapter also introduced the methodological commitments of the project, being narrative inquiry and participatory action research. These methodologies, discussed in depth in *Chapter Four*, weave together with the project's ontological and epistemological commitments because it is through peoples' narratives that we can get a sense of the evolution of a collective way of being and through relating future action can be imagined.

In outlining unconscious worlds, the chapter has predominantly focused on individual cases. In the next two chapters the discussion between the self and the social sphere is brought again to the foreground. *Chapter Three* links unconscious and conscious worlds with the experience of teaching. In *Chapter Four* Figure 4.1 features a model of the interplay between self and other through narrative, which is underpinned by unconscious worlds.

## Chapter 3

### Exploring teacher reflexivity

I have already introduced the notion and interplay of self and other, as well as unconscious and conscious worlds in the previous chapter. This chapter has six sections. Section 3.1 introduces the theory of *the unknown self* and introduces the idea that there are multiple selves that are not divisible but exist in some way. Section 3.2 connects ideas about *the acting self* with ideas about agency and frames these ideas in a reality that is ‘negotiated’ through ‘the teacher’ discourse. Section 3.3 looks at *the agentic teacher self* by turning to academic literature to gain a sense of individual teacher agency, which is dominant in the academic discourse.

I argue that individual teacher agency, while coveted, is also actively discouraged by the desire for teachers to conform to professional norms that feed into ‘the teacher’ discourse. I also argue that there is an important tension for teachers who find themselves in a double bind: while each is aspiring for individual agency, each also seeks to conform to professional norms that tend to homogenise what is considered to be good teacher practice. These conditions create a kind of *unconscious agency*, which sounds like a paradox, but is defined in relation to reflexivity in section 3.4. It is argued that agency is inhibited without reflexivity. *The reflexive teacher self* is explored through the academic literature in section 3.5, which situates reflexivity in a teaching context, within a professional learning frame. Finally, in section 3.6, *the teacher collective*, I contend that individual agency is only lived through a collective, which is also supported by academic literature, and that collective agency faces similar barriers to individual agency — an inhibition to explore the unknown.

#### 3.1 The unknown self

There is something inside of us which is foreign — the other inside the self, which compels us in certain ways (Frosh 2012a). Psychoanalysts such as Fairburn, Klein and Winnicott contended that human beings seek relationships

and not necessarily pleasure (Frosh 2012a; Hinshelwood 1989). This view turns away from individualism and considers others. According to Winnicott (1965), it is through the drive to develop relationships that a true self and false self emerges. He describes a true self as driven by instincts and a false self as driven by the need to be accepted by others.

For the purposes of this research I will refer to Winnicott's concept of the 'true self' as the 'impulsive self' because the word 'true' suggests the 'true self' is more 'real' or 'right', which is not necessarily the case. The 'impulsive self' suggests a self that is acting on desire rather than 'truth'.

A balance needs to be struck between the impulsive self and false. An unhealthy development might be the false self completely dominating the self, resulting in a person feeling like they are living a lie; or on the other hand, the impulsive self might dominate, resulting in a person being hyper impulsive (Winnicott 1965). In general people employ the false self to hide the impulsive self. The following excerpt is an example of the struggle to manage the balance. It comes from a conversation with Terry about other staff members having 'yelling matches' and is used to draw out the theory of impulsive self and false self.

[T] here's a swathe of people who are confrontational, like ridiculously confrontational, over the most trivial things ... [two particular colleagues] communicate [through yelling] because they like fighting about nothing ... it's irritating rather than fearful ... they're grown men you know ... I have higher expectations (*Terry*).

The above excerpt is pieced together from specific segments of conversation that flowed over a five-minute period. It is Terry's description of the two colleagues that are 'ridiculously confrontational', often 'yell' and whom Terry perceives 'like fighting', that give an example of two impulsive selves on exhibition as the two teachers are compelled by impulse.

### 3.2 The acting self

But why would someone want to hide their impulsive self? The answer to that has to do with negotiating reality. By 'negotiating' I mean a process of judgment called reality testing that determines the value of an idea, which in turn impacts on a person's reality (Brenner 2002; Freud 2005; Frosh 2012a; Rycroft 1995). For example, Terry has made a judgment that being 'ridiculously confrontational' is unacceptable based on the responses of others over a lifetime of experience, which is the reality testing process. To meet the demands of acceptable behaviour in a shared reality a false self is employed to gauge what is, or is not, acceptable (Winnicott 1965).

Terry has higher expectations of the two colleagues, which is in alignment with 'the teacher' discourse. For example, Mulford and Grady's (2001) research into the perceptions of government schooling of a random sample of Victorians and Tasmanians showed that one of the top three objectives of schooling is to teach people how to get along. Consequently, you would not expect the professionals responsible for teaching people how to get along to demonstrate something that looks like not getting along. Indeed, *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct* states that teachers are expected to demonstrate collegiality by: 'treating each other with courtesy and respect; valuing the input of their colleagues; using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters ...' (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015b, p.3). For example, if Terry were in a situation where anger was felt, Terry's statement suggests they would employ a false self to keep the anger at bay.

There is a perceived expectation that Terry is non-confrontational and if that expectation is met Turner (2009) suggests that Terry may experience a feeling of pleasure. A person is constantly dealing with internal conflict from wanting something pleasurable but at the same time being faced with displeasure by the idea of achieving it (Brenner 2002). While Terry might feel pleasure in meeting the expectation, displeasure might be the result of denying aggressive impulses. Pleasure is not only stimulated by meeting expectations, it can also be stimulated by positive impacting limitations (Turner 2009). For example, if the



colleague noticed Terry's increasing potential to yell and ended the conversation — a positive impacting limitation — Terry might also feel pleasure because the yelling was avoided.

On the other hand, unpleasure might be stimulated by not meeting expectations or negative impacting limitations (Turner 2009). If instead Terry yelled, the feeling of unpleasure may overwhelm, as expectations were not met. The feeling of unpleasure may also be compounded if Terry's drive to yell was due to the impression that the colleague was not listening; where someone not listening could be seen as a negative impacting limitation.

Through reality testing Terry was trying to strike a balance between the impulsive self and the false self, which conforms to 'the teacher' discourse. Terry's example shows that pleasure and unpleasure exist cohesively and reinforces Winnicott's (1965) notion that maintaining relationships outweighs pleasure seeking.

I introduced the idea that teachers are faced with competing expectations in *Chapter One*. They are expected to be and act in certain ways. For example, Winograd (2003) highlights that in the United States teachers are expected to love their work, or at least like it and if not, they are expected to fake the sentiment. In terms of the impulsive self and false self, what Winograd is suggesting is that teachers are expected to employ the false self if the impulsive self is not in alignment with what is expected. The false self is required in some way to maintain functional social interaction, though the over reliance of the false self is not a picture of health (Winnicott 1965). When the expectations of how a teacher is expected to be or act are out of balance with a teacher's sense of self, then tensions may occur (den Brok et al. 2013; Hochschild 2012). For example, the two colleagues' actions are out of alignment with 'the teacher' discourse possibly fuelling tension between the false and impulsive self; at least some of which would be unconscious.

A person negotiates their world through a process of judgment that leads to action, which can be defined as agency. Agency is often regarded in one of

three ways: 1) how one acts, 2) how one is consciously motivated to act, or 3) the unconscious habits of mind that lead to action (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). Conceiving of agency in these discrete ways means that the dynamic interplay of the three components is not necessarily considered (ibid). Theory of the unconscious helps pull together often discrete concepts of agency by considering action in a relational space, which is impacted by conscious and unconscious drives. Professional practices shape our minds but our action also shapes practices and the internal and the external come together as a dialectic (Edwards in press).

In summary, the unknown self can be compelled by both the impulsive self and the false self and typically at the same time. The acting self mediates between the self and the external world in a pragmatic sense — meaning that the acting self responds to the demands of the external world. The acting self also responds to the demands of the external world through a process of ethical judgment and some of the processing associated with the acting self is conscious, but other processing is connected with the unknown self and may be unconscious. While these selves seem like split off parts of a whole self they are integrated and intersect in complex ways.

I have avoided Freud's (2005) structural theory of the id, ego and superego, which gives the impression that functioning of the mind can be categorised neatly and there is a clear delineation between conscious and unconscious thinking. I turn to Brenner's view that there is actually no clear division of mental functioning. For example, a thought will have resonance with the mind as whole. There is no component of the mind that ignores external reality or internal impulses (Brenner 2002). In which case, why draw out these different selves? While these selves do not exist in isolation, something of them exists and coexist in a complex way where boundaries are blurred. Drawing them out is an attempt to create language to talk about these parts of ourselves that make the whole self.

The teachers and I negotiated our realities through attempting to strike a balance between our impulsive selves and our false selves. What the next

sections highlight is how naturally complex the process is and how much more difficult 'the teacher' discourse and professional norms make it.

### **3.3 The agentic teacher self**

Until recently there has been little well-developed theory relating to teacher agency (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Vongalis-Macrow 2007). Edwards (2015) adds that due to conceptual nuances across the research field agency is difficult to define but asserts Taylor's (1977) view that agency is impacted through a sense of responsibility and self-evaluation, which interact with each other. For example, an agentic teacher is responsible for their actions that are informed by judgments as to the worth of the action, yet a teacher is also responsible for those judgments and needs to evaluate their worth (Edwards 2015; Taylor 1977). This corresponds to the process of reality testing outlined in the processes of 'the acting self'.

Incorporating teacher agency with the psychoanalytic theory outlined above suggests that teacher agency is a dynamic reciprocation of action, motivating factors and judgment. This means that in addition to an agentic teacher making judgments on the worth of the action and the judgments themselves, they should also have an understanding of what motivates the teacher to take on the responsibility and make the judgments in the first place (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Priestley et al. 2012). The agentic teacher understands how past experiences and action inform current judgments and sense of responsibility.

Sometimes teacher agency can appear passive where a teacher makes a judgment that inaction serves their responsibility (Kelchtermans 2009). Hence, teacher agency is not simply visible action, the process of judgment and motivating factors in reference to the cultural backdrop are equally significant.

Teacher agency of this kind may complement, maintain the status quo, or challenge school discourses and practices of change (Priestley et al. 2012; Robinson 2012). For example, the experience with the two yelling colleagues

resulted in Terry self-evaluating expectations of behaviour and interaction, resulting in a judgment that communicating through yelling is inappropriate. The self-evaluation and judgment informs Terry's action, which challenges the status quo if, as Terry states, there is 'a swathe of people [who] are confrontational' at the school.

There are further influences contributing to the tension between the unknown self, the acting self and external expectations. There are also limitations. For example, Alex explains:

I think of other [subject] teachers and the classes that I've observed. I can think of Eric [for example], who had a similar education to me, in terms of teacher education, and then I look at the other end, like say Carol, and I think about the way I want to go and how much struggle each of them have dealt with and worked up against. [For Carol] I think it is a path of least resistance but I don't really want to go down that path. I think I want to be more like Eric, having interactive classes (*Alex*).

What is the resistance that Alex articulates? The 'teacher discourse' has already outlined how teachers are pushed and pulled to meet the sometimes-conflicting expectations (Ryan & Bourke 2013). All within an environment of changing educational policy where teachers' work is continually being reconfigured — change is constant for teachers (Riveros, Newton & Burgess 2012; Vongalis-Macrow 2007). The resistance or non-resistance is likely related to change. For Alex, a choice has been made about advancing as a teacher and that choice centres on either following a path of least resistance or following a path of resistance. In other words, accepting change unquestioningly or critically examining change.

Does the current teacher professional climate encourage the critical examination of change? White (2010) describes the reduction of teacher autonomy and trust:

Providing scripts for what teachers should say, or competency standards for how teachers should measure up, or specifications of how teaching should be performed does not replace teachers' professional judgement or individual pedagogy, and serves to reduce teachers rather than improve teaching.

(White 2010, p.293)

Numerous researchers share White's sentiment in relation to the reductionism of teachers due to the tension between their complex and intense work and the growing expectations to fit a mould (for example, Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Burnard & White 2008; Edwards in press; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Hilferty 2008; Johnson & Down 2013; Priestley et al. 2012; Ryan & Bourke 2013; Vongalis-Macrow 2007; Watt & Richardson 2010). Due to the dynamic nature of schools and the growing body of education policy, for Alex the decision to follow the path of resistance, possibly by questioning change to assess its value, may result in facing negative impacting limitations from the policy being questioned, prompting unpleasure.

### **3.4 Unconscious agency**

Although a process of judgment is executed it may remain unconscious, which Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) describe as 'unconscious habits of mind that lead to action'. In reference to Alex's conscious decision to be like Eric, what unconscious choices have been made? For example, why was it noteworthy that Alex and Eric had a similar education? What does that mean for Alex? Are there other forces at play that compel Alex to want to teach like Eric? Of course, this is speculation and Alex may have been conscious of the answers to some of these questions and the answers themselves are not important to the point being made here. Rather, it is that an agentic person is someone that self-evaluates and makes judgments on past and present action that inform future action. Part of the process of self-evaluation is to be aware of motivating factors, yet some motivating factors might be unconscious.

Herein lies a difficulty — a key component of agency is to make the unknown known — yet we cannot make known everything about ourselves (Freud 2005; Frosh 2012a; Winnicott 1965). What I am describing is unconscious agency; an

unconscious knowing that informs action (Edwards in press). I have already highlighted that for a person to be agentic, they should know why they might do what they do, which is why unconscious agency seems like a paradox.

Agency then requires a specific something that forces a person to look inwardly and explore the unconscious. In other words, agency relies on reflexivity and reflexivity impacts agency (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Edwards-Groves et al. 2010; Kelchtermans 2009; Robinson 2012; Ryan & Bourke 2013; Zembylas & Barker 2007). Frosh (2012a, p.4) describes reflexivity as a process of interpretation that allows people ‘to find ways to work out what they are “about”’. People naturally analyse their actions and thoughts, as well as the thoughts and actions of others, where the level of reflexivity is dependent on the degree of consciousness of the analysis.

In teaching, in particular, reflection is seen as an instrumental component of practice because a teacher’s personal philosophy of teaching is derived from experiences unique to them (Kelchtermans 2009). But what I am talking about is something more than, for example, Schon’s (1991) ‘reflection on action’ or ‘reflection in action’, when a person reflects on an experience afterward or as it is happening. To understand the present and oneself within it, a person must understand their own history — what came beforehand (Clandinin 2013; Kincheloe 2001b). The level of reflection that is required by a teacher needs to go beyond present action and even beyond past action to where the teacher explores the experiences, beliefs, values thinking and associated emotion from which their personal philosophy has derived. It is the practice of reflexivity that allows one to grow and develop by understanding what drives their action (Stîngu 2012).

As Kelchtermans (2009) describes, teachers need to engage in ‘discomforting dialogues’. I can extend this notion further by adding that exploring conscious beliefs, values, thinking and associated emotion is not discomforting enough. It is by confronting ease-of-mind that a person can begin to look critically at oneself (Clandinin 2013; Frosh 2012b). So, an attempt to explore the

unconscious, particularly what influences resistance and impulse, is also necessary to gain critical self-awareness (Kincheloe 2001b).

Reflexivity is a transformative process (Ryan & Bourke 2013) where 'one critically considers one's work from a perspective of challenge and through evidence to guide actions for change and improvement' (Morgan 2013). It is a process of introspection that is not only concerned with self-knowledge but also with self-care by way of being attentive and aware of the self, the strengths of self, and what needs to be worked on without punishing or fixing oneself (Bassot 2016; Geerinck, Masschelein & Simons 2010; Smyth 1993). Reflexivity is transformative but not problem focused.

### **3.5 The reflexive teacher self**

In the academic literature, a variety of terms are used to categorise reflective practice; reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity are commonly named and often used interchangeably. Marcos, Sanchez and Tillema (2011) state there is a lack of agreement about how to conduct reflection, as well as a wide sample of definitions of reflection. Therefore, when reviewing the literature I opened my search to include the terms, 'reflection', 'critical reflection' and 'reflexivity' so long as what was described in the literature was more than thinking about action and more than critical of action but also considered underlying motive and assumption. I will refer to the corresponding reflective practice as reflexivity.

Examples in academic literature of reflexivity in teacher practice are limited (Stîngu 2012). There are few studies that offer an example of reflexivity in practice in an Australian context (see for example, Morgan 2013; Parr 2007; Parr & Bulfin 2015). These focus on reflexivity through narrative inquiry, and inquiry through mentoring relationships. There is, however, a strong focus on the importance of reflection in general teaching practice. Furthermore, Ryan and Bourke (2013, p.411) argue that 'reflexivity is an essential element of teacher professionalism so teachers can mediate the diverse conditions within which they work', and explain that:

Reflexive teachers use evidence of themselves and their context to inform teachers'... subjective attitudes and values, their intellectuality and knowledge, and their motivations for action, along with the objective conditions within which they work, including diverse students' needs, curriculum, and institutional requirements and community influences.

(Bourke, Ryan & Lidstone 2013, p.410)

This type of reflexivity is in alignment with the teacher reflexivity that Bassot and Reid (2013), Cooper (2006), and Ovens and Tinning (2009) describe, which paints a picture of deep self-awareness highlighting a process of making something unconscious become conscious. Considering that the mind represses certain material to maintain ease-of-mind, and reflexivity requires teachers to make the unconscious conscious, then teachers are being asked to do something that Freud would suggest is extremely unlikely without support (Freud 2005).

Even though exploring unconscious thought and feeling might be difficult, if teachers only explore what is conscious they may only find what they are looking for; particularly if the process of reflexivity is not considered as much as the outcome of the reflection (Bassot 2016; Marcos, Sanchez & Tillema 2011; Stîngu 2012). A person might also only find what they are looking for reflexively if the process is undertaken in isolation without the opportunity of distance from oneself (Blasco 2012).

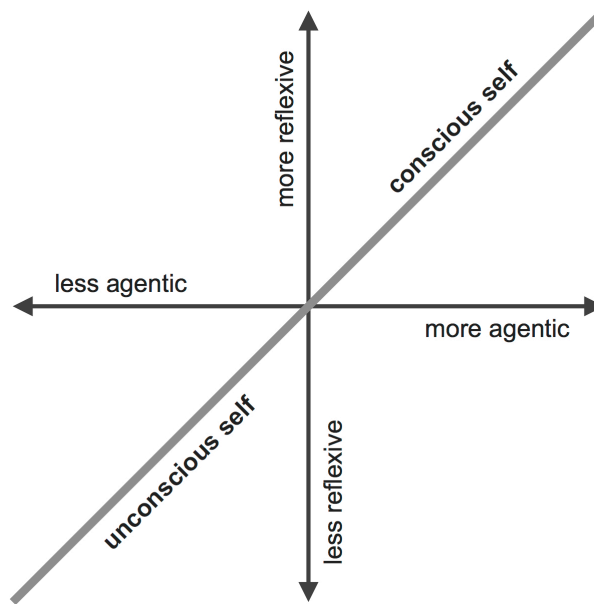
Obtaining the perspectives of others may be an important component in uncovering assumptions, motivations and emotions because an experience is grounded in context and others form that context. Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2015) consider the quandary of questioning practice that may raise difficult questions about the context, but despite the potential risk of uncovering something that is less than ideal, questioning is necessary to find potential areas for growth.

Tricky questions need to be asked to illuminate assumptions such as, 'why do I think of this person or these people in this particular way'; or, 'am I just jumping



to conclusions'; or, 'should I be making such assumptions' (Bassot 2016, p.88; Edwards in press). Asking such questions may result in a 'reconciliation between the teachers' ideal and reality' (Ramvi 2010, p.342); between 'what I think I know' and 'what I should know'. In this reconciliatory process, which is reality testing, meaning can be gained about what is known, what is felt, expectations derived from the self and expectations derived from others. But for each question further questioning is needed to determine how and why one acts and feels.

For example, in Alex's quote a question is raised; what kind of teacher do I want to be? Reflection was obvious but to be reflexive more would have been required. Further questioning would be needed, such as: why do I feel this way about Eric and Carol; what are the expectations of me as a teacher; what is my ideal and should it be so; and what do interactive classes offer my students? This is not suggesting that interactive classes should or should not be the ideal but simply there is possibly more motivating Alex's decision-making and action that is worth exploring. It is also not to say that Alex was unagentic. Keeping in mind that when someone acts they are compelled by both conscious and unconscious forces, they can hardly be completely unagentic, but can be more or less agentic depending on levels of reflexivity. Agency is not something a teacher can possess; it is something they act within a culture and does not signify their quality (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Edwards 2015). The relationship between agency and reflexivity in connection to the self can be seen in Figure 3.1. Alex's account highlights that unconscious agency requires reflexivity — a purposeful process that attempts to better understand the unknown and the acting selves as well as the motivation that lead to action and interaction with others.



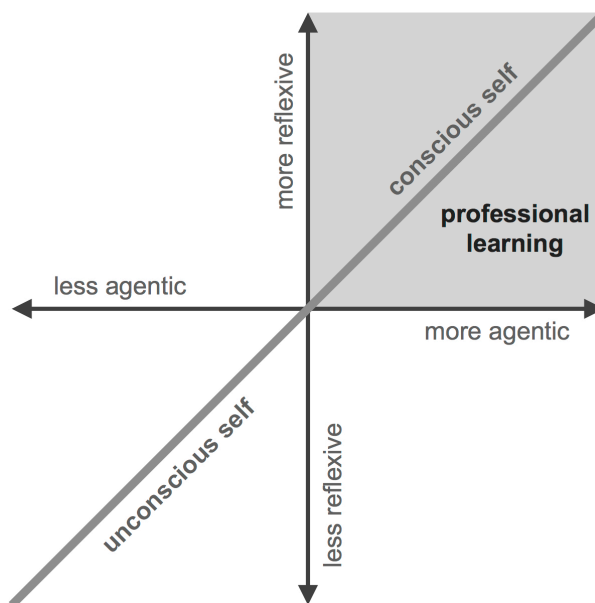
**Figure 3.1** Agency-reflexivity

Teachers are rarely asked about their beliefs around teaching so implementing strategies that assist understanding of their emotional position, interpretive framework, assumptions and awareness is important to maintain their emotional work (Hagenauer & Volet 2014; Harvey et al. 2012). Teacher reflexivity is also integral in professional learning (Kelchtermans 2009; Riveros, Newton & Burgess 2012). Winograd (2003) supports the idea of teachers coming together to share their stories through a process of collaborative reflexivity to facilitate professional growth and wellbeing.

*The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2017) document requires teachers to engage in professional learning (standard 6) and professional teaching networks and broader communities (standard 7.4). To maintain registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching a teacher must undergo twenty hours of professional development per year. They recommend that teachers select professional development opportunities to contribute to professional knowledge that supports students' learning; for example, collegial visits, professional discussions, short courses, postgraduate study, conferences, workshops and

researching educational websites, books or journals (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015a).

In the literature, the term professional learning can be used interchangeably with professional development yet at times it can mean two distinct things; professional learning means a shift in how one engages with practice on an intellectual level and professional development is the activities that develop the capacity for professional learning (Mayer & Lloyd 2011). I refer to professional learning as described above — a transformation from one professional way of being and knowing to another through a process of reflexivity that is dependent on and in support of agency. The literature with which I have engaged has a similar definition of professional learning. Figure 3.2 provides a visual representation of where professional learning might be situated in relation to agency and reflexivity.



**Figure 3.2** Agency-reflexivity and professional learning

Despite the obvious push for teachers to engage in professional learning, questions have been raised about the value of some professional development. Legislating hours for professional learning and pressuring states to meet milestones to improve teacher quality show little evidence of impacting on

teacher professional learning, yet add to the demands and expectations of schools and teachers within them (COAG Reform Council 2013; Jensen et al. 2014; Watt & Richardson 2008).

I have argued that collaboratively questioning underlying beliefs, values and assumptions is integral to the process of reflexivity, and reflexivity is integral to professional learning. However, much of the discourse around teacher professional learning focuses on individual teacher improvement (for example, Antoniou & Kyriakides 2011; Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis 2005; Jensen et al. 2014; Leech 2008; Samaras & Roberts 2011; Victory 2009; Whitby 2010). Furthermore, professional learning is mostly seen as enhancement of pedagogy and curriculum enactment, and less frequently as student management, behaviour or wellbeing (Graham & Phelps 2003; Mueller & Skamp 2003; Ovens & Tinning 2009; Watt & Richardson 2010). It seems that the dominant view of professional learning is narrow in scope excluding the exploration of underlying assumptions, motivations and emotion in a broader context with the aim of self or collective-transformation.

A typical constraint to professional learning is that teachers find it difficult to make time for the allocated number of hours of professional development in an already busy week (Jensen et al. 2014). In Victoria 'The Education State', which is a Department of Education and Training reform agenda, has piloted a 'Professional Learning Communities' (PLCs) initiative. *The Education State Initiatives Fact Sheet* (2017, p. 3) states that:

PLCs make it possible for teachers to learn from each other to develop and refine their practice and expertise, share pedagogical practices and curriculum knowledge, align their goals, and develop collective responsibility for improving student outcomes.

(The Education State 2017, p.3)

The pilot consists of 200 schools where teachers use a cycle of inquiry to collaboratively and 'forensically' 'diagnose' student learning needs (ibid). The PLC approach aims to provide teachers with time to concentrate on

professional learning. Here the issue of time appears to be addressed; however, the focus of professional learning still remains fairly narrow and related to curriculum, pedagogy and student outcomes. Also, language like 'forensic', 'diagnose' and 'outcomes' suggests an objective scientific procedure rather than the qualitative inquiry I am suggesting.

Professional learning should be in-depth, on-going, linked to practice, centre on student learning, address the teaching of particular curriculum content, relate to school improvement priorities and goals, and enhance strong working relationships among teachers (Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009; Qi & Levin 2010, p.14). This suggests a focus on inquiry-based professional learning. Collaborative action research has received great attention and there has been a resultant increase in inquiry-based professional learning opportunities for teachers (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Mockler & Groundwater-Smith 2015; Qi & Levin 2010). Collaborative approaches, practitioner inquiry or job embedded professional learning is most likely to support teachers in their understanding of themselves and their practices (for example, Darling-Hammond et al. 2009; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Kuijpers, Houtveen & Wubbels 2010; Mockler & Groundwater-Smith 2015).

Therefore, for professional learning to take place, as Antoniou and Kyriakides (2011) suggest, the collaboration between the teachers and myself needed to be teacher led. The process required depth of inquiry and time to unfold. I could not begin the collaboration process with a predetermined specific focus of inquiry for the teachers, or how best they might inquire into it, or how they felt about teaching. For the process to be an actual collaboration, those notions had to be negotiated as a group and the professional learning would occur through a process of self-research.

An example of self-research in practice is Cooper's (2006) study on employing a critically reflexive collaborative inquiry approach in relation to teacher educators refining social justice commitments. A group of teaching participants came together to develop instructional cases that offered 'opportunity to explore some of the successes and challenges of their work and to share their findings

with other teacher educators by publishing their cases' (2006, p.119). The participants also viewed it as a method of meaningful professional learning and development as they constructed knowledge collaboratively through an interpretive process of critical reflection, critical dialogue and other activities aimed at building a community.

The collaborative inquiry process established in this project was initially based on Cooper's (2006) research. The major difference is that instead of developing and publishing instructional cases this project required teachers to share stories. Both projects aimed to reflexively explore the successes and challenges of teachers' work. A difficulty highlighted in the study is that reflexivity paired with critical dialogue can be unnerving for participants because it 'exposes group members' sensitivities', though Cooper (2006) asserts that it is necessary if the process is undertaken thoroughly. A threat to ease-of-mind is essential to a critical process of reflexivity that leads to learning something about the unknown self (Kelchtermans 2009; Stebbins 2010; Turner et al. 2009).

While the value of reflexive professional learning is clear, there are barriers to its eventuality. To be truly reflexive a person has to be willing to face the discomfort that might stem from questioning the self and the collective. They have to initiate a threat to ease-of-mind by dismantling strong repressive forces in place to protect from discomfort. Asking a teacher to be reflexive is also asking them to work against mental processes that might keep them comfortable, which is no easy task. Apart from these issues, teachers are encouraged to critically examine narrow areas of teaching practice such as pedagogy, curriculum and student outcomes, which does not address broader inquiry. 'Tricky' questions like, 'why do I think of this person or these people in this particular way'; or, 'should I be making such assumptions' (Bassot 2016, p.88) might be excluded with such a narrow focus. While it is evident that collaborative, inquiry based, job embedded professional learning is preferable, how can it occur, given the various barriers?

### 3.6 The teacher collective

The quotes I have drawn on so far in this chapter highlight intersubjectivity; the merger and reliance between self and other (Frosh 2012a, p.138; Humphrey 2007; Winnicott 1969). Terry determined something about the self in reference to the two yelling teachers, and Alex determined something about the self in reference to Carol and Eric. These reference points are the nature of the collective — the relation between the individuals that compels other individuals to act, which become the reference of sense making (Edwards in press). A collective cannot exist without individual members and it is in this way that the binary of self and collective — or private and public or internal or external — need to be reconsidered and an ontology of complexity again embraced where ‘an individual subjectively experiences social, cultural, political, and educational structures’ (Kincheloe 2001b). As Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson (2009) explain:

In essence, schooling, in whatever forms it takes, at its core involves processes of enculturalization [sic] where what is believed in and valued within and among cultures is acted and reenacted in ritualized [sic] activity settings.

(Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson 2009, p.195)

A school culture is observed and experienced through how ‘education occurs through lived and living practices that relate different people to one another’ (Edwards-Groves et al. 2010, p.52). There is a collective agency and a professional solidarity that is a resource for building teacher agency, by way of illuminating teacher beliefs and values that may at times be at odds with each other and the current wave of educational reform (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Edwards-Groves et al. 2010; Robinson 2012). Agency, reflexivity and professional learning are intimately entwined, where one can hardly exist without the other.

What a teacher does reflects their professionalism. Yet there may be disparity between what is considered ‘professional’ within the teacher collective. For

example, Chris describes a different approach to the principal in regard to assessment:

I mean [being expected to pass students] is happening here as well ... so you [might be] asked to go and speak to the principal. Why? Because a certain amount of people failed. You bring in the documentation and [explain]. I don't see how the principal asked me to change [the grades] and pass three kids. I said, 'Okay, here is the documentation, you tell me [how], I'm not going to pass them, so you will have to make the judgment ... from my personal experience, from what I know with this subject, they have not sufficiently [passed]' (*Chris*).

This quote related to an incident some years before our collaboration. Chris was in a conflict with the professionalism of the school collective which dictated that the school was professional by passing students. Chris's sense of professionalism dictated that the student was not sufficiently prepared to master the subject.

Reducing a teacher's potential to exert judgment over their work through enforced educational policies that remove the control from the teacher, as described above, can be in tension with teacher agency that may challenge school discourses and practices of change (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Edwards in press; Edwards-Groves et al. 2010; Evetts 2009; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Robinson 2012). At the same time teacher agency is promoted as a vital aspect of good teaching practice (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Priestley et al. 2012). On the one hand teacher agency is considered productive to education reform but on the other a challenge. In such conflict teacher agency needs to be contextualised in terms of school culture and politics because it is difficult to achieve on an individual scale (Carr & Skinner 2009; Edwards 2015; Riveros, Newton & Burgess 2012).

Implementing collaborative, inquiry-based, professional learning, such as for example, 'The Education State Professional Learning Communities' does not necessarily mean that individual or collective teacher agency is supported.



There are notable shortcomings in a collaborative inquiry school-embedded approach. Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2015) have warned that teacher practitioner inquiry is often a celebration of what is already being done rather than a critical investigation of what needs doing. Teachers, collectively, need to be encouraged to purposefully seek out that which may challenge their habits of mind, their beliefs and values.

Kelchtermans (2009) suggests that teacher professional learning involves a collaborative process that requires teachers to come together and explore their personal interpretive frameworks with particular focus on both being a teacher and teaching (Edwards in press; Zembylas 2003). There is a certain depth that needs to be explored within the collective so that teachers can explore, express and understand in new ways their values and beliefs that shape and are shaped by the collective teacher agency (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015; Edwards in press; Edwards-Groves et al. 2010; Robinson 2012).

Additionally, how must teachers feel having to negotiate such conflicts? Teachers are likely to have conflicting feelings about change, particularly when change or practice might not align with personal beliefs and values. Rather than being helped to feel better about change, they need to make emotional sense and reconcile conflicting feelings about it (Zembylas & Barker 2007). Teachers need to experience pleasurable emotions in relation to their teaching work and professional selves (Turner et al. 2009). The alternative is that they will experience emotional exhaustion and anxiety as a result of not having control of their professional work (Brown 2012; Edwards in press). Hence, teachers also need a clear understanding of how their emotions impact on their professional and collective agency.

While depth in collaborative, inquiry-based professional learning is necessary it can be difficult for the individuals involved when they have varying world views (Wong et al. 2014). It also can be difficult when teachers are feeling emotionally challenged and avoid emotional and personal conflict in order to maintain calm and a certain degree of politeness (Edwards in press; Zembylas & Barker 2007). So, the success of collaborative work depends on a collective trust that

can bring down barriers and encourage the teacher collective to ask the ‘tricky’ questions (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Gu & Day 2013; Wong et al. 2014). Such collaborations also need time to evolve, leadership and careful consideration over their formation.

Teachers will respond in emotionally diverse ways to change (Zembylas & Barker 2007). While everyone does not have to share the same beliefs and values, they need a shared understanding of the assumptions that motivate the collective.

An individual teacher’s ability to act, to be agentic, is not an individual endeavour. It is a collective and relational endeavour undertaken to negotiate the expectations and limitations of reality. The collective operates in consciousness and unconsciousness. The more conscious a teacher collective is of underlying motivations and assumptions the more agentic a teacher and the teacher collective will be. There are barriers to gaining consciousness such as the repression of challenging thoughts and emotion, or the lack of encouragement to ask the ‘tricky’ questions. So how can teachers meet the demands of how they are expected to ‘perform’? Through the interplay between agency and reflexivity professional learning is a transformational, relational, collaborative effort centred on building trust and unmasking underlying thought and emotion.

## Chapter 4

### Merging narrative and action

What has been described so far is a framework for thinking about the interplay between self and other, not as a binary but including aspects of self that are intimately entwined. Importantly this includes the intersubjective space that exists within the framework of self and other. There is another element of self, *the told self*, section 4.1, which completes the framework of the self because it illustrates the lived experience. The told self is where much of the dynamics of the whole self reside through not just what is told, but also what is heard and how the script for the telling can be rewritten. In this chapter I explain that a framework of the self is applied to the project through narrative inquiry and participatory action research and how the told self and action are pulled together through a living script. *The action*, section 4.2, explains how I recruited the teachers, a pilot interview process, the background interviews and what I mean by ‘collaborative inquiry’. Section 4.3 describes what I have called *collaborative narrative action inquiry*.

#### 4.1 The told self

The self contains something that is also other and is in a constant process of transition — it is dynamic (Kincheloe 2005). Because of this state of flux I have, like Kelchtermans (2009), avoided the use of the word ‘identity’, which gives the impression of a fixed state. The self transitions through story and experience are told as a story. Indeed, Bruner (2004) states that there is no other way to capture ‘lived time’ than through narrative. Notwithstanding, there are multiple stories nested within the narrative of a moment lived. There is a story lived, a story told, a story heard, a story retold, a story re-lived — and perhaps others — each story having nuanced differences (Clandinin 2013; Goodson 2003).

#### **4.1.1 Living the story**

To explore the teachers and my own emotional consciousness the lived experience of emotion had to be considered. People experience emotion in diverse ways (Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015). '[R]esearchers need to theorize [sic] emotions as part of a dynamic, continuously fluctuating system of meaningful experiences' (Zembylas 2007b, p.61). Hence, narrative inquiry is an appropriate approach to capture the experience of emotion. Emotion and thinking are inseparable so the stories we tell of ourselves, derived from thought, are laden with emotion, which is intimately linked to our motivations, judgments and action (Zembylas 2007b).

Social, political and cultural factors as well as our past shapes how we interpret our current experiences so that all previous experiences lay the foundation for how we make meaning of the current experience (Clandinin 2013; Frosh 2012a). An experience can then be a smaller part of a larger whole that captures all 'lived time', which is a person's narrative (Bruner 2004). Through this thesis, I have referred to these fragments of a narrative as a 'story', though unlike typical stories, as Kohler Riessman and Speedy (2007) point out, these stories require analytic attention.

When telling their narrative, a person makes choices about what content to share or not share, in what order they share it and who they share it with (Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007). A person paints a picture of themselves and has to make decisions about the value of the details in their stories. Not all decision-making is conscious; the unknown self can play at story-telling and can paint a picture of a life that is different to reality because the reality might be too painful (Bruner 2004; Goodson 2003; Hollway & Jefferson 2013). Furthermore, not only is the telling partial, it can evoke 'selective reactivation' of past action (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). For example Chris states: 'Facebook is deceiving because people only share the good things in their life' (*Chris*). Chris has identified the selective nature of the told self of others on Facebook as well as the striving to reactivate the 'good things' in future action by telling the way 'things' are desired to be.

Recounting one's personal narrative requires reflexivity. While there may be unconscious processes at play there are also conscious processes and if the narrator is also the 'central figure' of the narrative then there has to be a turning back on oneself (Bruner 2004). How reflexive the process might be depends on how willing the narrator is to explore the unknown self (Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007).

#### **4.1.2 The heard story**

The narrator of a story does so through interpretation within a social, political, cultural and historical context, and the listener also hears the story through their own unique interpretation. When stories are shared, people are forced to consider the implied social, political, cultural and historical influences that underpin them.

The teachers and I came together as a group of no more than four people and shared stories from our professional life so as to inquire into them. It was a collaborative space where we interpretively co-constructed and re-constructed knowledge through 'multiple voices and perspectives' (Cooper 2006, p.117). This meant that I was also scrutinised in this space as a means of exploring how I 'heard' the stories to achieve mutuality and reciprocity within the group (Clandinin 2013, p.28; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). The collaboration took place in a continually re-negotiated relational space. Frosh (2012a) notes that:

[O]ne universal characteristic of people is that they try to find ways to work out what they are "about" and — on the whole — that they do this in the context of their relationship with others.

(Frosh 2012a, p.4)

I wanted the teachers to be able to recognise me as invested in what they had to share — to feel heard and be the authority of their experience (Loughran 2002; Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014). Clandinin (2013, p.129), Cooper (2006), Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012, p.80) and Wong et al. (2014) all discuss the benefits of having others contribute to one's thinking about

professional practice or the stories we tell, or both. Having a collaborative inquiry group where we shared our stories allowed us to inquire into ourselves, our relationships, our role in our school, university, community and the world, along with how we experienced emotion in those contexts. Given the nature of the stories shared and the repeated interaction between the teachers and myself, a closeness evolved which is explored more fully in *Chapter Six; Ethics is everything*.

#### **4.1.3 The script rewrite**

A narrative is dynamic. The self/other relationship influences the dynamics of the narrative as well as the stories that make up the larger narrative. ‘...[L]ife stories must mesh, so to speak, within a community of life stories’ (Bruner 2004, p.699). Moreover, as Dybicz (2010, p. 343) explains: ‘All people have an image of themselves as how they are and how they would like to be (or continue to be)’. This means that while stories are interpreted through social, political, cultural and historical lenses they are also created to fit social, political, cultural and historical norms. For example, stories of teachers are both created to fit and interpreted through ‘the teacher’ discourse. Fraiberg, Adelson and Shapiro (1975) describe how from birth, or perhaps even earlier, there are ghosts in the nursery that can influence the script of our lives:

Even among families where the love bonds are stable and strong, the intruders from the parental past may break through the magic circle in an unguarded moment, and a parent and his child may find themselves reenacting a moment or a scene from another time with another set of characters.’

(Fraiberg, Adelson & Shapiro 1975, p.387)

The expectations, assumptions and limitations of a person’s life narrative are unknowingly written into their script by family, and the collective others, long before the person has a chance to write their own script. A person may fulfil the role that is predetermined but they also have the ‘power to structure perceptual

experience, to organize [sic] memory, segment and purpose build the very “events” of a life’ (Bruner 2004, p.694). This means that the script is not completely set, it exists but it is malleable in a way that allows the protagonist of the narrative to transform it. Part of the work of co-constructing knowledge is co-composing narratives — past, present and future (Clandinin 2013, p.28).

Living a predetermined script can be comforting because the world can seem less uncertain, but at the same time it closes doors to what might be possible. In the collaborative inquiry space, we needed to be ‘strengthened to meet uncertainty’ through improvisation and reflection (Bateson in Steeves 2006, p.113). Our teacher collective had to interrogate and justify the personal values and judgments that impacted on our professional agency, which meant that we had to uncover something new about ourselves. We had to improvise in the midst of what we uncovered and transform into a new way of being, which is what Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) refer to as a transformational partnership. Through this collaborative inquiry process our individual scripts could be rewritten by the collective but the collective script could also be influenced by each individual (Bruner 2004).

As an example of how scripts can be predetermined, I turn to a discussion in one of the collaborative inquiry sessions where Jordan shared a story about a group of students selected to represent the school at an external event that other schools attended. Jordan had selected the students and stated that ‘you want them to behave because people look at [our students] and just think [bad behaviour] is typical of those sort of students’. In a way, the script for the students had been predetermined because it was assumed that the students would behave badly. Jordan had bestowed the students with extra responsibility in the hope that the script would be rewritten, but it could not:

[I have higher expectations because they are] representing the school, you obviously want to have a better reputation, but also, for yourself. Some of the stuff that these boys were saying to the girls and they were throwing rocks — it’s not safe and it’s certainly not appropriate to be saying certain things to girls or anyone for that matter (*Jordan*).

The hope for the collective script to be rewritten was bound up in the hope that the student's script could be rewritten, that the school's script and Jordan's own script within the school collective could be changed and also that the script for females in general might be rewritten. It is a process of reality testing as narrative (Bruner 2004). Jordan was testing the students as well as reality. The test resulted in Jordan's view of the students' role being 'badly behaved' even more solidified. Likewise, each student's personal script became more set. Their ghosts had haunted them so that the ghosts themselves had almost become a comfort and to shake them would be to dissolve part of the self. Jordan was willing to take the risk to try to rewrite the script of the story but the students were not because the potential benefits would not outweigh the risks.

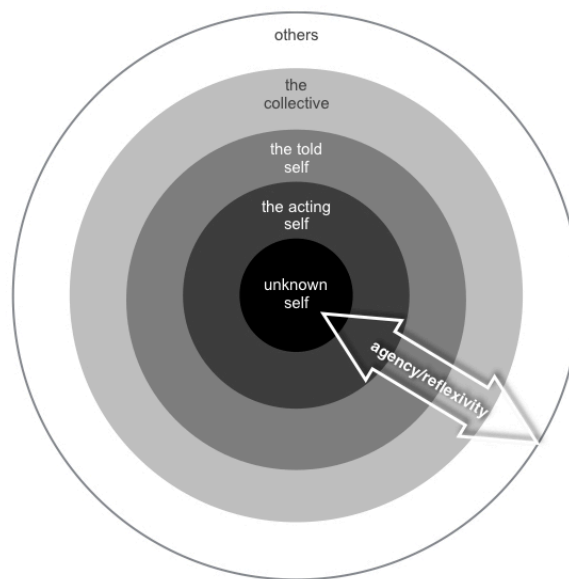
There is tension in the above story, with an ongoing battle over how the future script should be written. It was these tensions in the shared stories that became the centre of the inquiry. By exploring these tensions, or as Frosh (2012b, p.58) would put it, '... to "unsettle" social situations by revealing the unconscious elements that feed into them', something could be discovered (Clandinin 2013; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012).

Tension is often seen as 'the problem' requiring fixing, but was not the case in this project. The usual tendency is to attribute system issues such as 'lack of time, timetabling problems and organisational problems' to the tension (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.44). It is easier to conceive of 'fixing' system issues and once 'fixed' it gives the impression that there is no further need to inquire. Inquiring into the told self has no endpoint because the script is in constant flux (Clandinin 2013). Rather, the tension signalled a starting point to the inquiry, where the risk of ignoring the tension was to also risk the necessary awareness for transformation and educational endeavour (Goodson 2003).

'Narrative study is cross-disciplinary' (Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007, p.20), therefore narrative inquiry and action research have been drawn on to gather a sense of the collaborative group — the unknown self, the acting self, the told self, the collective and our experiences. A visual representation of the multiple



selves is presented in Figure 4.1. The unknown self compels the acting self and consequently how a person might tell of oneself, which the collective interprets and shares with others. Those others influence the collective, which shapes how the script is written and rewritten, impacting on our future action. Narrative inquiry is useful to question the told self and participatory action research is useful to inquire into past and future action in relation to the scripts of the told self/other.

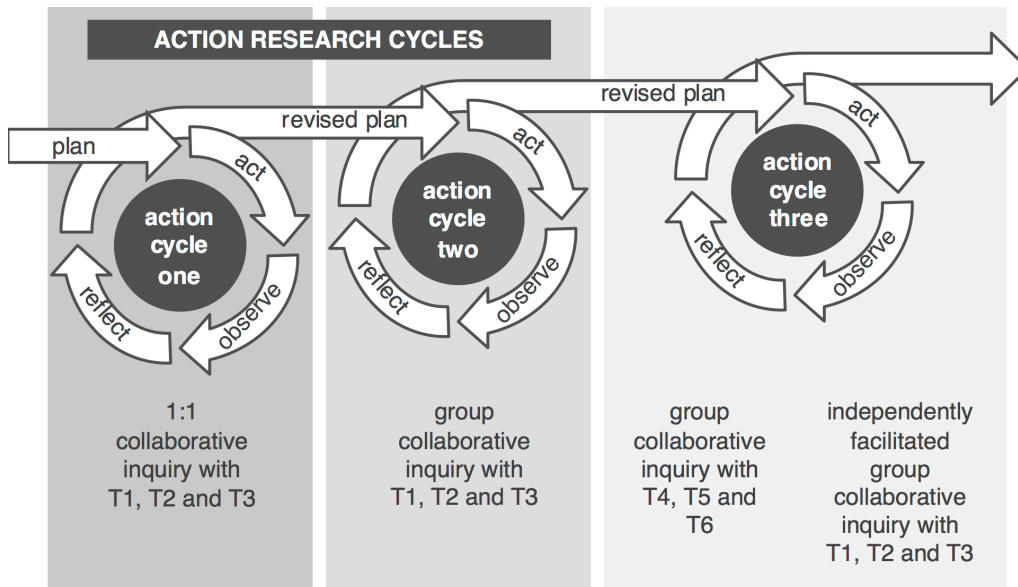


**Figure 4.1** The self-other

## 4.2 The action

Participatory action research is ‘a process of systematic inquiry, usually cyclical, conducted by those inside a community rather than by outside experts’ (Hinchey 2008, p.4). It can involve multiple stakeholders with the aim of improving not only schools but also society. Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) state that action research is a dynamic process built of four ‘moments’: 1) developing a plan of action; 2) implementing the action plan; 3) observing the effects of the action; and 4) reflecting on the effects. These four moments are cyclically re-lived as an attempt to fine-tune the process and resulting action, all with the aim of improving what is already happening within a specific context. Rather than the objective of improvement, this project aimed to create social action through transformative partnerships (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). ‘Improvement’ was a hopeful byproduct of the social action but it was not the

specific intention because ‘improvement’ is a more subjective measure than ‘action’ and may only become obvious at another time and place.



**Figure 4.2** Action research cycles

The project encapsulated three action research cycles (see Figure 4.2). The first cycle was primarily a pursuit of reconnaissance through transformative partnerships. I worked one-to-one with the first three teachers to volunteer (T1, T2 and T3) to be part of the project. Not only was the first cycle a way for each teacher and me to be introduced, it was also a way to become re-introduced to oneself, considering that there are parts of ourselves that we do not know or perhaps once knew but know no longer (Frosh 2012a).

The following sections detail the specifics of the collaborative inquiry process and how the teachers and I came together to inquire into each other's stories.

#### **4.2.1 Recruiting teachers**

I provided the principal with a copy of the 'Information to participants involved in research — principal' document (see Appendix A). The benefit of the project to the school was clearly stated. At a minimum, it offered professional learning to the teachers that participated; however at best it could produce a support framework that might be useful ongoing. There were costs involved for the

school — a room to meet — and for the teachers, their time. Given that the research intended to interrogate teacher practice we discussed the possibility of how it might expose weaknesses, and the potential for becoming emotionally unsettled, even though this was not the intention. Cooper's (2006) collaborative inquiry study prepared me for this possibility.

Another issue I discussed with the principal was my insider-outsider status. Given that I did have an existing professional relationship with the principal and I was attempting to deliver a service to the school as a teacher, as well as use the school as a site of research, it needed to be clear that I had two codes of ethics to adhere to; the teaching professional code of ethics (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015b) and the human research code of ethics (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council & Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee 2015). We discussed issues around me maintaining a respectful relationship with the school and the teachers involved by questioning the content of the research to be published, although if the integrity of the research was to be compromised, further discussion and consideration would be necessary.

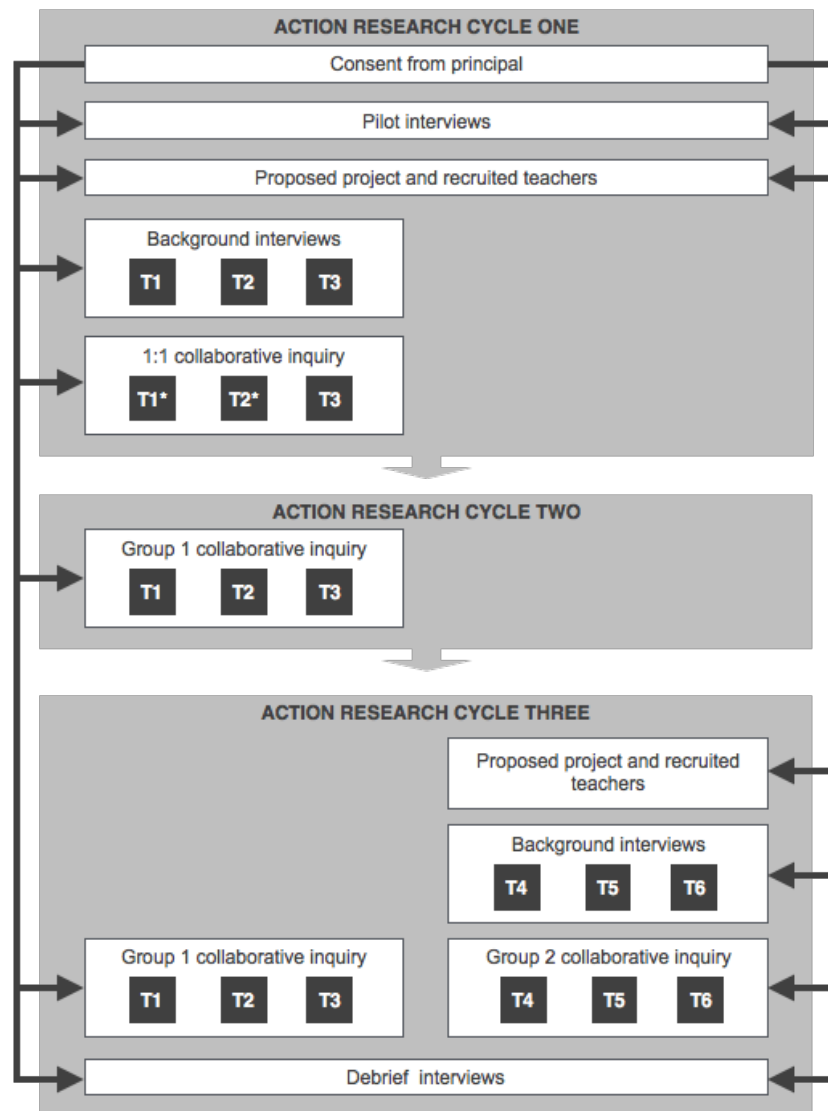
The roles of practitioner and researcher are not really divisible and the ethical researcher needs to 'intuit thoughtfully' when professional ethics collide with research ethics (Drake 2011, p.58). The issue of what to include and not to include and how to include certain content in this thesis was an issue that pervaded the whole process. The quotes throughout this thesis sometimes have omissions not just to protect the identity of the teachers but to also ensure they are represented fairly. A written statement can easily be misconstrued if it is not grounded in context. I have chosen to leave out some detail, reallocate other detail or talk about certain aspects from a different angle.

With a positive response from the principal the 'Consent form for participants involved in research — principal' (see Appendix B) was discussed and signed. We then negotiated a suitable time for me to address the staff. Requesting that the principal send out an email flyer to teaching staff members at the school was one option for recruitment. But an email can easily be dismissed, which

could have jeopardised the future of my project. I considered that a personal connection would be helpful when recruiting teachers as building rapport and trust between the teachers and me was vitally important in allowing me to gain an understanding of the cultural, social and political nuances of the school (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). If I had just sent out an email flyer then the teachers would not have a sense of who I am, and if I was someone with whom they could build a rapport and trust.

The principal requested that on a curriculum planning day I address the staff to request their participation in the project. I spoke for fifteen minutes, handed out the 'Information to participants involved in research — teacher' document (see Appendix C) and asked interested teachers to contact me privately by email or phone. I had three swift replies and arranged a time to meet with each of the respondents to conduct a background interview. I emailed them a copy of the 'Consent form for participants involved in research — teacher' form (see Appendix D), which we discussed and each teacher signed before the background interview began.

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the process of the various stages of the research that will be discussed in the subsequent sections. T1, T2, T3 and so on represent individual teachers.



**Figure 4.3** Action flow chart (\*used media stimulus to start sharing story)

#### 4.2.2 Confidentiality

Maintaining the teachers' and the school's privacy was always tricky, as flagged in the previous section. Confidentiality is considered integral to research involving people (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). It was recognised from the outset that there would be potential for any of the teachers to lose their anonymity due to the small number involved, the combination of one-to-one interviews and collaborative group sessions, and the intention to feedback my interpretations to the individual teachers and the school. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) argue that simply applying pseudonyms does not eliminate the risk of a confidentiality breach and that the research participants need to be informed of

the risks. The risks around confidentiality were addressed in the 'Information to participants involved in research — teacher/principal' documents and the 'Consent form for participants involved in research — teacher/principal'.

The teachers also had to take responsibility to protect the anonymity of each other. The location of meetings, negotiated with teachers and the school, was on site, so the teachers were at times observed meeting with me. As I had addressed the whole staff, any teacher meeting with me would reasonably be assumed to be a research participant. Despite the teachers and the school being aware of the risks I still had to do my utmost to protect the teachers' confidentiality and this had implications at various stages of the research. For example, when presenting my research at a seminar to which the teacher collaborators and other teachers were both invited, the teacher collaborators had to be prepared for the potential of being recognised by teaching peers even though pseudonyms had been used. Also, in writing up this thesis, information such as gender, age and subject specialty needed to be withheld or reallocated.

#### **4.2.3 Pilot interviews**

Pilot interviews were used as a way of testing and refining the interview process, as is recommended by McNair, Taft and Hegarty (2008). Pilot interviews can provide feedback on the flow of the interview as well as uncover an inclination to excessively control the interview, particularly by a novice research interviewer (ibid). The value of the pilot interview was not fully understood until two pilot interviews were conducted, transcribed and I had begun to 'pilot' code the transcripts. By 'code' I mean that I reflected on the transcripts to decipher core meaning by drawing out and grouping the fragments of conversation (Saldaña 2013). Greater detail on the process of how I coded the conversations is provided in *Chapter Six*.

The first pilot interviewee had background information on the research itself and was prepared for the questions that I asked. The interviewee explicitly stated on one occasion; 'I think what I mean by reflection is a little bit different to what you've said', where 'what you've said' is in relation to previous discussions we

had about the research. The second pilot interviewee was someone with whom I had limited discussion about the research and also someone that I had only known for about six months professionally. In feedback after this interview the interviewee explained that she was often stumped in the interview to recall specific situations that I was asking her to reflect on and thought that having a preview of an interview guide prior to the interview might have helped. Both predicaments pose difficulties. The situation of the interviewee being stumped to think of something can itself be an honest act interpreted in some way, particularly emotionally. If an interviewee was prepared for the questions they would be asked it would be impossible to distinguish their initial response to the questions unless they explicitly mentioned it. I decided that the interviewee being aware of the interview guide was not needed and that it was important to experience the emotional journey of the interviewee as it unfolded.

The pilot interviews also allowed me to consider reciprocity, which can be described as the interviewer revealing feelings or experiences with the interviewee to improve engagement and trust (McNair, Taft & Hegarty 2008). It was important for me to find teachers with whom I did not have a close professional or other relationship, so that interviewees did not wish to please me or I to please or protect them. When there is care and affection at play between two people those emotions will permeate every aspect of the relationship, whether they are known or unknown. As Turner et al. (2009) explain:

... every education-related communication carries both an informational message and a relational message (i.e., an underlying emotional/relational communication). The relational aspect is often communicated through nonverbal behaviors [sic], such as voice tone and facial expressions. When individuals interact over time, interactional patterns are established.

(Turner et al. 2009, p.261)

I would argue that the research interview is an education-related communication. I was trying to learn something from the teachers but the exchange is not simply transactional. The boundaries between interviewer and

interviewee are blurred with an ongoing exchange between the two (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). It would not be impossible to work with someone with whom I had a relationship, it would add another layer of complexity and blurring and I felt the need to avoid this situation.

The pilot interviews also highlighted a reticence on my part to reciprocate with both interviewees regardless of the close relationship. I refrained from agreeing too eagerly and I refrained from sharing experiences, thoughts and emotion in general. This response forced me to reflect more closely on my role as interviewer/facilitator/teacher/peer throughout the fieldwork. I will discuss the implications of refrain and reciprocity later in the thesis, but for now the excerpt below from my reflexive journal demonstrates the ongoing pondering.

I feel most comfortable being the interviewer and trying to draw out information. The facilitator/collaborator role requires me to be active in the reflection and exploration of emotion and perspective and I feel insecure ... however, I know that I am not acting without deep consideration and I weigh up all motives quite seriously (*Jean*, Journal 18/9/2014).

The pilot interviews helped me understand, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) note, that good interview practice:

involves a situated judgement of what knowledge and techniques to apply when acting in a given context and when one is confronted with different goals and values that demand careful choice.

(Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, p.75)

#### **4.2.4 Background interviews**

The background interviews were arranged with the teachers I had recruited to be part of the project. Before each interview I had an in-depth discussion about the potential for the research process to leave the teacher feeling unsettled and confronted. I emphasised that a psychologist affiliated with Victoria University would be available to work with any teacher if they needed further support (for



evidence of agreed support see Appendix E). I reminded individual teachers of this repeatedly over the duration of the fieldwork, especially if we had been discussing something particularly difficult.

Given that I have psychoanalytic psychotherapeutic training and have worked as a counsellor, I was not completely unpracticed at interviews, but research interviews are different, particularly research interviews that impact on the outcome of a qualification. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2007) warn about competing agendas — I had an agenda as a student-researcher. This can be further evidenced in a quote from my reflexive journal: 'The frustration [the teacher talking in circles] evoked in me was perhaps that this was not ideal for my research'. I wanted the interviews to yield rich data and therefore, despite being interview practiced, I was in some way paralysed with fear. I have already noted my lack of reciprocity in the pilot interviews and my caution over adding complexity. I walked into the interviews with this awareness and was comforted by my interview guide. The background interview guide questions formed what Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) describe as a semi-structured life world interview where the questions were both thematic and dynamic (see Appendix F). This means that the questions targeted the major themes of the research such as, emotion, agency and reflexivity but allowed space for the conversations to flow naturally for the benefit of knowledge construction, narrating the experience and interpersonal interaction (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). For example, 'can you tell me about your work generally?' would usually result in the teacher disclosing how many years they had been at the school, their position title, their role and describing their practice, without further questioning. Interviewing in this way also led to transitional questions that were relevant but impossible to predict because they depended on answers such as 'how did you feel in that situation?'

Arranging times for future meetings was always a negotiation at the end of a session. Teachers were encouraged to participate in the project by school administrators as long as their participation did not interfere with their school responsibilities. All of the group meetings were set at the end of the school day outside of the typical hours allocated for meetings. Some of the individual sessions were set in the middle of the school day when the teachers had non-

student contact time. This means that the teachers that participated had to sacrifice their planning and assessment time to participate in the project — the major cost, as it turned out, for each teacher.

#### **4.2.5 Collaborative inquiry sessions**

There was a total of 21 collaborative inquiry sessions conducted. Each collaborative inquiry session centred on a 'critical incident', defined not as 'critical' in the sense that the actual incident required critique but was important to the teacher who was somehow 'stuck' on the incident which caused an anxiety provoking emotional response. The critical incident was a story worth sharing — something similar to my story of Steven.

What the teachers had to say was also vitally important, not only because of the particular topics discussed, but also because I needed to pay attention to how they needed to tell their stories. Research collaborators should be allowed to contribute to the research process. They need to be actively involved in the 'action' component of action research (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.65). How the teachers told their stories indicated how I should respond. How the teachers engaged with those responses told me how helpful they were. Some of my responses legitimised their experience, some connected our worlds and some responses opened doorways to new thinking. How the collaborative inquiry process unfolded is outlined in *Chapter Ten; Reflexivity*.

In this project, each story that we shared was a metaphor where the listener connected the heard experience with a personally lived experience. The connection allowed a more intimate understanding of the heard experience, plus a reacquaintance with and new insight into the lived experience, like a reflexive lens. Conceptual metaphors are often used to describe, relate, and differentiate abstract concepts in a concrete way, by linking the unfamiliar to more familiar metaphors that help us to understand and express ourselves (Carpenter 2008; Daley 2001; Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Each story shared was also a metaphor and finding out how the story metaphors facilitated reflexivity was the task of the first action cycle.

What the narrative inquirer does is look for threads across stories as well as explore the implicit choices people make when recounting their story (Clandinin 2013). Due to the desire to have the teachers' stories flow naturally I did not want to pre-structure the collaborative inquiry sessions. Asking specific questions demands specific answers and the interruption of questions stops the emotion from seeping out (Hollway & Jefferson 1997; Hollway & Jefferson 2013). I drew on Hollway and Jefferson's work (2013) on 'free association narrative inquiry' which:

... allows interviewees to follow the threads of their emotional experience as they transform it into freshly discovered meaning ... Its aim is to enable interviewees to give answers that reflect their own concerns even when these are not immediately consciously accessible.

(Hollway and Jefferson 2013, p.151)

Due to the free-flowing nature of the process, another ongoing concern throughout this stage of the research was trustworthiness which Hinchey (2008) describes as a quality standard for interpretive action research particularly when a lone researcher is planning, implementing, observing and reflecting on action. Was the process to be trusted, as Hollway and Jefferson (1997) assert that eliciting narrative through an in-depth interview and drawing on psychoanalytic theory of unconscious mental content means that we cannot believe what is being said at face value? They refer to a narrative interview as a 'quasiclinical' interview method, which probes in areas where there might be avoidances, silences, or responses of 'I don't know', while Drake (2010, p.88) suggests we should be 'looking critically at what the research chooses to make visible'. The 'making visible' was not always accessible through plain language. It was through probing that the stories were co-constructed within a research context (Hollway & Jefferson 2013), as evident in this excerpt from my reflexive journal:

I felt the collaborative inquiry session unfolded nicely. We started with a newspaper article where [the teacher] was able to draw a metaphor between the story and [their] current professional practice in several ways. When I

made suggestions [due to gaps or inconsistencies] I usually framed it in a question. I wonder whether ... ? Do you think that ... ? (*Jean*, Journal 15/10/2014).

The second action research cycle had the three teachers and I come together to form a group collaborative inquiry. The aim of the second action research cycle was to fine-tune the process of inquiry established in the first cycle as well as explore how the emotion in each story could be identified without fragmenting the story. For example, if we were to focus on the emotional aspects of a story in a contrived way that focused too much on specific preidentified emotions, would we run the risk of missing a deeper meaning or connection to the lived experience? Hollway and Jefferson (2013) remind us that many research methods fragment the story that unfolds to researchers. So, in this second action research cycle I was trying to draw out and identify the emotion in the stories without losing the attachment between emotion and the lived experience.

The third action research cycle saw a second collaborative inquiry group included in the project. The second group consisted of three new teacher volunteers (T4, T5 and T6) and myself. I had acted as facilitator for all collaborative inquiry sessions thus far so the aim of the third action research cycle was two-fold: to trial the established inquiry process with me as their facilitator, and for the initial collaborative inquiry group to trial the inquiry process with one of them acting as a facilitator and me as a participant.

#### **4.2.6 Group One**

For the first collaborative inquiry session, the teachers were asked to each bring in a newspaper, magazine clipping, or any story really, (media stimulus) that attracted their interest. It was an attempt to allow the teachers 'to follow the threads of their emotional experience' (Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p.151) and 'trigger the telling of stories' (Clandinin 2013, p.45). The teachers were drawn to particular stories for a reason and initially the purpose of the collaborative inquiry process was to get a better sense of that reason. There was already a

possibly unconscious conceptual metaphor connecting the chosen story with the teacher's lived story. When asked why they chose that story, the rich description that followed led to discovery of a theme in the story that connected to a personal difficulty in a professional context. For example, one of the teachers chose a newspaper story where a father killed his young children; by the end of the session we were talking about how emotionally difficult the teacher found it working with students that come from dysfunctional homes.

Using the media stimulus was also a useful way to connect my world to their world. They were usually newspaper stories that, if I did not know them thoroughly, I had heard about them. It was also a way to explore emotion in relation to something that has some distance from oneself. Two of the teachers used the media stimulus in the initial sessions, one for four consecutive sessions and the other for the initial session. The third teacher brought a media stimulus to the first session but wanted to discuss a critical incident instead. At the start of each session I asked the teachers if they would like to discuss the media stimulus or a critical incident. Eventually the media stimulus was phased out as teachers chose to dive straight into a critical incident.

After between two to four one-to-one collaborative interviews with each teacher they agreed to come together as a group moving into the second research cycle. Creswell (2013) notes that research groups are likely to yield rich data if participants are similar and cooperative, but might be more hesitant one-to-one. On the other hand, the ability or lack of ability to critique or be open in a collaborative setting might be compromised (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2007). Having a collaborative inquiry guide became important at this stage to emphasise that we were interrogating but not specifically critiquing each other's actions. How the collaborative inquiry guide changed through the cycles of action is addressed in *Chapter Ten*. I had built rapport and trust with each individual teacher but now they had to build trust and rapport with each other, particularly because they were discussing sometimes difficult incidents. The first group collaborative inquiry session required a reminder about the responsibility to maintain confidentiality and an attitude of open-mindedness and respect toward each other.

Group One had nine collaborative group inquiry cycles, more than intended but the teachers were keen to continue and I wanted more time to refine the collaborative inquiry process so the teachers agreed to an extension of participation in the research. This only occurred after the principal was approached and also agreed and consented to the extension of participation (see Appendix G and H for associated documentation). I also had difficulty knowing when to end the sessions, which is discussed in detail in *Chapter Six*. After nine group collaborative inquiry sessions Group One transitioned into the third action research cycle where I became a teacher participant and one of the other teachers took on the role of facilitator.

#### **4.2.7 Group Two**

Group Two was recruited through a similar process as Group One and within a week I had three new teachers on board. I emailed the consent form and arranged a time to conduct a background interview.

After the background interviews Group Two went straight into group collaborative inquiry sessions. The collaborative inquiry process had been refined and the final guide had been developed (see Appendix I). On two occasions a teacher was unable at the last minute to attend. The first group collaborative inquiry session for Group Two was one of these occasions. On both occasions, we went ahead with three people instead of four. It was acknowledged that the teachers involved had other responsibilities, as well as external pressures. I noted in my reflexive journal that:

In an early reflexive journal entry I said, 'the frustration [the teacher talking in circles] evoked in me was perhaps that this was not ideal for my research'. This is how I felt for much of the session. [The two teachers] were limited in their thinking and sometimes we were going over the same things. I am not sure that this is because Group One had the bonus of time (more individual sessions, more sessions in all), the media stimulus to begin with, or whether Group One just worked dynamically better. Or, whether two people and me

was not enough to stimulate conversation or to have another view. Or, that this group is at the beginning and I am comparing them with Group One that have advanced through the process (*Jean*, Journal 12/5/2015).

Each subsequent session flowed much more easily, leading me to believe that it was an issue of time. Group Two had a total of four collaborative inquiry sessions.

#### **4.2.8 Debrief interviews**

I conducted a debrief interview with each teacher after the collaborative inquiry sessions concluded, following the debrief interview guide (see Appendix J), which almost mimicked the background interview questions to gauge whether the teachers' responses had changed.

### **4.3 Collaborative narrative action inquiry**

The ultimate aim of each of the collaborative inquiry sessions was to establish a transformational partnership. Our partnership hoped to set in motion a shift in being that stimulated a growing awareness of our collective through the stories we live and act (Clandinin 2013; Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Schussler, Stooksberry & Bercaw 2010; Steeves 2006). It was hoped that the teachers and I would evolve in helpful ways, rather than to discover solutions to tricky problems. A useful byproduct of the collaborative inquiry was that the shared stories were cathartic. In psychoanalytic terms catharsis is the discovery and release of emotion connected to experiences that are not well understood (Rycroft 1995). Dybicz (2010) suggests that catharsis is facilitated by narrative, which is perhaps why Lopez (cited in Clandinin 2013, p.183) tells us that '[t]he stories people tell have a way of taking care of them' and in return we must care for our stories.

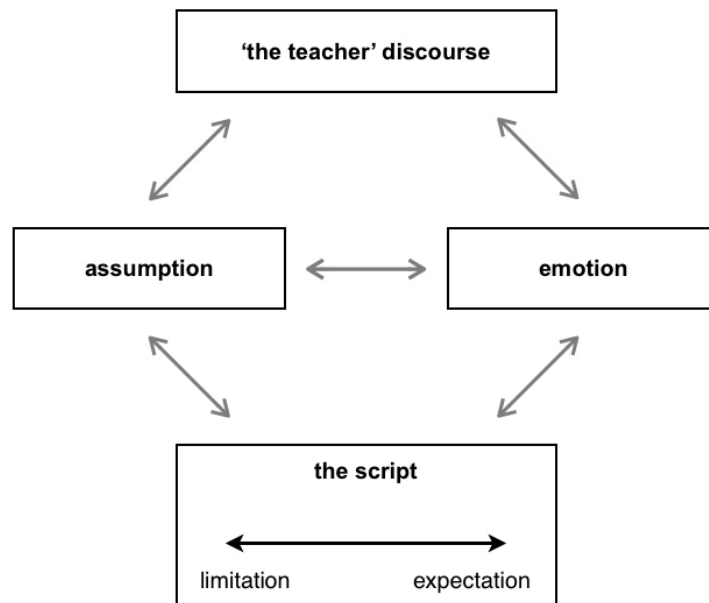
Scripts for the stories are bound by expectations, such as Jordan's script that included an expectation that specific students would behave in a certain way based on Jordan's previous experiences. There are general expectations but there is also an acknowledgement that those expectations might not be met —

there are limits. For example, Jordan expected that the students could misbehave because they were known as ‘badly behaved students’. So, limitations also influence the scripts of the stories we live.

The scripts for the stories we live by are also underpinned by assumptions, which are an element of the knowledge we construct. I have highlighted throughout the thesis that knowledge is fluid. For example, ‘people speak with their mouths’ seems like a fairly straightforward piece of knowledge, but do they? Or do they speak with their minds, or do they speak with their hands, or their eyes or bodies? Some people do not speak with their mouths at all. The assumption that people speak with their mouths is linked to expectations. We expect to see peoples’ mouths move when they speak but there is much taken for granted in that expectation; for example, that speech involves sound coming from someone’s face rather than the many other ways we speak to each other, which brings us back to ‘people speak with their mouths’ being an assumption. Assumption, or knowledge, is never fixed. It changes constantly in relation to the experience of limitations, like Jordan’s experience. Jordan and the students ‘spoke’ to each other in other ways. Jordan assumed that the students were able to meet the extra responsibility but they did not and so future assumptions about those students will shift.

The stories that we tell embody the scripts that we live by, bringing together narrative and action underpinned by expectations, limitations, assumption and importantly, the glue that holds us together — emotion. Figure 4.4 pulls together the interrelation of the ideas discussed so far. This is a depiction of reality testing as narrative, a process suggested by Bruner (2004) which is not cyclic and one component does not lead to another. Some of the dynamics are conscious and some are unconscious.





**Figure 4.4** 'The teacher' discourse - script interplay

When the limitations and expectations are strongly pulling against each other there is tension but at other times they may be balanced. In the next part of the thesis I connect what I have intellectualised in this first part with the experience of emotion, which I argue in reality cannot be divided from the intellectual. To consider thought, emotion must also be considered.

## PART TWO

### **The emotion**

## Chapter 5

### Exploring teacher emotion

This chapter argues that consistent with the merger of self and others which allows sense making, the merger of self and others also allows feeling. Emotion is not merely an individual experience, it is also a social, political and cultural experience because emotion and thought are enmeshed and allow people to make sense of their world. In section 5.1 the chapter looks at how academic literature frames *the emotional teacher* through models of emotional intelligence, emotional competence and emotion regulation, which often view the teacher in deficit. Part of the difficulty in framing emotion is that *naming emotion*, section 5.2, is necessary to give rise to discussing emotion but at the same time can limit the uniqueness of each emotional experience. While emotional experiences are unique they are also shared through *collective emotion*, section 5.3, which is influenced by emotional rules that are derived from 'the teacher' discourse.

While it is important to acknowledge the various models of emotion within which teachers might be considered, because they feed into 'the teacher discourse', I draw on particular authors and research to scaffold emotion in section 5.3 and the remainder of this thesis; for example, the work of Hochschild (2012), Ramvi (2010), Stebbins (2010), Winograd (2003) and Zembylas (2005, 2007b) who frame emotion in reference to a collective of people, an approach with which this thesis aligns.

The chapter will then introduce the idea of *acting emotion* in section 5.4, where Hochschild (2012) has conceptualised deep acting and surface acting, which supports the concept of the impulsive self and false self. There is a natural tension where one has to balance emotional drives with the expectations and limitations of reality and this tension is compounded when teachers are expected to 'act' in ways that are unnatural. What adds further complexity to the tension is that *unconscious emotion*, section 5.5, influences action in line with unconscious agency outlined in *Chapter Three*. I argue that by uncovering the emotional

significance of unconscious thought a viable point of entry is on offer to understand unconscious agency and the thoughts, motivations and judgments that drive it. Section 5.6 explores how, with *emotion in tension*, teachers' wellbeing might be impacted, but I avoid discussing resilience in detail as this involves examining coping strategies which are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Feelings, values and caring are often diminished in society, including in some modern psychology, and a reimagining of these elements of emotion in relation to control and the construction of consciousness is needed (Kincheloe 2001b) because teachers are positioned as being in control and having authority. Elements of psychoanalytic theory encourage close inspection of ideas around control and authority and I draw on this as well as a sociological perspective to help frame the concept of emotion and how it connects to teachers' practice.

Just as defining a teacher is not straight forward, capturing what emotion is and how it impacts a person or community is not easy because it is complex and can be difficult to define. This can lead to emotion being omitted in consideration of practice. For example, Turner (2009) outlines how sociologists in the past have generally avoided considering a person's emotional world due to emotions operating on multiple levels. A neurological concept of emotion is different from a biological or behavioural or cultural perspective, highlighting that 'there is no commonly shared notion of what is an emotion' (Klann-Delius 2015, p.138). Fried, Mansfield and Dobozy (2015) discovered that out of 82 academic papers specifically focusing on emotion over a ten-year period only a small number defined emotion and those that did varied greatly.

Despite the lack of agreement of how to define teacher emotion, Kelchtermans (2009, p.269) asserts that 'hardly any teacher or teacher educator will deny that emotions play an important part in their work'. Emotion is also an inherent element of relationships and the dynamic of a classroom revolves around many relationships (Zembylas 2007b).

Teacher emotion in classrooms is often discussed in terms of emotional intelligence, emotional competence, emotional regulation, emotional labour and emotional resilience. Much of the research on teacher emotion is individualistic; it considers the attributes of teachers without addressing the context in which they operate in, and will be explored in this chapter. This individualistic view of emotion simplifies and narrows its complexity. To consider emotion only within the self, forgets its social, cultural and political elements and to consider emotion external from the self, ignores the psychological, neurological and biological elements (Zembylas 2007b). The aim is then to explore both the internal and external elements of emotion, with particular focus on the intersection of the two, requiring a reimagining of emotion through a convergence of perspectives.

Other education researchers have benefited from converging multiple perspectives to frame emotion. For example, Ramvi (2010, p.331) uses Bion's psychoanalytic informed theory about learning from experience with Hochschild's work on emotional labour to develop an understanding of 'teacher's experiences of losing control over their feelings.' Stebbins (2010) uses psychoanalytic and feminist theory to explore the relationship between teacher and student, particularly the taken for granted, sometimes unconscious, assumptions. Because of the complexity of emotion and the intention to explore emotional consciousness — not just what is conscious but the journey from the unconscious to the conscious — psychoanalytic theory has an important place in this research.

In the *Introduction*, I noted for the purposes of this research that emotion is taken to be the interrelation between one's predisposition, what is felt, and what is experienced against a social, historical, cultural and political backdrop (Brenner 1974b; Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015; Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson 2009). Within the internal, external and intersectional elements of emotion, which are not discrete components with easily identifiable boundaries, there is a range of what can be felt, displayed or experienced (Turner 2009).

## 5.1 The emotional teacher

While this research is concerned with both the internal and external elements of emotion in reference to the whole self, to ignore more narrow perceptions of emotion would be, as Pitt and Brushwood Rose (2007) suggest, to disregard the dominant discourse of teacher emotion. There is a variety of models of emotional intelligence employed and applied to teacher practice (for example, Corcoran & Tormey 2010; Corcoran & Tormey 2012; Penrose, Perry & Ball 2007; Perreault et al. 2014; Tait 2008; Yin et al. 2013); where emotional intelligence is conceived as one's ability to perceive and understand their own and others' emotions but to also generate emotions and reflectively regulate them to assist thought and emotional growth (Mayer & Salovey 1997). This definition suggests emotional intelligence is an ability although others suggest that it is dependent on specific traits namely: self-awareness, empathy, managing emotions, self-motivation, and handling relationships with others (Goleman 2006; Yin et al. 2013, p.138). This approach to emotion is individualistic because it relies on the teacher's abilities or traits that will influence their competence to perceive, understand and manage emotions.

Whatever model of emotional intelligence is investigated there is agreement that high levels of emotional intelligence impact positively on teachers and their students (Corcoran & Tormey 2010; Corcoran & Tormey 2012; Penrose, Perry & Ball 2007; Tait 2008; Yin et al. 2013).

Emotional competence refers more to the action of the teacher rather than considering what a teacher can do based on various traits or abilities (Corcoran & Tormey 2013). For example, teachers might be able to accept emotions, regulate emotions or be emotionally available (Harvey et al. 2012). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) additionally capture an intrapersonal element when describing emotional competence by addressing competencies such as social awareness and relationship management though it is still the internal functions of the teacher that allow these competencies to be enacted.

Teaching, being an emotional endeavour, influences teachers to regulate their emotions in order to perform more effectively (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight

2009). In short, Gross (2013) describes emotion regulation as managing emotions through a process where one is faced with a situation that demands attention, the situation is appraised and then an emotional response is deployed. People generally employ various strategies to regulate their emotions. Sharplin, O'Neil and Chapman (2011) outline three ways in which teachers regulate their emotions; 1) direct-action, which is proactive in addressing emotional disequilibrium and willing to seek external support; 2) palliative, which is self-soothing and proactive in using internal support strategies; and, 3) avoidant.

Emotional intelligence, competence and regulation seem to fit together, as emotional intelligence arises from the core traits or abilities of a person to demonstrate emotional competence through processes of emotion regulation. It is as though emotional intelligence is situated at the core of the person and the emotion regulation processes connect them to the external, and emotional competence is the action between the two. While emotional regulation appears to be linked to the external, in Sharplin, O'Neil and Chapman's (2011) list of ways teachers' regulate their emotions teacher emotion regulation is very much situated in the teacher.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009, p.380) state that focusing on an individual's emotional intelligence, as a set of skills or traits, is framing the individual through a perspective of deficit because the skills or traits they are yet to possess will allow them to perform optimally. Their research centres on social and emotional learning programs for students, but the logic can be transferred to teachers that are also being emotionally measured and assessed in similar ways to students. Even the positive psychology movement is 'based upon assumptions about a generalised psychological need in society' (ibid), and fuels sensibilities around appropriate feelings and responses to events. Though there is merit in considering how emotional discourse impacts on perceptions of how to emote 'appropriately' and how fuelling unrealistic expectations may be problematic to teachers in the classroom, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) also down play the significance of the context of the emotional experience.

... we should regard everyday life as sometimes trying and difficult; see restraint as a normal response; and curb interventions that soothe fears of crisis but pathologise people's own emotional coping strategies.

(Ecclestone & Hayes 2009, p.380)

General 'life' is not the same as 'work' and there are implications for one's work dictating particular expectations in regard to emotion (Hochschild 2012).

## 5.2 Naming emotion

So far the thesis has discussed the discourse around teacher emotion that centres on the teacher's individual traits or abilities, action and management of emotion that generally need to be enhanced in some way. Another aspect of the teacher emotion discourse is how emotions are named. For example, many studies explore emotion as either positive or negative (see Hagenauer & Volet 2014; Hargreaves 2001; Keller et al. 2014; Shapiro 2010; Spilt & Koomen 2009; Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009; Taxer & Frenzel 2015), yet such a broad view of emotion does not capture its nuances (Keller et al. 2014; Lazarus 1991). When an emotion is labelled positive what about it is positive? Does it have a positive impact on the person experiencing the felt emotion? Does it have a positive impact on another person witnessing the display of emotion? Does the experience of emotion result in a positive outcome? The difficulty is that both typically positive and negative emotions can be seen as functional and result in a positive outcome (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006; Winograd 2003). For example, fear would typically be regarded as a negative emotion, yet the experience of fear can help protect a person from harm. Alternatively, enthusiasm would typically be regarded as a positive emotion, although intense enthusiasm could also be a distraction (Keller et al. 2014).

So why name the unnamable? Naming emotions provides a vehicle for emotion to be discussed (Barrett 2006). At the risk of seeming reductionist, identifying what one feels, displays or experiences relies on an understanding of how particular emotions or groups of emotions are culturally named as part of the broader concept of emotion (Thoits 1989). Similar to other elements of emotion, naming



emotions is equally complex (Barrett 2006). Often there are considered to be a set of primary emotions, and then secondary emotions that are a combination of primary emotions, where levels of intensity will also impact on how the emotion is understood and named (Turner 2009). For example, frustration might be thought of as less intense anger but it might also be a combination of sadness and anger, where these are the primary emotions and frustration is the secondary. While this does not mean emotions are easily distinguishable and universally experienced by all people, specific emotions are not only difficult to define and usually exist in complex constellations, they are also uniquely expressed and experienced by each person (Brenner 1974b; Turner 2009). I take the stance that all experiences of a specific emotion are unique and to name an emotion, such as fear, runs the risk of implying all experiences of fear are equal.

The danger of regarding an emotion as positive or negative is of oversimplification through avoiding consideration of the complexity of how they are felt, displayed or experienced. Rather than categorising a specific emotion as positive or negative, the emotions experienced by the teachers engaged in this research are discussed as pleasurable and unpleasurable. That is not to say an emotional experience with a felt and displayed element was pleasurable to anyone other than the teacher recollecting their emotions, or that pleasure and unpleasure cannot be felt simultaneously.

The word 'pleasure' gives the impression of a physical element. There is a neurophysiological connection between pleasurable bodily feelings and pleasurable feelings of the psyche, likewise with unpleasurable feelings, but like many aspects of emotion these feelings are not easily distinguishable. Pleasure or unpleasure is not limited to thought or physical sensation but encompasses both (Brenner 1974a; Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson 2009). For example, a person experiencing anxiety is experiencing physical unpleasure as well as an expectation something unpleasurable will happen, something like danger. In this way a person's internal experience of unpleasure is connected with an external world. The feeling of anxiety is connected with ideas about anxiety — emotion and thought are connected.

Defining emotions as pleasurable or unpleasurable is still broad in scope and to further identify how the teachers experience emotion greater distinction needs to be made. To reiterate, specific emotions are typically experienced in constellations, which means fear will not be felt in isolation but in combination with other emotions, such as anger and sadness, and depending on their intensity might determine whether, as a constellation, they are named as shame, guilt or alienation (Turner 2009).

There is a discrete set of emotions associated with teaching, some have been detected from teacher self-reports in literature, but these same set of emotions are then identified as 'teacher emotions', without further investigation of the scope of teacher emotion, creating a closed set of 'teacher emotions' (Shapiro 2010). For example, Keller et al. (2014, p.74) identified that discrete emotions in teaching were not often researched so explored teachers' enjoyment, pride, shame, anxiety, anger and boredom. Similarly, Taxer and Frenzel (2015) explored a set of discrete emotions. What needs to be highlighted here is that I have not approached this project with a discrete set of emotions in mind derived from literature. Rather, the eight notable emotions that have been identified emerged from the teachers' stories.

When emotion is discussed it can be in reference to what is felt, thought or acted, meaning when a specific emotion is mentioned such as 'care', one can have caring feelings, caring thoughts or act in a caring way (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006). These three slants on the emotion of 'care' shall not be itemised, nor for the other emotions discussed, because they coexist in a frame of emotion that incorporates the dynamics of the conscious self with the unconscious self, the self with the social world, or the internal with the external (Brenner 1974b; Freud 2005; Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015; Needles 1969; Pitt & Brushwood Rose 2007; Zembylas 2007b).

I aimed to approach naming emotion in a holistic way, which means that I attributed names to the emotions that emerged from the project rather than

seeking predetermined emotions. I also recognised that emotions could be discussed in terms of what the teachers felt, how they intellectualised their emotions or by describing an emotion laden action. By naming an emotion I did not disregard its fluidity, for example, while two teachers might talk about anger, the intensity of the emotion and how it might have been clustered with other emotions would be unique to each experience. The process I undertook to analyse emotion is covered in *Chapter Six; Ethics is everything*.

### 5.3 Collective emotion

Discussion to this point has focussed on individual teacher emotion. There are studies that explore the emotional culture in which a teacher may find themselves as well as the emotional experience of the teacher (for example, Eveleina, Korthagena & Brekelmans 2008; Hagenauer & Volet 2014; Intrator 2006; McDonough 2011; Ramvi 2010; Sharplin, O'Neill & Chapman 2011; Winograd 2003; Zembylas 2005; Zembylas 2006). More specifically, a study by Sharplin, O'Neill, and Chapman (2011) explored the quality of work life for remote and rural teachers in Australia, focusing on person-environment fit and workplace socialising drawing attention to the teacher's lived experience. The findings of that study however did focus on teachers' individual emotional coping strategies but emphasised the need for teachers' to be supported by the school by: 1) implementing opportunities for teachers to develop social networks; and 2) for teachers to feel connected to the community and feel that their future is stable and secure. Moving away from individualist teacher emotion research enables the complex nature of emotion to be explored further in relation not only to intrapersonal, but also interpersonal, social, cultural and political contexts (Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015).

Professional codes of ethics are often a disguised set of emotional rules and professional norms (Yin et al. 2013). For example, one of the teachers described how:

[I reflect on my] colleague's practice. I went past a class where this one student and [the teacher] were just having a screaming match. ... They were communicating but they were just screaming, they were getting high [pitched] and aggressive. ... I didn't teach the student at the time. I've got him this year and from day one he was pretty sceptical. [He] doesn't really want a relationship and I learnt from seeing my colleague with him, just never raise my voice at him, not even, 'put your pen down!' None of that. It's all quiet, it's all calm (*Drew*).

*The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct* (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015b) expects that teachers treat others with courtesy and respect and to communicate appropriately, which is a reasonable request, but does have an emotional implication. The implied emotional rule is that anger can only be expressed in a calm and respectful manner. Again, this is not to say that this is an unreasonable request, but to highlight that the rule is at play. Emotional rules are influenced by social, cultural and political forces (Hagenauer & Volet 2014; McDonough 2011). Professional governing bodies, teachers, parents, students and the community at large all contribute to defining emotional rules. For example, Thomas & Montomery (cited in Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009) point out that if students were to enforce a rule for the teacher, it would be not to yell. In contrast, Warner and Shields' (2009) study indicates that intense angry feelings, including yelling, were judged as an appropriate emotional response depending on the severity of the predicament. Having a one-size-fits-all blanket set of emotional rules does not take into consideration the complexity of emotion. There is a range of ways an emotional response may be perceived — what one person constitutes as yelling may not be the same for another — and whether an emotional response is deemed appropriate differs between individuals and cultures. An emotional experience depends on 'complex factors that transcend individual experience' (Yang 2009, p.101).

The emotional rules that are implied through professional discourse can be at odds with those that a person lives by (Hochschild 2012). Whether or not the expression of anger by a teacher is harmful to students may depend on its usefulness in a classroom. Both teachers and students maintain power in a

classroom or school around what they can do (Manke 1997). Occasionally demonstrating anger is a justifiable and effective way to establish some control over a classroom that is increasingly getting out of hand (Keller et al. 2014; Winograd 2003). In such situations to remain emotionally neutral may also be perceived as an inappropriate response (Warner & Shields 2009).

As has been highlighted in the *Introduction* there is a public, sociocultural, political, expectation of what a teacher looks like and acts like and similarly how they emote. Winograd (2003) describes how:

[T]eachers are supposed to enjoy children, enjoy their work, maintain a patient and kind front, become angry with children infrequently and so on. These rules are not necessarily taught formally to teachers, but they are collaboratively constructed in the everyday work of teachers, students, principles, parents, and teacher educators.

(Winograd 2003, p.1645)

What is being emphasised here is not that there is a problem with teachers 'feeling' things or, as Taxer and Frenzel (2015) suggest, that teachers should be supported not to experience unpleasurable emotions, but that teachers are expected to emotionally display in ways that may not be natural to them (Truta 2014). Suggesting that teachers should not feel unpleasure or deemed 'negative' emotion is also suggesting, like Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) assert, that teachers who do are in deficit and there must be something wrong with them (Ecclestone cited in Ecclestone, Robinson & Wheeler 2014; Ecclestone & Hayes 2009). Teachers may then minimise certain emotions by modifying their situation, focusing their attention elsewhere, or trying to shift their thinking (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009). Zembylas (2006) notes that teacher emotion regulation is becoming viewed as a necessary element of maintaining order in educational systems. Social and professional rules regarding appropriate and inappropriate emotional expression, and individual personality impacting on teachers' perceptions of professionalism, influence how teachers express their emotion (Hagenauer & Volet 2014), as described in Winograd (2003).

My emotions were dysfunctional when I appeared to psychologize [sic] my emotions, by experiencing them as individual phenomenon and not as an expression of the sociopolitical context. It was functional when it alerted me to teaching problems.

(Winograd 2003, p.1651)

In this way emotions, 'positive' or 'negative', can be considered functional when they are a catalyst for action in relation to solving a teaching problem (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006; Winograd 2003). Dysfunctional emotions are emotions that inhibit action and instead conjure self-recrimination or complaints regarding others. Dysfunctional emotions can also lead to a continued cycle of 'darker emotions' and contribute to much of the emotional response to working with students. As well, dysfunctional emotional outcomes 'reflected norms that encouraged privacy and isolation among teachers' (Winograd 2003, p.1662). In this view, it is not such a concern whether the emotions are perceived as positive or negative or how they are regulated or managed but what action is taken from the emotional experience to contribute to professional learning. Sharplin, O'Neill and Chapman (2011) also highlight how psychological and physical distancing, as an avoidant coping strategy, may lead to a continued struggle within the work environment and eventual withdrawal from the profession.

What has been described so far is a process of emotional work — also known as emotional labour coined by Hochschild (2012). Emotional work involves face-to-face contact between students, teachers and others where a teacher is expected to influence the emotional regulation of others by, for example, promoting enjoyment or enthusiasm or calming fear or anger, and regulating their own emotions based on professional norms (Hochschild 2012; Winograd 2003; Yin et al. 2013).

Emotional work is a complex process that has to consider both the individual teacher, the social world they operate within and how these two interact. In other words, part of a teacher's emotional work involves understanding their own personal experiences within organisational expectations and limitations. It is

through a process of reflexivity in relation to emotional work that the teachers' assumptions or those of the structure within which they work can either be confirmed, maintained or transformed (Yang 2009; Zembylas 2007b). Emotionally intelligent teachers are inclined to express their genuine feelings — no faking, no hiding, nor remaining neutral (Yin et al. 2013). I have so far considered emotion regulation within an individualistic frame however a more relevant concern is how do teachers regulate their emotions within a contextual frame?

## 5.4 Acting emotion

Due to the expectation that a person comply with emotional rules, their emotional experiences need to be managed in some way. Feeling rules that are culturally driven exist and influence the internal self, which in turn influences the feeling rules. For example, a teacher's feelings towards their students should be pleasurable, not unpleasurable because teachers should like their students. The rule is culturally and institutionally driven but the teacher perpetuates the rule at an internal level through what Hochschild (2012) calls either surface or deep acting. For example, a teacher should not show fear of or anger towards their students, and is broken if they cry and show sadness. Unpleasurable feelings should not be expressed and may be repressed (Hochschild 2012). The feeling rules are navigated within a reality similarly to what has been outlined in *the acting self*, in *Chapter Three*. One's reality is made up of a collection of physical sensations and thinking informed by assumed knowledge, where the two are mediated by emotion.

The process of determining the validity of feeling rules or knowledge is one of appraisal or judgment made by an individual in relation to cultural norms and expectations (Turner 2009). It is an emotional process of reality testing. The feeling is first appraised and a judgment is made based on the rules of feeling, but there are also the rules of displaying emotion. Emotions can be displayed through deep acting, where a person conjures up the deemed appropriate emotion that becomes felt and displayed, or surface acting which can take two forms; 1) suppressing or hiding the felt emotions by lessening their displayed intensity and

expression, or 2) simulating or faking an emotion that is not genuinely felt (Hochschild 2012; Truta 2014; Yin et al. 2013). Display and feeling rules are referred to collectively as emotional rules but may still be referred to separately.

It has been noted that teachers follow typical display rules of emotion (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009; Truta 2014; Yin et al. 2013). The view on whether deep acting and surface acting are useful strategies for teachers to employ in their emotional work is varied. For example, (Hagenauer & Volet 2014) suggests that hiding one's emotions is not necessarily maladaptive but depends on the social context, for example, withholding a smile or laughter at a funeral would be considered appropriate. However, on the other hand Taxer and Frenzel (2015) argue that teachers who hide their emotions are more likely to be in poor mental and physical health and suffer emotional exhaustion. I would argue that deep acting and surfacing acting are, to a certain extent, in alignment with Winnicott's (1965) notion of the impulsive self and false self, which are necessary to negotiate reality but can become maladaptive.

Winograd (2003, p.1652) describes typical and specific teacher feeling rules, or expectations, as: teachers having affection for their students, having enthusiasm for subject matter and students, avoiding the expression of extreme emotions, loving their work and having a sense of humour. Keller et al. (2014) highlight that teaching is emotionally rewarding, meaning that the emotions that a teacher experiences when teaching are recompense for teacher work, supporting the notion of teaching as emotional work. While a teacher might be expected to feel love for their work and affection for their students Stebbins (2010) suggests society requires teachers to take delight in learning but not in students and therefore emotions such as love and desire should not be enmeshed with learning, limiting the more pleasurable emotions, particularly on a display level. There is also a limit to other emotions such as anger where it is suggested teachers believe restricting the expression of anger protects the teacher-student relationship and allows the teacher to remain focused on pedagogical issues and nurturing relationships (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009). What these studies allude to is that in addition to keeping the deemed 'negative' emotions at



bay emotional reward for the emotional work of teaching also has caveats — teachers should feel one thing but display another.

Deep acting serves a purpose when an actor has to find a way to manage through, or survive, a particular event, for example taking a class that a teacher really does not feel like taking; deep acting can conjure up the necessary happiness and enthusiasm to take the class. This mechanism can prove useful in private circumstances, though it can also cause difficulty if it becomes so entrenched that the actor feels like they are living a lie and begin to question what is or is not real. This aligns with Winnicott's idea of the false self becoming maladaptive by consuming the whole self and impacting on normal reality testing processes (Winnicott 1965).

In terms of surface acting, Taxer and Frenzel (2015) focus on the rules of faked and hidden emotions. For example, in relation to the feeling and display rules outlined above by Winograd (2003) and Stebbins (2010), the feeling rule may be that a teacher should have affection for their students but the display rule says that a teacher should not love their students. Therefore the result is that the display of affection for students is hidden. Or if a teacher dislikes a student then the teacher has to fake at least some like. Happiness, liking, enthusiasm, and pride are recognised as most frequently faked emotions and anxiety, anger, dislike and disappointment as the most frequently hidden emotions. Teachers rarely fake 'negative' emotions but are most likely to fake anger and disappointment (Taxer & Frenzel 2015).

Surface acting too can cause difficulty. It is typically employed when someone needs to display an emotion that is different from what is felt; therefore there is already a disjunction between what is being experienced internally and what the social expectations and norms might be. When the work context places expectations on a teacher that continually requires surface acting, due to the teacher facing personal or collective limitations, the teacher's wellbeing is at risk (Winograd 2003, p. 1648).

Too much deep acting results in a life script being rewritten by others. The actor loses agency and the future becomes predetermined by the 'the teacher' discourse and all that feeds into it. The self becomes lost at an unconscious level. Too much surface acting requires the actor to juggle two scripts — the genuine script and a false script. A disjunction between the impulsive and false self is also highlighted but it is at a more conscious level. The teacher may recognise that they are 'acting', which raises other emotional responses such as guilt or shame in not meeting expectations and having to fake or hide their impulsive self (Turner 2009).

### 5.5 Unconscious emotion

Anxiety is different from other emotions in that it is a nondescript feeling attributed to something that is unknown (Freud 2015). Researchers have specifically discussed anxiety (for example, Keller et al. 2014; Taxer & Frenzel 2015) but there is little consideration of the unknown self's emotional experiences. This is probably because something unknown is difficult to consider, as Brenner (2002) emphasises:

There is no part of the mind that functions in a mature, logical, realistic way simply because that is the way that part of the mind is designed to function ... To be mature in one's thinking, to be logical, to be consistent, to take account of the demands and constraints of the environment are all behaviors [sic] that express conflict and compromise formation...

(Brenner 2002, p.402)

For example, considering Drew's earlier account (p.104) of a teacher and student having a screaming match, how can Drew easily keep 'all quiet and calm' while expressing angry feelings? There might be a conflict between the two desires. This is not to say that Drew should or should not express angry feelings but that angry feelings, similar to those of the yelling teacher, are likely to be felt at some stage. Expressing those feelings could prove difficult if Drew is even hesitant to say 'put your pen down!' Compromise formation resolves the inner conflict

between a repressed impulse, for example Drew's potential angry feelings, and repressed agency, not asking the student to 'put your pen down!' (Rycroft 1995).

I have already established that natural emotional tension and compromise formation is a process of balancing pleasure and unpleasure and an attempt to master reality. If Drew had given into the impulse and said sternly: 'put your pen down', pleasure may be initially experienced but then also unpleasure because Drew's expectation was not met. On the other hand, if the anger was not expressed at all the inhibition could be self-destructive (Brenner 2002). For example, after an interaction one might dwell on what they should have said or could have done in a self-recriminatory way. In this case, the compromise formation process has been hijacked by 'the teacher' discourse. The natural balance and compromise was not possible because a compromise between yelling and keeping calm but still expressing anger might be talking sternly. Drew was attempting to completely repress the impulse and the agency with no compromise.

What also needs to be emphasised here is that pleasure might be considered at odds with reality, suggesting that pleasure needs to be subdued, is irrational and needs to be harnessed by reality. Staging pleasure against reality removes feeling, value and caring in society (Kincheloe 2001b; Turner 2009). Both pleasure and unpleasure can be rational or seem irrational and connect to reality when a judgment is made and agency is employed based on that judgment. Again, in Drew's case the judgment was, 'I will remain calm' but as suggested in *Chapter Three*, agency can sometimes be unconscious through the function of repression (Brenner 1974b). The aggression may find its way into other experiences, which at that time may seem irrational.

Some psychological theories often regard a person as passive in relation to emotion, suggesting that emotion is something that happens to the person but they cannot control (Zembylas 2007b). To say that one 'controls' their emotions is perhaps too strong when considering that both conscious and unconscious

emotional activity occur within the mind. There is an attempt for a person to control emotional conflict by reaching a compromise but unconscious emotion and the connected thought may impact on the person in unknown ways, so cannot be controlled. What adds to the complication is that repressing or avoiding emotions has become expected from teachers due to external stipulations of professionalism and feeling rules (Edwards in press; Hagenauer & Volet 2014; Spilt & Koomen 2009; Truta 2014). So, another element of control is added to the already existing natural conflict by institutions intervening in the emotional acting process by removing elements of choice, exacerbating the conflict to unnatural proportions, through a labour context (Hochschild 2012).

Unconscious agency is influenced by unconscious emotion and unconscious emotion is influenced by unconscious agency. Thought does not lead emotion and emotion does not lead thought but either can occur depending on the circumstance (Turner 2009). Because of the connection between thinking and feeling, internal and external, self and social in the dynamics of teaching and learning emotion, encompassing bodily sensations, beliefs, values and judgments, needs to be accounted for in classroom life (Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015; Zembylas 2007b). Indeed, a critical element of teacher agency is to uncover underlying beliefs, values and emotions that inform judgment — of which reflexivity is a vital element — making the unknown known.

Emotions, similar to thinking, evolve over time. An emotion is not just a response to either a pleasurable or unpleasurable instinctual drive at a point in time; emotions evolve throughout one's development, they have a history within a social context that impacts on how emotions are felt, understood and displayed (Brenner 1974b; Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015; Turner 2009; Zembylas 2007a). Part of the told self is the *emotional* told self which is influenced by 'the teacher' discourse by way of emotional rules. The emotional rules are written into the script long before one has the capacity to understand them but the *emotional* script changes over time too. A person might feel, for example, anger in relation to a particular experience and then at a later time discover that they also feel sadness and not so much anger in relation to the same experience. This is not to say that the anger

was alleviated or that sadness was absent in the first place, just that those emotions were partially unconscious and that they evolved, becoming consciously understood in a different way.

If the aim is to bring emotion into consciousness then the thought connected to the emotion needs to be uncovered as well. Alternatively, to uncover unconscious thought the emotional significance entwined with the thought needs to be explored as well and is often a more viable excavation point (Pitt & Brushwood Rose 2007). In relation to this project what is being outlined is that teachers will have unconscious emotion and thought that impact on their action, yet judgments are made in relation to emotion and thought that connect the self to the social. If the emotion, thought and related judgments remain unconscious then a teacher acts without understanding why they are acting; so to shift the unconscious material into the conscious, unconscious emotion needs to be explored. Furthermore, in the past psychoanalytic theory focused specifically on exploring anxiety to uncover unconscious thought; however all emotion is linked to thought and is worth exploring (Brenner 1974b). When teachers are being asked to put their emotions aside they are really being asked to bury the thinking and consciousness of the action that is associated with it in the unconscious.

## **5.6 Emotion in tension**

In life, there is conflict between personal endeavour and the culture that constrains the self, where the conflict is fuelled further by the demands of a work culture (Kincheloe 2005). So how do teachers cope? There is a body of literature around teacher resilience, particularly research that links resilience and emotion (for example Gu & Day 2013; Keogh et al. 2012; Price, Mansfield & McConney 2012; Roffey 2012; Sharplin, O'Neill & Chapman 2011). Resilience may be understood as the manner of interaction during elevated stress between a person and objects or events in their environment that can be strengthened by being challenged (Tait 2008). Some research maintains an individualistic and 'teacher is in deficit' stance, such as Mansfield et al.'s (2012) study which observes that a resilient teacher does not take things personally, has a sense of humour, manages emotions,

enjoys teaching, cares for their own wellbeing and copes well with job related stress. This list contributes to 'the teacher discourse', influencing the emotional rules by which teachers should work. Yet other researchers such as Bottrell (2009) call for consideration of resilience in terms of its embeddedness in a social context. This research does not explore the specifics of how a teacher 'copes' with emotion but interrogates normal emotional mental processes to facilitate professional learning. The question of what coping strategies teachers employ to manage teacher emotional work follows sequentially from this project, and while being beyond the scope of this thesis would be worth exploration in future research and work with teachers.

While the specifics of teacher resilience are not a focus, it cannot be denied that '[t]he complex and ever-changing nature of teachers' work challenges their well-being' (Price & McCallum 2014). So, the point is that teachers sometimes do not cope well. Much research has set out to assess teacher wellbeing (for example, Bullough Jr & Hall-Kenyon 2011; Burns & Machin 2012; Margolis, Hodge & Alexandrou 2014; Martins, Ramalho & Morin 2010; Price & McCallum 2014; Roffey 2012; Spilt, Koomen & Thijs 2011). Margolis, Hodge and Alexandrou (2014) call attention to the increase in responsibility, particularly of pre-service teachers, to become more resilient. This suggests that the teacher's wellbeing is solely the teacher's responsibility and not the institution in which they work and that the teacher's wellbeing must be sacrificed for the overall wellbeing of the institution. Spilt, Koomen and Thijs (2009) describe teachers' tendency to 'neutralise negative emotions' as a way of 'acting professional', but to always remain neutral, 'professional' and 'agreeable' seems unhealthy and understanding the consequences of this is important for future teacher wellbeing (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006).

Exhaustion may result from teachers attempting to control events without the resources to do so (Bullough Jr & Hall-Kenyon 2011); what is also being suggested here is that this may be the case of attempting to control emotions without the resources to do so. Here, 'resources' does not only mean teachers' individual emotional coping or regulation strategies, but also the ability to be open

about genuinely felt emotions and the opportunity to discuss them with peers. Teacher wellbeing may be positively influenced by having the ability to openly discuss the inherent norms, values and emotional rules within the workplace as a way of internalising professional demands and become congruous with the workplace (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006; Winograd 2003; Yin et al. 2013). For example, Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) emphasise that it is difficult to distinguish between the emotion of caring and the act of emotional labour. Teachers may see caring as part of their job but a difficulty may arise if the distinction goes unnoticed and there is growing disparity between the felt emotion and the expectation of teacher work. The incongruity leaves the teacher feeling like the failure is theirs (Winograd 2003).

Harvey et al. (2012) propose that emotional contagion, that is emotional convergence between one or more people, is a dimension of the classroom emotional environment that connects with both intrapersonal and interpersonal elements and is inherent in relationships, where the emotional wellbeing of teachers is likely to influence the felt emotions of students. Indeed, there are many diverse emotional cultures in both classrooms and schools (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006). Intrator (2006) described a conversation with an experienced teacher who saw her teaching as a 'thrill ride' and related the everyday experience of glory and despair as well as sadness in regard to political aspects of her teaching environment. Intrator (2006) described how:

At the end of our conversation, I asked her if she had anything else she wanted to add. She paused and then said, "One more thing. Maybe the most important thing." "Like the old saying, 'If Momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.' If you get a teacher in the classroom who's not happy then look out little children."

In this one remarkable homespun image I believe this veteran of many years in the classroom captured an essential first principle of teaching and learning: Any teacher, particularly a novice teacher, cannot teach children well if they are demoralized [sic] and overwhelmed. In fact, it is worth lingering on its cold inverse: If our beginning teachers have no strategies for retaining their

enthusiasm, rejuvenating their energy, bouncing back from the inevitable dark day, then our children will suffer.

(Intrator 2006, p.238)

Emotion in teacher-student relationships is never neutral (for example, Bergin & Bergin 2009; Danielsen, Breivik & Wold 2011; Riley 2009; Roorda et al. 2011). Close teacher-student relationships are linked with 'positive' emotion, though teachers may experience feelings of helplessness when students are facing difficulties academically, and anger when the teacher-student relationship is strained (Spilt & Koomen 2009). While relating to students, teachers' emotions are tied up in the conflict of wanting to care for their students, meeting expectations, feeling things because they care for their students, such as the hope to meet expectations, all the while avoiding their emotions. Generally, it is secondary teachers and inexperienced teachers that are more likely to experience anxiety about close relationships, avoidance of emotions and vulnerability to rejection (Riley 2009).

While there is certainly an emotional interaction between teacher and student which is significant to the teaching and learning process (Bergin & Bergin 2009; Ramvi 2010; Spilt & Koomen 2009; Spilt, Koomen & Thijs 2011; Stebbins 2010; Sutton, Mudrey-Camino & Knight 2009; Tait 2008; Winograd 2003; Zembylas 2005) this research shall not focus on teacher-student relationships being the only emotional aspect of teaching, as teacher-teacher or teacher-other interaction is also significant (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012).

There are other factors that have also been considered in relation to emotional work. Tait (2008) cites typical stressors, particularly in the early years of teaching, as the breadth of expectations in the role, inconsistency between how teachers are prepared and the expectations of them, inconsistency of the teacher's vision and the realities of the job, and isolation. Isolation was also cited as impacting negatively on teacher emotional wellbeing by Gallant (2013), Shapiro (2010) and Winograd (2003).



Emotion is so very complex and while this might be a barrier to research it also means that it is the very element of teaching that we need to understand further (Shapiro 2010; Zembylas 2005), particularly when cognition and emotion are so thoroughly integrated (Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015; Kelchtermans 2009; Zembylas 2007a). When emotions are only considered on an intellectual level, as in an emotional intelligence framework, and attempted to be controlled and minimised, emotion is silenced and teachers are expected to give into their feelings of helplessness. The alternative is to open a dialogue regarding the complexity, relevancy and necessity of emotional life that can make learning possible (Pitt & Brushwood Rose 2007). It also needs to be remembered that while individualistic teacher emotion research, supports and interventions have their place and provide many insights, teacher emotion needs to be considered within an educational emotional culture where 'teachers and students create the environment that shapes how they are emotionally connected and engaged in learning together' (Zembylas 2007a, p.357). Teachers need to become emotionally conscious and aware of their emotional identity to combat the de-humanisation of the teaching profession. Up until recently the tension between teachers' cognition and emotion that adds to a sense of powerlessness was relatively unexplored in academic research (Shapiro 2010).

When emotion is explored in an interactionist sphere there is added strength to the developing understanding about reality and knowledge through a holistic rather than a reductionist binary approach. Internal being separate from external being excludes the intersection of the two. The task of exploring emotion at all levels — from internal to external and particularly what transpires between — is complex and not only has implications on a theoretical level but also impacts on research at a methodological level (Zembylas 2007b).

## Chapter 6

### Ethics is everything

*Chapter Four* detailed the methods of data collection. This chapter focusses more on the interpretation and analysis of the data as well as the ethical implications. In the *Chapter Five* I argued that exploring unconscious emotion is a doorway to understanding the associated thinking and agency. This chapter builds on that argument. I locate myself at the centre — how did my unconscious emotion impact on my thought and agency — because this is important in explaining how my understanding, or epistemological stance, connects with the approach to both design and analysis. The chapter explains a process that I have called *fieldwork supervision*, which helped me uncover my unconscious emotion and details this process in relation to two research dilemmas. Other research dilemmas unfolded such as: ‘to transcript or not transcript’; or whether I should turn to a narrative approach after already embarking on a thematic approach; or whether I should conduct *feedback interviews* with the teachers. The choices I made likely had an impact on the interpretation of the data and the trustworthiness of the *analysis*. This chapter explains the choices made and details the processes that followed.

Before any fieldwork took place and teachers were even approached, I had applied for and received university ethics approval (see Appendix K) as well as ethics approval to conduct research at a Department of Education and Training site (see Appendix L).

Lather (1993, p.683) declared ‘my challenge has been to make productive use of the dilemma’, where a ‘dilemma’ is a choice that has to be made, particularly where any of the possible responses could lead to a potentially undesirable consequence. Researcher reflexivity allows the space for exploration and consequent strengthening of emerging limitations of the research.

Groundwater-Smith (2007, p.122) adds that dilemmas *are* ethical concerns: ‘There are costs and benefits whichever way we turn’. I purposefully looked for the dilemmas and questioned myself throughout the entire project as a

methodological tool to highlight researcher subjectivity: ‘...how does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel affect data collection and analysis’ (Pillow 2003, p. 176). Reflexivity is the act of attempting to answer these questions, similar to that outlined in *Chapter Three*. The difference is that instead of a teacher exploring themselves and their practice, I was a researcher exploring myself and my practice as a researcher.

There were two reflexive strategies I used throughout the research — fieldwork supervision and a reflexive journal — and both have to do with the fieldwork which was a relational space dependent on place. Every story takes ‘place’ somewhere. Whether or not the ‘place’ is shared can impact on the telling and understanding of the story (Bruner 2004; Clandinin 2013). There was a point of difference between what I could understand of the stories from the perspective of place compared to the other teachers. My point here is that while I have significantly focused on intersubjectivity or relating, that relating occurs in a place that encompasses shared emotional, intellectual and physical space. The shared space is choreographed by complicated social, political and cultural influences to which I needed to be open. The consideration of such aspects is ethical as well as methodological. I employed a fieldwork supervisor (FWS) whose specific role was not so much research supervision as focusing on the relational interactions within a social, political and cultural space. The details of the FWS’s role and the theory that underpinned it are addressed later in this chapter.

The other strategy was to keep a reflexive journal, which is a tool that allows the researcher to self-interrogate through the analysis of the layered images constructed in the journal. ‘In this perspective, we might see the flow of narrative as an ongoing construction of a reflective/constructive/disruptive layer that feeds while growing alongside the life it seeks to portray’ (Brown & Heggs 2011, p.297). In this chapter, there are extracts from my reflexive journal. Entries, 50 in total, were recorded immediately after I met with the teachers or the FWS over an eleven-month period of fieldwork. When I wrote in my reflexive journal I focused on trying to uncover the meaning behind my emotional and physical reactions to the fieldwork experiences.

## 6.1 Fieldwork supervision

I employed the FWS to ensure an ethical approach to the research process. Often in research texts the ethical practicalities on an intellectual level are considered. For example, codes of ethics being adhered to, informed consent, issues of confidentiality, as I have outlined previously. An ethical stance is a one that considers the emotion that is entwined with intellectual thought. Emotion was sometimes unconsciously driving my seemingly intellectual motivations and unconscious emotion cannot be easily understood without support, which was the role of the FWS who helped me 'dig' deep to try to remain conscious of the changes in self and the collective that were the intention of the project (Humphrey 2007).

In a social work context supervision is a key part of practice. Professional supervision is described by Davys and Beddoe (2010, p.21) as an interactive dialogue that 'shapes a process of review, reflection, critique and replenishment for professional practitioners'. My past experience working within a multi-disciplinary team of allied health professionals attuned me to the potential benefit of supervision within a research field. Social work supervision has three functions: administration, education and support. Here, the administration component addresses the issues of managing competing agendas, maintaining accountability within multiple codes of ethics and ethically balancing ownership of the research. The educative component to the supervision draws on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model of experience, reflect, reconceptualise and experiment. The supervisor acts as a facilitator of experiential learning and thus supports the supervisee. The fieldwork supervision together with the reflexive journal both acted as a way for me to use reflexivity to explore the emotional entanglements of the research process and ensure the ethical agenda of the research (Bondi 2014), including maintaining the trustworthiness of the research by offering greater opportunity to see weaknesses (Hinchey 2008).

I invited an experienced social worker, supervisor, and academic with a doctoral qualification to fulfil the role of FWS and officially join the research team. The

university approved the FWS as an 'external investigator' (see Appendix M). Though the supervision required was consistent with the social work profession *Supervision Standards- 2014* (Australian Association of Social Workers 2014) rather than research supervision, the FWS had also conducted a qualitative doctoral study using in-depth interviews, so she had an idea of my research experience. The practicalities of the relationship were discussed and we agreed to meet monthly throughout the duration of fieldwork. The FWS outlined the process; 1) I would bring to the meetings my *experiences* of fieldwork dilemmas; 2) we would *reflect* on my experience and the FWS would share similar experiences; 3) I might *reconceptualise* my experience through the FWS's reciprocity; and 4) the reconceptualisation of the dilemma might lead me to *experiment* in the field. The term 'critical friend' might be used to define 'a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend' (Costa & Kallick 1993, p50). The FWS role was more than a friend acting on a favour, even though it did embody the elements of what constitutes a critical friend. The FWS was a trained supervisor fulfilling a contract of duty; therefore, there was an element of work and duty of care that goes beyond the boundary of 'friend'.

I will address two dilemmas from the fieldwork. The *choice* within the dilemma lay in how I perceived the interaction with teachers or chose to allow teachers to perceive my interaction. Without the support of the FWS my perceptions and choices may have been quite different and undesirably impacted on the research. Though there are many more dilemmas that could be explored, the two chosen succinctly address ethical issues already discussed. The following extracts were taken from post fieldwork supervision meeting entries unless otherwise specified. The meetings with my FWS were not audio recorded.

### **6.1.1 The researcher reciprocity dilemma**

I have already outlined my concern over research reciprocity in *Chapter Four*. It was something that I discussed with the FWS. Even though I had already identified the dilemma at the stage of the pilot interviews, I grappled with it into the early stages of the collaborative inquiry sessions that were intended to offer

support to the teachers. However I hesitated to actually facilitate out of fear of dominating the conversation, resulting in the teachers talking in circles. The FWS gave some examples of when she struggled with a reciprocity dilemma and highlighted some benefits of researcher reciprocity. I began to understand that fear was preventing me from engaging in researcher reciprocity because I was struggling to understand my own position, which was foreign and full of the unknown. I was afraid of what I might learn about myself and the responsibility of being trusted. I felt the fear of my reciprocity influencing the research (Mercer 2007). I was fearful of unknowingly compromising the integrity of the research by crossing an ethical boundary (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2007). I had to move past the fear and have the confidence to engage with the teachers reciprocally in order to benefit the research. For example:

Our last meeting [with FWS] had given me the ability to reach insights that strengthened my position in the research. Previously I was scared to give of myself, yet afterwards I was keen to take on the challenge. And I did. The sessions flowed much better. I felt like the process, with me not afraid, helped the teachers gain deeper insights too. ... I suppose my concerns were really reactions to my discomfort about having to make decisions about this information later on. FWS reminded me that I really just need to make sure that boundaries are clear (*Jean*, Journal 23/10/2014).

‘Clear boundaries’ is not a suggestion of a fixed boundary, but being able to clearly see the boundaries shift and change (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Taylor 2011). My reciprocity did influence the research process as intended — it was a collaboration. Clandinin (2013, p.28) describes co-composing field texts through reciprocity and mutuality which the teachers and I did. ‘The aim is to become risk-aware rather than risk-averse ... given the impossibility and undesirability of eliminating risks’ (Humphrey 2013, p.582). Thus, I became familiar with the once unconscious physically felt fear that rendered me unable to collaborate and gained the confidence to keep exploring how my reciprocity influenced the research.

### **6.1.2 A transference dilemma**

Researcher reciprocity can build trust but with this can come transference, where in psychoanalytic terms transference defines a person transferring or bestowing on another person the significance of a third person (Rycroft 1995). Freud initially thought transference prevented progress with patients but later decided that it was a necessary element of the psychoanalytic method that required interrogation because 'present relationships were mediated by past interactions and experiences' (Stebbins & Roberston cited in Stebbins 2010). For example, Lundgaard Andersen (2012) details a process of transference where some research participants bestowed on a current researcher the associated emotion and thought processes that stemmed from past experiences with external consultants. People in relationships are naturally exposed to the forces of one trying to have the other fit a frame that is not their own (Frosh 2012b).

Transference is considered hand in hand with counter-transference. In this research it is the potential for me to 'bestow' the significance of another on to one of the teachers (Rycroft 1995). For example, I could have encouraged friendship or viewed the teachers I worked with as clients. Early in one of the collaborative inquiry sessions a teacher commented that the session was like therapy. The teacher bestowed onto me the significance of a therapist. I spoke to the FWS about this particular disclosure. It made me feel very uncomfortable because I had repeatedly declared that the collaborative inquiry process was not therapy, despite my having a professional background as a therapist. Ramvi (2010), a therapist, highlights that something can have therapeutic elements without strictly being therapy. The FWS reminded me that while I might be aware of the distinction of me as researcher and me as therapist the teacher might not. The dilemma I faced was how to work with the transference. It was a matter of continually making sure my perception of my role and the teacher's perception of my role were in alignment and to reiterate the offer of referral to the university affiliated psychologist. I constantly reflected on my emotional responses to this particular teacher's interaction throughout the fieldwork and the potential for counter-transference, such as me working with the teacher as

though they were a client or patient. When the collaborative inquiry sessions were coming to an end I reflected with the FWS, as follows:

Every time I mention the sessions coming to an end (in actual fact they can continue without me) [the teacher] seems to get a disturbed expression on their face. Now, whether this is because I am looking for disturbance or that there actually is disturbance I am not sure. ... The reason for me to think that there may be disturbance is that [the teacher] has expressly stated on several occasions that the collaborative inquiry sessions are like therapy. ... [The teacher] has often talked about having difficulty connecting with peers in the past due to [a particular event] and that they often felt like an outsider. At the discussion of ending the sessions I wonder whether it raises feelings of losing something that they are currently within (on the inside) (*Jean*, Journal 24/3/2015).

The FWS and I went on to discuss the delicateness of ending working relationships. I was reminded of a previous situation working with adult clients as an Educational and Support Counsellor. Over some time, I had built working relationships with a group of clients but eventually left that role to pursue another employment opportunity. To make matters more difficult, there was no one to hand my clients over to because the organisation planned not to replace me. I had to just end their sessions. At the time, I felt terribly guilty because I knew what the work meant for those clients. I realised this could be the reason I was sensitive to 'seeing' disturbance at the thought of ending the sessions and noted in my journal:

I discussed all of this with the FWS who shared some experiences from her own professional life, which in some ways mirrored mine. I realised that the feelings of sadness and guilt are the normal path of ending work with a client. In some ways because I had never expressed the feelings of my previous experience at [my previous workplace] to anyone, I had carried that grief and sadness with me. Even though, I knew that I had done all that I could and had acted appropriately given the circumstances, I had not forgiven myself, and discussing this with the FWS allowed me to realise that I needed to (*Jean*, Journal 24/3/2015).



The FWS had made me realise that there was a dilemma of transference and counter-transference. I had counter-transferred the teacher perceiving me as a therapist by seeing the teacher as a client. This highlighted the fear of researcher reciprocity and building trust because I was unable to trust myself. Not to say that issues of transference, counter-transference and researcher reciprocity need to be avoided. The knowledge of these feelings and my narrative of the past driving my present behaviour gave me the agency to move forward in this tricky space.

## 6.2 Transcription

All interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions with teachers were audio recorded, totalling 33 hours. I transcribed the two pilot interviews by repeatedly playing and replaying audio files intending to type them verbatim. I wanted to use the pilot interview transcripts to practice thematic coding. I have already outlined that I was on the lookout for emotional themes but I was also open to other themes emerging. Clandinin (2013, p.107) described how she played the audio recordings while rereading the transcripts 'initially to ensure accuracy of the words but also to metaphorically put myself back into the feelings I had during the first conversation'. In addition, Hollway (2009) emphasises that the meaning behind the words lies in the quality of what was spoken. When I started to code the transcripts, while again listening to the audio, I realised that my transcription was laden with errors. Many errors were a forgotten word here or there but others were sentences completely transposed, attributing speech to the wrong person, key words interchanged; for example, emotion and reflection. This then led me to consider external transcription. Drake (2010) distinguishes between a "scribe" and an "author":

A researcher in the position of 'scribe' rather than 'author' diminishes the text instead of enhancing it. But taking on the mantle of 'author' also means taking responsibility for expressing authorial understandings and theories that emerge as a result of a complex process involving other people.

(Drake 2010, p.96)

To personally transcribe or to employ a transcriptionist became an ethical issue. I felt that I was emotionally involved, as is obvious through the explanation of how the FWS supported my emotional work, and employing an external transcriptionist would limit the layer of emotional complexity. Poland (2008) reminds us that transcription is more than simple data management; it is a phase of initial interpretation that should be considered early in the process of analysis. The resulting transcripts lay the foundation for future analysis and therefore an external transcriptionist interpreted the interviews without having an emotional connection and personal investment other than completing them to a certain set of agreed standards and within an agreed timeframe. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement prior to commencement of transcription (see Appendix N).

Whether or not I transcribed the audio, the intention was to transcribe the pilot interviews verbatim. However, this was not the outcome. It should be noted that filler words such as “um”, “ah” and “yeah”, were included in the pilot transcripts. When it came to coding the raw data it was noted, even at the pilot interview stage, that the filler words interfered with rather than aided the interpretation process. The pilot interviews raised the question of whether to transcribe verbatim or whether the transcription should support the interpretation of the meaning behind what is spoken. I decided to have the transcriptions non-verbatim; that is, not to include filler words. This decision was also made because of the ethical implications of publishing verbatim transcripts, which can appear incoherent and provide a false representation of the person or people speaking (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2007; Poland 2008).

### **6.3 Analysis**

I began analysing the transcripts while conducting the fieldwork. Although an open and holistic approach to emotion was central to my analysis I initially began with a thematic analysis, which Hollway and Jefferson (2013) warns runs the risk of fragmenting the experience. Themes are the repeated statements, phrases and words discoverable when a saturation point is reached in the

collected research texts and no new themes materialise (Firmin 2008; Ryan & Bernard 2003). I am not suggesting that the resulting themes are a discrete set of emotions that all teachers feel, or even a discrete set of emotions that the specific teachers that participated in the research felt. What anyone feels at one particular moment is far too complex to reduce to a single theme or even a cluster of themes. These data enable me to merely scrape the surface.

As per Table I in Appendix O, 33 emotional themes were finally coded, where a code is described by Saldaña (cited in Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014, p.72) as, 'most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data'. These codes or words allow the complex — in this instance emotion — to be spoken about (Barrett 2006). The themes are a way of discussing the emotional experience of the teachers that participated in the research. They were not questioned about specific emotions. They were asked how they felt at the time of the story they were recounting or how they felt about the story they were recounting at the time of the conversation. Kohler Riessman and Speedy (2007) suggest combining a narrative approach with thematic analysis is typical in therapeutic focused research with which this research shares similarities.

The themes naturally emerged from the many conversations with the teachers. A natural implication of the narrative approach is that the teachers needed to talk at length to tell their stories. From the mass of text that was collected 'some selection [of the conversation was] absolutely necessary' (Kohler Riessman & Speedy 2007, p.9). What has been presented in this thesis has been carefully chosen to convey the interpretations of the research while protecting the identity of the teachers. For example, I could have explored codes such as male or female, which would have made the chances of identifying the two male participants easier.

The considered choices I made about the ways in which fragments of stories were coded and categorised also meant that the 33 emotional themes emerged

from an initial 54 codes, which can be seen in Table II in Appendix P where some codes are clustered.

I used NVivo (NVivo 2015) software to help manage the data. Before coding each transcript, I read back over the associated reflexive journal entries which reconnected me to the relationships that developed between the teachers and me (Hollway 2009). In the first round of coding I already had a sense of what the teachers were telling me but I wanted to remain very open to what else might emerge. I started off with no predetermined codes. I was looking for emotion codes specifically and if it was not emotion related then I started to allocate other types of codes, such as 'physical reaction' or 'gender'. Every spoken word was coded in some way and, in some cases, many ways. When using NVivo I could drag and drop the text into a code group. I would usually connect a fragment of conversation to a code, rather than a single word or short sentence, to keep the context of what was being said. The code names were not necessarily observable in the information but were underlying what was being said (Saldaña 2013). A fragment of conversation could have been coded as both 'physical reaction' and 'gender' depending on the context of what was spoken.

By the second action research cycle I had categorised the 138 codes identified into eight categories and some had two or three levels of codes (see Table II in Appendix P): this means some codes were connected by becoming sub-codes or sub-sub-codes (Saldaña 2013). The categories were: 'activity', 'characteristics', 'emotion', 'money', 'pedagogy', 'position', 'reasoning', and 'time'. It was not surprising that the 'characteristics', 'emotion', 'pedagogy', 'position' and 'reasoning' categories emerged, given that the teachers were prompted to talk about themselves and their role in the school, their teacher practice, their emotional experiences at school and their reflective practice. 'Money' was not especially significant but 'time', particularly related to their history of teaching, was significant. The teachers talked a lot about what they did as teachers but not all of it was pedagogy related so the non-pedagogy related activity was captured in the 'activity' category, which became fairly significant.

At the end of the first-round coding, after all transcripts had been coded, I checked for any significance I could find. First of all, it was not surprising that the emotion category had a significant number of references because the collaborative inquiry process did focus on drawing out emotion. I then went through a second-round coding process of condensing the code list, which is how the emotions became clustered. I will explain the process more thoroughly in *Chapter Seven; Emotion*.

I was also not surprised that there were many references to 'activity' because it is fairly wide in scope and consumes much of life. Student-interactions and teacher-interactions were both also significant in the number of references, which is also not surprising because teachers interact often with either students or teachers while at work. The codes that interested me were 'limitations' with 179 references, 'control-power' with 117 references and 'assumption' with 123 references. There were other codes with a significant number of references, such as vocation, but I had explicitly asked questions related to vocation. I initially had not asked anything related to limitations, control/power or assumptions. I had a second look at those codes and compared them against all other codes, trying to find if they overlapped in some way and found that they significantly overlapped with each other. Furthermore, the 'expectations' code with 97 references also overlapped significantly. I then attempted to code a second time, the theme of each code emerged but there was a problem. A theme did not capture the connection between limitations, control/power, assumptions and expectations so I turned to narrative to capture the experience of the teachers and how limitations, assumptions, expectations and ideas of control/power, which actually became 'agency', impacted on their experiences.

## 6.4 Feedback interviews

Creswell and Miller (2000) define 'member checking' as a method by which research participants can clarify or dispute interpretations. This was the purpose of the feedback interviews that were audio recorded. Each teacher was given a summary of the interpretations related to their narrative found in *Chapter Eight*;

*The Struggle and Chapter Nine; Reframing the struggle.* It was a measure to strengthen the trustworthiness of the research and to give the teachers part ownership and authority over the research product. It was not a measure to determine validity because my interpretations are no more or less valid than the next person's, but likely to be different in any case. As Lather (1993, p.683) asserts: '[a]uthority comes from engagement and reflexivity'. I engaged the teachers in a reflexive discussion about my interpretations not simply to agree with me but to question me and to ensure that we collectively had the 'authority of experience'.

The process of analysis has ethical concerns regarding the trustworthiness of the project and resulting thesis. At the deepest level, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) suggest that what needs to be avoided is self-delusion. It would have been easier for me not to confront the difficult emotions I experienced throughout the fieldwork. It would have been much easier not to conduct feedback interviews and to write my analysis based on the themes of agency, assumption, expectation and limitation through the coding I was already in the process of doing, and not turn to a narrative approach. I'm sure I could have deluded myself into writing up something that could work; for example, 'teachers are bound by limitations, expectations and assumptions'. But I found myself asking 'and so what?' I needed something else to draw out how limitations, assumptions and expectations intersect in the lived experiences of the teachers. I needed to understand my own feelings in relation to the stories shared and those that shared them and to check that my interpretation of these experiences was fair to those that lived them. The analysis is the crux of this project and with ethical dilemmas abounding, ethics really is everything.

## **PART THREE**

### **The collaboration**

## Chapter 7

### Emotion: from pleasure to unpleasure

My thematic analysis has attempted to gain a sense of the emotions that were significantly experienced by the teachers involved in this research. The initial part of the chapter explains how the emotions discussed became a list of eight; *defeat, frustration, worry, anger, sadness, contentment, happiness and love*. The details of how many times each emotion was referenced can be seen in Table 7.1. What this chapter is looking at is the eight emotions in a holistic sense. I could have drawn on many quotes highlighting, for example, frustration in isolation to other emotions but I have chosen — rather than illustrate distinct emotional responses — to consider emotion as constellations within a complexity of self/other. For example, frustration, anger and defeat were often clustered together and typically experienced in a relational domain.

There were limitations to thematic analysis because it can give a sense of what the teachers' explicitly state, but it is harder to capture what is implied. In other words, what was predominantly conscious for the teachers was explicitly expressed, but emotion does not always operate at a conscious level. This is evidenced in the 'love' section where there were obvious limitations on expressing love. Nonetheless, the process allowed me to gain a sense of eight significant emotions in relation to the underlying *emotional rules* and each other. This chapter outlines the discovery and interplay of these emotional rules, and how they influence the professional lives and agency of the teachers involved in the project. It argues that a natural balance between pleasure and unpleasure is struck but that the emotional rules set limits that interfere with the balance and need to be interrogated further.

There were 51 emotions discussed in the 33 hours of conversation with the teachers. Eight emotions have been selected for discussion in this chapter. The enormity and the range of emotions experienced by the teachers were evident, similar to Winograd's (2003) findings.



There are many emotions and even more words to describe them. Some emotions are only subtly different and if you were to interchange them in a sentence, the meaning would not necessarily change. This was the basis on which emotions were deemed similar, and the 51 emotions were compared by similarity. When a similarity was suspected the coding for the two emotions was compared and if there was significant overlap then the emotions were grouped together. For example, 'defeat', 'overwhelmed' and 'hard' were used to describe a similar feeling. 'Worried', 'anxious' and 'tense' were used to describe a similar feeling. Or 'fun' and 'enjoyment' were used to describe a similar feeling. The 51 emotions then became 33 (see *Code chart* in Appendix P).

Once the emotions were grouped together they were ranked by the number of sources in which they were mentioned and then by how many times they were referenced (see *Series of emotion* in Appendix O). The eight emotions discussed in this chapter, which can be seen in Table 7.1 below, were selected based on, firstly, how many sources in which they were mentioned and, secondly how many times they were referenced throughout the fieldwork. A source represents a one-hour long conversation that was either a background interview, a debrief interview, or a collaborative inquiry session. In the background or debrief interviews the teachers were not prompted to talk about specific emotions or specific emotional experiences. They spoke about emotion as it flowed naturally to them.

Emotion	Source	References
Defeat	31	302
Contentment	29	122
Frustration	23	88
Worry	23	86
Anger	21	80
Sadness	20	59
Happy	20	40
Love	17	33

**Table 7.1** Eight notable emotions

In the group collaborative inquiry sessions one teacher would offer a critical incident to discuss and a set of emotions related to it would be described. Due to the nature of the collaborative inquiry cycle the teachers that did not recount a critical incident were prompted to discuss an emotional experience similar to the critical incident that was initially shared, leading to a similar set of emotions becoming unveiled, rather than an emotional experience that was significant to them at the time of a collaborative inquiry session. There were reasons for this part of the collaborative inquiry process, which is discussed in *Chapter Ten; Reflexivity*. Being prompted to discuss a similar critical incident occurred in all 21 collaborative inquiry sessions. Even when the sessions were one-to-one between me and a recounting teacher, I was then prompted to share stories with a similar emotional experience. For example, in a particular conversation a teacher recounted a critical incident where they were left feeling really ‘annoyed’ and as though their ‘buttons had been pushed’, and then afterwards the non-recounting teachers referenced anger eleven times, which is detailed in Table 7.2 below. A pattern of emotional dialogue would emerge influencing the representation of the set of emotions discussed in that one session. So anger was counted once in the source rather than counting each of the repetitions.

1	Annoyed	T1
2	Fly off the hook	T2
3	Angry	T3
4	Generates conflict	T2
5	Aggressive	T3
6	Aggressive	T3
7	Angry	T3
8	What the hell?	T3
9	Unfair (unjust/on edge)	T2
10	Frustration (strong)	Jean
11	Push my buttons	T1
12	Mad	T1
13	Piss me off	T1
14	Angry	T3
15	Mad	T1
16	Anger	T3

**Table 7.2** Collaborative inquiry session sample of anger references

The eight emotions discussed were selected because they were mentioned in over half of the sources. That means they were emotions discussed across over half of the 33 interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions with both Group One and Group Two teacher groups. The eight emotions listed in order of significance from the study were: 1) defeat, 2) contentment, 3) frustration, 4) worry, 5) anger, 6) sadness, 7) happiness and 8) love. While I have clustered some of the original 51 emotions I have not clustered others that may appear to have an overlap. For example, frustration and anger overlap but anger is typically more intense than frustration and frustration may also contain an element of sadness (Turner 2009). Clustering frustration with anger would have ignored an important nuance that becomes clearer subsequently.

These eight emotions are grouped further into pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions. Though the chapter is titled, 'emotion: from pleasure to unpleasure', I

discuss the emotions from unpleasure to pleasure. There is a reason for this order and the discrepancy which will become clear throughout the chapter.

Much of the conversation focused on specific emotion came from the background and debrief interviews where the teachers were prompted to talk about their professionally related emotional experiences. I have used the knowledge of the content derived from background and debrief interviews compared to the collaborative inquiry sessions to gain an understanding of teacher's prompted responses as opposed to emotional talk that arose naturally in conversation in the collaborative inquiry sessions. One perspective provides a view of what the teachers are consciously aware of in relation to their emotional work and the other gives a view of what lies beneath the surface.

The collaborative inquiry group of teachers was small and not all of the sessions were whole group sessions so the identity of the teachers needs to be protected from the other teacher collaborators. If I were to use the previously allocated pseudonyms, the teacher collaborators who may read this document could possibly connect some of the following quotes, that were shared in confidence, to the stories shared in *Chapter Eight; The Struggle*. So, to protect the critical incidents being matched up with the quotes in this chapter the pseudonyms have been omitted altogether here. Instead, teachers are named as T1, T2, T3 and so on. Each subsequent quote from a teacher is numbered T1a, T1b, T1c and so on. T1 in one section is not necessarily the same teacher as in the next section. For example, T1 in the *Defeat* section is not the same teacher as T1 in the *Frustration* section. So T1, T2, T3 and so on do not consistently represent a single teacher. Each teacher has been quoted fairly evenly in this chapter; Chris, Drew, Jordan and Terry seven times, Ash six times and Alex five times.

## 7.1 Unpleasurable emotions

The unpleasurable emotions encompass defeat, frustration, worry, anger and sadness. Defeat is perhaps an odd word to use as an emotion. I could have used 'despair' as in when '... we have no hope of relief, we speak of 'despair''

(Darwin cited in Brenner 1974b, p.542). Or I could have used 'shame' because shame is tied up in the vulnerability of a struggle (Kaufman 1974; Turner 2009). Or, I could have used 'humiliation' as a shame of sorts (Gerson 2011). The reason I used defeat is that, more than the other words, it emphasises the ongoing struggle which seemed to be central to the conversations that were had. This section highlights the significance that the feeling of defeat, threatening defeat to feeling defeated, has on the teachers' work.

### **7.1.1 Defeat**

The teachers rarely used the word 'defeat'. Other words were used such as 'overwhelmed', 'challenged', 'overworked', 'difficult', 'fight' and 'hard'. Hard is a word not normally used in terms of emotion but its use here is a feeling of something being too hard, harder or simply too much. Other phrases were also used such as: 'run down' or 'falling apart'. With these words or phrases defeat was referenced 302 times throughout the fieldwork including all of the collaborative inquiry sessions. The feeling of defeat has been discussed along a continuum and central to this feeling is a struggle of sorts. At one end of the continuum is the battle being fought and almost being won, but a struggle nonetheless. Somewhere in the mid-range of the continuum is a feeling of holding ground or of losing ground in the struggle. At the opposite end of the continuum is the battle being lost — defeat to defeated. The quotes below highlight the continuum.

I actually found two things helped me. One was living with uncertainty... Making uncertainty my friend ... But the second thing is [knowing] ... a healthy individual has those struggles (*T1a*).

This first quote shows that there was a struggle that T1 was endeavouring to overcome and 'two things' helped in that struggle. Defeat threatened but was fought off. Also, the quote indicates recognition that 'struggling' is inherent in living. T2a and T3a are quotes demonstrating a tougher struggle that is 'difficult' or requires 'hard work'. The threat of defeat is stronger but the teachers continue to endeavour

some students that just don't want a relationship take a lot of time and, you have to consciously adopt different strategies to work with them and think about what you did wrong or what you did right. With a lot of students, it does take a lot of extra work (*T2a*).

He [staff member] drives me mental. He's a drama queen ... we don't get along at all. I find him mean spirited and petty, he's just difficult to work with. He's very difficult to work with so I just try and have not much to do with him at all (*T3a*).

T4a and T5a signal a struggle that is turning from endeavour to battle and is leaving the teachers feeling more defeated, rather than defeat threatening. There is little left to endeavour toward. T4a declares 'hate' for the battle and T5a states that they 'don't know how' to win.

when you get kids that you just can't get that rapport with, it's like I really hate it when they're not listening, they can't concentrate in class, that's a reasonable challenge (*T4a*).

I'm having more work time than everything else ... I usually spend between four to six hours each day and the weekends, that's Saturday and Sunday, for marking. If it's bad it'll be 10 hours ... I usually have to work in the holidays as well ... But I've done a little bit more this year and I think it was too much ... I totally overworked myself and I was totally run down ... I've got to try and cut down but I don't know how (*T5a*).

This last quote flags the feeling of complete defeat. The battle is lost. However, T6a's narrative suggests there may be another battle to fight on another day and so there is hope for the future.

I wouldn't say I get angry in class. I don't think angry is the right word for it but I feel defeated sometimes when it doesn't go as I planned and I'll have something that I think is great and then it just doesn't — it falls apart in your hands and then you can see it falling apart and you know it's falling apart and

it makes you feel really defeated that you're not there yet [at the place where the lesson doesn't fall apart] (T6a).

Defeat in relation to teacher-student interaction featured most in the background interviews and defeat related to workload also featured significantly but not as much. Experiencing the feeling of defeat within teacher-teacher interactions did also occur, though mostly in the one-to-one collaborative inquiry sessions, suggesting that there is hesitation to talk about defeat and the related difficulty regarding teaching peers with other teaching peers. Though, it also suggests that there is difficulty among teaching peers that the teachers deemed worth discussing.

The feeling of defeat was not generally articulated well as an emotion. It was described most often but not often named. It is an emotion associated with life's struggles and as mentioned earlier is intimately connected to despair, humiliation and shame. The vocabulary around these feelings is limited (Kaufman 1974). When someone is left feeling defeated and humiliated there is a 'constriction in the capacity to utilize [sic] the informative power about experience made possible by thoughtful reflection...' (Gerson 2011, p.526). The feeling becomes disconnected with the thought. Unpleasure stimulated by a failing to meet expectations is most likely to evoke repression because the shame, or defeat, is an attack on the self and is particularly painful to tolerate (Turner 2009).

### **7.1.2 Frustration**

This first quote emphasises frustration in relation to pedagogy. This is highlighted because in all the dialogue about the emotion of frustration this is the only example of a link to pedagogy. All others are linked to behaviour or even more specifically relationships.

I feel frustrated because I have lovely EAL [English as an additional language] kids coming in, they've only been in the country for six months and I'm asking them to write — first of all they have to learn these brand-new terms to do with

[the subject] then they have to be able to use them ... It's so frustrating. I just feel at the moment — I can't cater for a lot of them (T1a).

So, teachers' work itself, as in the act of teaching, has not been highlighted as a source of frustration throughout the conversations in the fieldwork. Frustration was typically clustered with other emotions, such as anger and defeat featured in many of the following quotes. In the background interviews teachers talked about frustration in reference mostly to teacher-student interaction, as shown in the two quotes below:

Definitely frustration. You just think 'why can't I get this kid on my side?' Sometimes you want to give up on that student but you know you can't. So, it's really hard. So yeah, probably frustration and anger is a big one (T2a).

I've got this Year 12 student and I don't know what it is, and I feel really bad saying it, but I really find him quite an unlikeable student. ... I have to force myself to start a relationship with him ... he's so annoying ... — something was going on in my brain and I'm just going "arghh" just seeing red (T3a).

Both of the above quotes also highlight a struggle. In T2a there is a sense that the struggle is frustrating and defeat threatens so much that the teacher feels like giving up, which spurs angry feelings. T3a follows a similar pattern where the struggle is frustrating and the teacher 'forces' themselves to battle against their feelings, leading to "arghh" and 'seeing red' which has been interpreted as 'anger'. In the collaborative inquiry sessions frustration was also discussed in relation to teacher-teacher interactions as can be seen in the quotes below:

I had a meeting with the [subject department] ... we need to choose something that we all like, and I guess I was just really frustrated that I gave them options ... two weeks ago and they haven't even looked at them, let alone read them. ... It's really annoying because I am the only one who did the prep work for that meeting (T4a).

... so, we've got people jumping up and down, getting really angry and frustrated saying they did this to me last year — they took a period away and



everyone gets very protective of their 'pie.' The pie of the subjects being taught. ... I used to get really, really angry and frustrated and get documents and proof and things like that and then do the whole thing [address issue with relevant others], whether it's a conversation or whatever, I wouldn't sleep. And it would affect me, I'd be angry and frustrated (*T1b*).

So, when first questioned about typical emotions experienced in teacher practice, the teachers were conscious of experiencing the emotion of frustration mostly in reference to teacher-student interaction but in the collaborative inquiry sessions they also often discussed frustration in relation to teacher-teacher interactions. Despite the above examples, it is not being suggested that the teachers mostly experienced frustration in reference to teacher-teacher interaction, only that frustration in teacher practice exists within both teacher and student interaction and not significantly within one more than the other.

The final examples show a clear link between defeat and frustration at the 'defeated' end of the spectrum. Even though there is an underlying sense of defeat rather than a threat of a defeat, both teachers use this knowledge to gain agency. Defeat is implied through statements that suggest a battle or struggle. For example, 'smash against the brick wall', or 'well no, I'm going to continue' and 'I will try'. The consciousness of their emotions impacts on the teachers and how they act. For example, I know I will feel heartbreak and frustration but that is because I care and I wish to care.

I think we reach a point where you feel like you can only smash against the brick wall for so long and then you stick to the path with the least resistance. You know, the path that you know that's worked with them. I think that's probably not the best because that's when the kids' learning will suffer (*T3b*).

'I've often reflected that if I get a bit frustrated or angry I don't need to say that that's not valid either because there's an element of me that says "well no, I'm going to continue to have high expectations of them". I will try to use my emotional reaction as a signal to me that there's more steps to take for example, I've got to change strategies because they're not meeting my

expectations, I've got to not lower my expectations, but lay a longer path (T5a).

These two quotes show a level of consciousness of the teachers' emotions and signal a limitation. There is a sense that the frustration is expected to be tolerated but that there is a limit to how much frustration can be tolerated and so a change has to be made. The recognition of emotion has impacted on the teachers and how they act. Agency is being employed to manage the struggle — to keep the defeat at bay. For example, in T3b the recognition of frustration potentially becoming overwhelming cues the teacher to manage the threat with taking a 'path of least resistance'. T5a 'validates' the emotion of frustration and uses it as a cue to signal they need to 'lay a longer path'.

Anger has featured throughout discussion of frustration. For example, the statement, 'I used to get really angry and frustrated' in T1b. '[I]n layman's terms these two words [anger and frustration] may be associated with different emotional states yet may be difficult to distinguish from a theoretical and empirical viewpoint' (Keller et al. 2014). Likewise, they may also be difficult to distinguish in life though the teachers repeatedly use both side by side. This need to distinguish could be due to social and cultural influence. The emotional rule that teachers '...become angry with children infrequently...' (Winograd 2003, p.1645) and use '...appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters...' (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015b, p.3), perhaps prevents teachers from acknowledging anger independently of frustration because frustration is more acceptable. Sutton's (2007) findings were similar when teachers were prompted to comment on their emotional experiences in the classroom; frustration was more notable than anger because the teachers believed anger was detrimental to their work and needed to be hidden.

### **7.1.3 Worry**

Worry was discussed in the background interviews mostly related to teacher-student interaction with a focus on managing relationships. Other synonyms for worry were 'anxious', 'stressed' and 'panicked'. Very rarely was worry

commented on in relation to workload or pedagogy. The teachers were free to talk about worry in the one-to-one sessions and the group collaborative inquiry sessions. Though, in the one-to-one sessions they talked fairly evenly about worry in reference to both teacher-teacher interactions and teacher-student interactions, and in the group sessions they mostly discussed worry in relation to teacher-student interactions.

Much of the discussion that centred on worry included a query about boundary or limitation; whether a line has been crossed, either by a student, teaching peer or the teacher. Also, worry was typically clustered with defeat and fear.

Interestingly, fear was not mentioned at all in the background interviews but was discussed in over half of the collaborative inquiry sessions. When fear was noted it was often clustered with worry and also often minimised as highlighted in the following quotes.

...fear's the word maybe. Maybe it is in terms of "Do I really want to fight this fight?"... I wonder what their opinions of me are going to be if I'm standing up for this (*T1a*).

When you see how someone might make a gesture, like holding their head, their temple like this [making a gun to the head gesture] ... "Oh, you're stressing people out" and then you feel more defensive ... at that point sometimes a bit of anxiety, a bit of fear, creeps in. I mean, don't get me wrong, this is on a social level we're talking about rather — I'm not saying that [two colleagues] are actually threatening one another (*T2a*).

I never want to admit it — to the students, but I think it's not so much a fear — I'm not worried about her hitting me or anything. Like she could if she wanted to, I wouldn't do anything back but I think that it's more fear about, just that I — it's way beyond my control (*T3a*).

The above three quotes all highlight fear in connection with worry and defeat. In each quote the fear is minimised. For example, in *T1a* the teacher says 'fear's the word maybe' not wanting to commit to 'fear'. In *T2a* the teacher talks about

a threatening hand gesture and then down plays it as a non-threatening 'social' interaction. T3a features the teacher stating, 'it's not so much fear' in relation to the threat of being hit.

Fear would be quite a normal and reasonable response to potentially being hit but not only does the teacher not want to admit fear to the students, they also do not want to admit it to themselves. This is not to say that the teacher's account is incorrect, just that there is a certain amount of incongruity between the teacher's statements in this regard. The incongruity fits with Hollway and Jefferson's (2013, p.11) research into the fear of crime, where what is deemed socially rational impacted on the understandings of fear. For example, it was considered that women fearing crime was irrational because they fell within a category of being least at risk of crime. However, the crime discourse within society positions a woman as vulnerable; therefore a woman being afraid might be considered rational. The reverse is happening in this captured experience for the teacher. The teacher is expressing that they were not afraid because that would make them emotionally neutral and 'the teacher' discourse dictates that teachers need to be in control of their students and remain emotionally neutral. So, fearing a student might be seen as irrational for a teacher who has control of the student.

There is an invisible line or limit that is potentially crossed in each statement. For example, in T1a the teacher asks themselves, 'if I'm standing up for this' will I have crossed a limit? In T2a the teacher is outlining worry over a communication that has potentially crossed a social limit and in T3a the teacher is worrying over a physical boundary that could be crossed. Potentially the breakdown of these three limits may threaten defeat or complete defeat. In T1a the defeat threatens in that opinions of the teacher may be compromised but the teacher is endeavouring regardless. For T2a defeat lies in fear and worry creeping in and needs a defence so the teacher is locked in a battle. In T3a the defeat lies in the teacher feeling powerless and losing the battle. The defeat in T2a and T3a is not a case of acceptance of defeat which comes with failure, but more in alignment with vulnerability. Worry and defeat were often intimately

connected because the feelings of defeat were in relation to the struggle that was worrisome.

#### **7.1.4 Anger**

I have already discussed anger in relation to frustration and defeat and in the next section it is discussed with sadness.

Similar to frustration, in the background interviews when the teachers were prompted to comment on their emotional experiences, anger was mostly attributed to teacher-student interactions. Also, similar to frustration is that in the collaborative inquiry sessions, when conversation on emotion was unprompted, anger was discussed in relation to teacher-student and teacher-teacher interactions but was mostly restricted to the one-to-one sessions. Anger was not discussed as much in the group sessions. The quote below highlights the struggle to keep angry feelings hidden:

I try to keep my anger to myself but sometimes you do have to yell at a student if they are doing the wrong thing but, yeah, I just sort of try and have a conversation with that student (*T1a*).

To highlight the hesitation to talk about angry feelings, when the first collaborative inquiry group came together after having the one-to-one sessions, they were invited to share a critical incident and one of the teachers stated that they had a critical incident describing it as a 'clear jerk one'. The way the teacher said 'jerk' it was obvious the incident was loaded with anger. Then the teacher paused and said, 'I'm not sure', which I took to mean that they were not sure about sharing the incident so I asked, 'do you have concerns about discussing it in this forum?' The teacher nodded in agreement.

#### **7.1.5 Sadness**

Other words were used to express sadness, for example, 'disappointment', 'misery' and 'sympathy'. There were also actions such as crying that were taken

as a signal of sadness. Similar to other emotions discussed, most of the discussion around sadness in the background interviews was in relation to teacher-student interaction but in the collaborative inquiry sessions more discussion of sadness featured teacher-teacher interaction. Nevertheless, across all the fieldwork a sense of sadness was overwhelmingly in relation to students and unlike some of the other emotions it was more easily discussed in the one-to-one and group sessions.

The next example highlights a situation where the teacher was talking about a student that had been physically abused at home and as a result began living on the streets. The school had followed appropriate protocol by engaging the necessary authorities but the teacher recounted how:

I remember going into the Principal's office and being like, "what can I do?" And she looks at me and she goes, "you cannot take him home, you cannot give him your phone number, you can keep the boundaries that I can clearly see you want to cross right now". So that was difficult and then I cried over him a lot. There are the days that you come home crying (*T1a*).

This quote highlights a link between defeat and sadness. The teacher felt defeated in the attempt to support the student but it also shows the intimacy that develops between teachers and students. This is where feelings of love, care and affection can be clustered with sadness and defeat. The following quotes also display a constellation of sadness and defeat with love:

I don't punish a lot of students, but I think it's almost like a motherly expectation that I want them to do well and it's more like I'm disappointed if they don't ... I feel like they really respect me, so it's more like they don't want to disappoint me than they don't want to get in trouble (*T2a*).

Yeah, extremely disappointing. [These particular students] love [the subject] and I thought I would give them an opportunity to miss out on [other] classes but also do something productive and they let me down (*T3a*).

T2a talks about a ‘motherly expectation’ and T3a describes being ‘extremely disapoint[ed]’ in the students. Both quotes emphasise the relationship between teacher and student: ‘they really respect me’ and ‘they let me down’. Love is apparent through the importance of the attachment. In T3a the element of care emerges as the teacher gives the students the opportunity to do something they love. All of the above quotes highlight ‘giving’ in a way. By T2a withholding punishment something more nurturing is given. The sadness then comes from a loss. What has been given has been tossed aside or there has been damage to the relationship. Even in T1a the teacher wants to give and the loss stems from not being able to give.

There was also some overlap between sadness, anger and defeat in the conversations, which is explored below. Anger and sadness co-existed at times, though each of the following examples highlights sadness through words such as disappointment and upset:

The [students] were walking past and I said, “hey girls, can we talk?” and they turned their shoulder and walked off. Then I confronted them about an hour after and I just said, “that’s not on” ... I was pretty mad, to be honest. I was still extremely disappointed in them (*T4a*).

‘I’ve gotten terribly, terribly upset [with administrative choices], spoken to people, and the comeback was “well, this is what’s been decided” — but it can’t be justified. Sometimes it can, I think it depends on who’s in administration ... But, when the year ends and that person’s gone, and there’s no evidence of that communication, suddenly people become quite bitter and angry (*T6a*).

There are signs of the battle throughout this section. In T1a the teacher asks, ‘what can I do?’, suggesting there is more that could be done and the battle is on. In T2a the teacher states ‘I want them to do well’, which is a struggle and frames the battle. In T4a the teacher states, ‘that’s not on’, suggesting they had been let down and a line had been crossed. The teacher was acting in a way to create a beneficial experience for the students and it failed. The teacher actually talks of a ‘confrontation’ — an actual battle — that needed to be fought

leaving them feeling defeated. In T5a the struggle is for justice and the teacher is trying to fight the battle but talks about being left feeling 'bitter and angry'. The bitterness may be the taste of defeat. So, sadness and defeat are closely linked because both are due to a loss or a threatening loss that could be a loss of something or losing the struggle, or both. The 'sometimes' anger that accompanies sadness and defeat might be a grief response. Grief is a type of sadness usually in response to a loss and often includes expressions of anger (Lazarus 1991).

While the teachers were fairly open about feelings of sadness among themselves when sharing their stories from the past, this does not mean that they were open about expressing sadness in their immediate lived experiences. For example:

[the student's poem] was really poignant and sweet and I read it and [I] burst into tears on the spot, well you know, you hide it but that was the impulse (T6a).

It is as though some distance was needed between when the feeling of sadness was first experienced and when it could be acknowledged or articulated. The teachers often talked about hiding their sadness in the classroom, consistent with an emotional rule that Winograd (2003, p.1645) stipulates where 'teachers are supposed to enjoy children [and] enjoy their work...'. Expressing sadness does not fit in this frame of teaching and the teachers have to employ a false self by either faking or hiding their emotions to meet the expectation.

## 7.2 Pleasurable emotions

Despite the collaborative inquiry sessions focusing on an experience on which the teachers were fixed, that was also usually anxiety provoking, a feeling of contentment still featured throughout the field work. Contentment was discussed across 29 of the 33 sources analysed and was featured, unprompted, in seventeen of the 21 collaborative inquiry sessions. This section highlights that pleasure and unpleasure not only co-exist but work together.



### 7.2.1 Contentment

Feelings of contentment were often conveyed in parallel with other pleasurable emotions such as happiness, joy or love but contentment remained distinguishable because it appears to be a base pleasure. It is required to make 'being' satisfying. Happiness and love are in a way nested in contentment. For example, to be happy you are also content. Happiness is another level beyond being simply satisfied. Love is more intense and conflicted than happiness because it is tied up with a relational attachment (Bowlby 2012; Winnicott 1969).

The teachers discussed contentment in relation to their work, teacher-student interactions and teacher-teacher interactions freely throughout the fieldwork. The teachers gave an impression of general contentment of their work as well as in the interactions with teachers and students, as highlighted in the following quotes: 'I really enjoy [teaching]. I find it really rewarding with different kids, I'm loving it' (T1a); and, 'I'd say that [I would have] a higher proportion of good [days compared to bad]' (T2a).

T1a also talks about the reward in teaching that goes hand in hand with good feelings and refers to love and happiness: 'I really enjoy [teaching]' refers to a sense of contentment and happiness, 'I find it really rewarding with different kids', refers to an effort that is rewarded and a sense of satisfaction. 'I'm loving it' suggests something beyond contentment and an attachment to 'it', which is perhaps the things to do with teaching, for example, the school, the subjects, the students. T2a hints that there is a balance of emotion at play between good feelings and bad feelings as well as a sense of effort to keep that balance in favour of teaching.

Most of the discussion on contentment featured, at least a hint of effort but often also featured a sense of endeavour and something more like a struggle. The following quote highlights a threat of defeat in managing a struggle, but a balance was achieved through particular support from 'staff that you have fun with'. Contentment stemmed from that support:

I will [engage in extra-curricular activities] but I decide whether I can beforehand. I was always very happy to [engage in extra-curricular activities] but also you're spending hours prepping for [events] and things like that, it makes it easier if you've got a group of people [staff] that you have fun with. So that helps (*T3a*).

The feeling of contentment was referenced 122 times, the second highest of the emotions coded. Interestingly, of all the emotions, defeat and contentment are not always consciously recognised emotions. About half of the discussion around contentment features comments like 'that helps' or 'that was good' or 'that makes it easier'; suggesting that the teachers were more consciously aware of the something that gave rise to the feeling rather than the possession of their feelings. For example, in *T3a* the teacher states, 'so that helps', in reference to a thing that helps, but the feeling of ease that comes with help is not mentioned. In *T4a* the teacher mentions 'drawing a line' to make 'more room', which acts as a support to 'like the job'. Most conversation in reference to contentment was typically clustered with a threat of defeat, suggesting that the equilibrium between defeat and contentment is the teachers' typical emotional state within their teacher practice. The teachers described attempts at maintaining a balance between the feeling of defeat and contentment, as illustrated in the following quotes:

About four weeks we're into term now, this is the fourth week, and I'm already waking up at night having trouble going back to sleep. It is the stress reaction, I've come to recognise it as that now and, you know, life really can just be full. You go home, [complete chores], settle down for the marking and planning and then hopefully you get to bed before 12.30am. Then you get up at 6am to do it all again. It's madness really. It's quite mad. I like the job but this is mad ... you just don't have room for anything extra ... we've got to draw a line around it at some point. So, I could sleep, let alone eat or God forbid, hug your [family] (*T4a*).

I know that in order to not burn out and for it to be sustainable you do have to find efficiencies, you know. And that's what I'm actually waiting for. That little

bit ... [of] efficiency to kick in but at the same time, I don't just want to be a body who just comes in (T5a).

T4a and T5a are both describing the teachers' consciousness of the feeling of defeat and the balance with contentment that is required. The expectation of teachers is high, as Bandura (cited in Tait 2008) asserts, with no room for defeat: '[E]fficacious teachers see difficult tasks as challenges rather than threats, heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of disappointment [and] attribute failure to insufficient effort ...'. T1a confirms Bandura's view because this teacher sees their work as a challenge, and if the challenge is met they feel rewarded. So, what happens when despite all effort a failure still results? Both T4a and T5a highlight how consciousness of the defeat impacts action to maintain the balance. T4a talks about 'drawing the line' and T5a talks about 'finding efficiencies'. Both are searching for a compromise, the balance, and are consciously aware of the search. The consciousness of defeat has allowed them to be proactive. A challenge is helpful to drive one forward but the attitude that a person could be 'perfect' and never falter is primed to lead to exhaustion and likely exaggerated 'imperfection' (Shapiro 2010). Acknowledging vulnerability is essential to maintaining a balance, which may tip from time to time despite best efforts. However, a lack of consciousness is only going to allow the balance to swing wildly and prevent the teacher from being agentic.

### **7.2.2 Happiness**

Feelings of happiness were expressed in relation to being a teacher but teachers also typically attributed happiness to teacher-student interaction or pedagogy, as the following quotes indicate:

I definitely feel happy a lot of the time in class, I just came out of that class feeling very happy and I think that comes a lot from the relationships with my students — they really make my day a lot of the time (T1a).

[When I have a good rapport with a student] I'm really happy with that student and they sort of feel comfortable with me as a teacher and they're doing the

right things in class, which is really good ... I'm usually pretty happy when I'm at work (T2a).

If I deliver a really, really great class I come out going "God I nailed that one" you know, and I'm really happy about it (T3a).

Happiness was not spoken about very much in the small group collaborative inquiry sessions. Table 7.3 shows when and how happiness was referenced. It was attributed to the experience of teaching in the background interviews. In the debrief interviews the teachers were mostly reflecting on the collaborative inquiry process and a potential future for the collaborative inquiry process and there was less reflection on teaching experience than in the background interview. There is a marked difference between happiness regarding teaching experience being referenced thirteen times in action research cycle one, zero times in action research cycle two and four times in action research cycle three. This pattern, I believe, is due to the evolution of the collaborative inquiry process. In action research cycle one the conversation was free flowing and less targeted. By 'targeted' I mean that in the second action research cycle, for reasons outlined in *Chapter Ten*, I had started to structure the sessions with specific questions to uncover the underlying origins of why the teachers were 'stuck' on the particular experience they chose to share. Happiness, like contentment, was not usually attributed to the incidents that teachers were stuck on as these were typically anxiety provoking, yet both were often mentioned, especially contentment. The above quotes clearly highlight a connection between teacher-student interactions but there was not a great deal of crossover between teacher-teacher interactions and the feelings of happiness.

Happiness regarding:	Background Interview	Action Research Cycle One	Action Research Cycle Three	Debrief Interview
a teaching experience	10	13	4	1
life in general		2		
other's happiness		3		2
the collaborative inquiry process		2		2

**Table 7.3** References of happiness

Happiness was also often discussed simultaneously with a feeling of defeat. The next two quotes provide examples of defeat combined with happiness, or alternatively, being ‘chuffed’. The two quotes outline a situation where the feeling of defeat threatened, but happiness wins out:

I always want kids to succeed and if there's ways that I can differentiate tasks, then [students] can see that's my job, to make it happy for them and happy for me because it's really hard to work with someone who says “No, no, no, no, no” [I can't do this], it's just too negative (*T4a*).

‘[Involvement in an extra-curricular event] was a bit of an emotional toll but I feel I went pretty well. There was one day I was particularly flat-lining but I still encouraged them on and kept a smiley face and saying “Just keep going”, “this is so great”, so I'm pretty chuffed. I still kept that up’ (*T5a*).

In *T4a* the teacher is highlighting the threat of feeling defeated if the students are not happy and are too negative, so part of their struggle is to do what they can to make sure defeat does not take hold. Similarly, the *T5a* quote shows that the teacher accepted the emotional toll, and the experience of flat-lining, and because they survived the struggle they were happy with how they had managed. While the above examples intermingle happiness and defeat, the comment below demonstrates two very similar instances, yet still separate,

where one holds defeat and the other holds happiness. In this case both emotions, defeat and happiness counteract each other. In a way, the happiness cancels out the defeat, which is not to say the resulting emotion is neutral but that the defeat is not as overwhelming as it might have been if not balanced by happiness.

[Two students] are definitely not going to pass. I'd like them to but they've bombed their attendance, I can't pass them just on attendance now, and they've failed too many of the assessment tasks. Whereas there was one [student] sitting on the edge, who's recovered their performance now, and I'm stoked about that (T6a).

Interestingly where the relationship between contentment and the threat of defeat seemed more aligned with support from others such as 'having a group of people that you have fun with' or being given 'more room'; the relationship between happiness and defeat seems to be more aligned with personal agency. Happiness seems more connected with the teachers' personal success in surviving the struggle, whereas contentment was connected with a relief that they, one way or another, survived the struggle. So perhaps a sense of defeat is felt more strongly when support from others is required, regardless of whether or not they survived and less so when support from others does not feature as highly.

A condition of being human is being in constant conflict, which we negotiate through compromises (Brenner 2002). Some of these compromises were highlighted in the *Contentment* section, where the teachers 'drew lines' around their time or workload or 'found efficiencies' to make things work. This section also highlights that the teachers maintained a greater sense of pleasure when they achieved success personally rather than being supported to survive. When someone is compelled to act or feel in a certain way due to external expectations or limitations, their intrinsic compromises are manipulated and conflict is exacerbated (Hochschild 2012). When the teachers were faced with a struggle and they demonstrated agency then their reward was pleasurable feelings such as happiness. When they were faced with a struggle and their

agency was limited, yet they consciously desired to be agentic, pleasurable feelings were compromised and an opening was left for defeat.

### 7.2.3 Love

Love was discussed throughout the sessions. The following extracts mostly feature the word 'love' but they also feature comments that are related to 'care' or 'affection', which are other ways of discussing loving feelings towards something or someone. The target of the loving feelings was both human and non-human. Loving feelings towards people or a person were only discussed in the one-to-one collaborative sessions or background or debrief interviews and in most of these the people were students. The non-human items, such as a subject, the act of teaching or the school, were discussed more than people in relation to love. Loving feelings were explicitly talked about least of the pleasurable feelings reported in this analysis. For example; 'I love, I love my [subject] class ... I, love the day when I've got them' (*T1a*); and 'I really got along with my [subject] teachers at school and I loved [the subject] so it's just been a passion of mine since I was younger (*T2a*).

Loving feelings were only referenced twice in the small group collaborative sessions and both examples were in relation to non-human items; for example, 'I love that sweet moment' or 'I'd love to [do something]'.

I have also shown how loving feelings such as care or affection can be clustered with sadness and defeat, particularly with reference to teacher-student interactions. The examples below feature love as being threatened in reference to non-human items. With a threat comes a struggle and again the struggle is to strike a balance so that threat does not reach the point where it is overwhelming and the teacher is left completely defeated. In these examples, however, the ability to overcome the struggle is not always the teacher's. In *T3a* the timetabling depends on the action of another, in *T4a* the contract renewal also depends on the action of another. All three comments have been placed along a continuum from a threat of defeat to being defeated, which is evident in *T5a*.

[The school is] not offering [my subject] next year and ... it's playing politics with who's got control with the timetabling and ... that's tough ... you can imagine that kind of power play with what you teach and what you love to teach and how you want to teach it (T3a).

I'd sort of fallen in love with this place. My role here; I'm a pretty optimistic, dynamic sort of person and I work well with others so I do a lot of good work with colleagues in my faculties. ... But, at the same time ... I was constantly just seeing [my contract renewed] by one term, one term, one term. And knowing that at the end of this year my contract will be up again ... it does add quite a bit of pressure (T4a).

I do love teaching the kids but ... this is just driving me crazy all this marking so it's going to be a nice release [losing a class] — just less work to do (T5a).

Love involves an attachment to something (Bowlby 2012; Winnicott 1969). Most of the above quotes use the word 'love' in relation to non-human items, which suggests that the teachers did not love their students, yet loving attachments are necessary to gain a sense of self through intersubjectivity (Frosh 2012a). In a teaching context, it is the attachment to others that builds a sense of self in relation to being a teacher (Riley 2009). What the teachers are highlighting here is that emotional rules are at play. Teachers are expected to act in a caring or loving way in relation to their work but they cannot express caring or loving feelings (Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006; Stebbins 2010). They could express care or love in a one-to-one session but not really in front of people with whom they work and not often in regard to the students, or even less likely the teachers they work alongside.

I argue that my not being able to grasp the love that the teachers felt for their students is a limitation of the thematic analysis. In *Chapter Eight; The struggle* and *Chapter Nine; Reframing the struggle* the unconscious or implied instances of the teachers' love for their students is explored through narrative inquiry. I have previously argued that it was understandable for happiness to be discussed less in the small group collaborative inquiry sessions in action



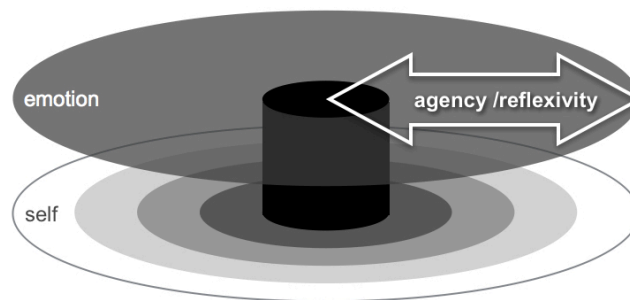
research cycle two and three because the critical incidents that teachers chose to share were anxiety provoking. The specific questioning kept the teacher focused on the emotions associated with the anxiety. Love does not fall into the same category as happiness because love can be as anxiety provoking as anger. Love is often more intense because it is also tied up with hate (Ramvi 2010). So, where happiness is absent for obvious reasons, love is absent without reason.

### 7.3 Emotional rules

As Zembylas (2007b, p. 62) explains, '[t]he reduction of emotion to emotion terms or concepts is highly problematic'. This chapter has shown that emotions come together in a complex web that is not easily fragmented. For example, multiple emotions are experienced simultaneously and the physical, expressed and experienced elements of emotion are also not easily separated (ibid). Yet, naming an emotion is not the same as defining an emotion, just like naming a person does not reduce a person to a word. However, naming an emotion is an important step for the teachers to take to provide ways of talking about their experience and reacquainting themselves with their own emotions, rather than seeing emotions as a separate component of themselves.

Rather than trying to define each separate emotion, this chapter emphasises that teachers are bound by unspoken emotional rules. The discrepancy between how teachers reported on their emotional experiences when prompted, compared to the emotional experiences that were naturally recounted, shed some light on the emotional limits and catalyst of emotion. For example, student interactions were considered the common catalyst of all of the emotions, aside from love. Yet in the stories shared through conversation teachers often spoke of teacher-teacher interactions also being a catalyst for those same emotions. Shapiro (2010, p.616) noticed teacher conversation was restricted to 'two main topics student misbehavior [sic] and reality television'. Likewise, when initially prompted teachers had restricted their conversation to the 'safe but shallow' norms (ibid). Emotion is an essential part of self and it is the emotional rules,

influenced by the collective and others, that in turn influence the way we act, as highlighted in Figure 7.1.



**Figure 7.1** The self and emotion that impacts on agency-reflexivity

Interestingly, love for teacher peers as well as for students was barely present in any conversation. It is understandable that teachers limit loving feelings or display for their students due to the social, political and cultural influences. For example, '[I]n their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or parent/carer' (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015b, p.2). The limited conversation about loving feelings toward teacher peers struck me as odd because I have developed many loving relationships with my teacher peers at each school at which I have worked. Some of the teachers I worked alongside also became close friends and have shared many significant moments of my lived experience. That is not to say that the six teachers who participated in this research must also have loving relationships with their teaching peers, but it might be a discrepancy worth further investigation. There was a continued lack of recognition in all the background interviews about the significance of teacher-teacher interactions in the teachers' work lives, even though for the duration of the field work teacher-teacher interaction was actually referenced more than teacher-student interaction.

The act of teaching did not appear to be a significant catalyst for emotion in either the background, debrief or collaborative inquiry sessions, which suggests that teachers feeling defeated by heavy workloads such as planning and assessment might not be as significant as negotiating relationships. Relationships seem to be a much stronger catalyst for feelings of defeat or the threat of defeat, than the act of teaching. The following is a list of emotional

rules that have been derived from analysis in this chapter. They are not definitive. I am not suggesting that all teachers are bound by these rules, but that the teachers with whom I conversed provided a sense of these rules:

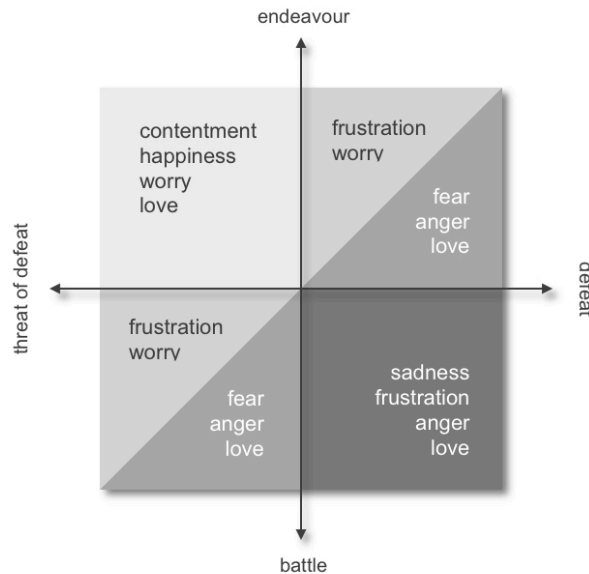
1. Frustration, worry, sadness and anger is evoked by student interactions;
2. Teachers should not feel or display fear;
3. Teachers should not display anger;
4. Teachers should not display sadness to students;
5. Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching, students and other teachers;
6. Happiness is evoked by the act of teaching and students;
7. Love is evoked by the act of teaching;
8. Teachers should not feel or display love for their students or other teachers; and
9. Defeat is inherent in teaching but must not be shown.

To uncover these rules is interesting in itself but is not the end of the story. It is the interplay of these rules and the significance of how they impact on the work lives and agency of the teachers that is of interest to this project. The analysis in this chapter can draw out the emotions that are hidden, but rules around which of these emotions are faked is much harder to detect, particularly when teachers may not be consciously aware of faking emotion. So, the significance of any of the emotions discussed may have been emphasised by faking processes and are not necessarily the teachers' intrinsic impulses (Hollway & Jefferson 1997). The emotional rules are limitations that need to be analysed further in relation to the teachers' lived experiences and future action to gain a sense of the teachers' understanding of themselves both individually and collectively (Zembylas 2005).

This chapter has also drawn out the interplay of the eight notable emotions where a struggle of sorts is central to the emotional experience. Unpleasure is a part of life from which humans are not immune and it serves a purpose (Adler & McAdams 2007). Pleasure and unpleasure are opposing forces that work together to strike a balance; for example, Ramvi (2010, p. 339) asserts: '[t]he

challenge faced by every human being is to integrate love and hate'. Threatening defeat or shame prompts a struggle to search oneself (Kaufman 1974). If the teacher meets the challenge then contentment may be the result, or happiness, depending on how agentic the teacher is in their endeavour. There is a line drawn somewhere in the struggle. On one side the teacher's endeavour overcomes the struggle, but on the other side there is a battle being lost and whether or not this line is crossed or maintained evokes worry. Struggling to keep on the 'winning' side of the limit evokes frustration and maybe even anger and if the teacher finds themselves on the 'losing' side then feelings of sadness may be evoked due to the potential loss or sadness and anger when the loss is confirmed.

The interplay between defeat — the threat of defeat to complete defeat — and the struggle — from endeavour to battle— can be seen in Figure 7.2. Each quadrant contains a constellation of emotions but this is not to say that these constellations are definitive of teachers' emotional work. The conversations provided a sense of the emotional constellations but each person is unique and may be an exception to the diagram. Defeat is a central emotion to the experiences that the teachers shared in the collaborative inquiry sessions and permeated the other seven emotions, which is why 'defeat' began this chapter. On the other hand, contentment was significantly referenced by the teachers despite them sharing stories of struggle, suggesting that the teachers predominantly fell within the 'threat of defeat'– 'endeavour' quadrant. They were generally content and pleasure outweighed unpleasure, which is why I titled the chapter from 'pleasure to unpleasure'. The experiences for the teachers started at pleasure. Love has a presence in each quadrant because the teachers endeavour through the struggle because they care, whether about the act of teaching or their students — they care.



**Figure 7.2** Defeat, the struggle and associated emotion

I am not saying that teachers should not be challenged. They expressed enjoyment from the challenge, as the following quote highlights:

I really love finding people in other disciplines and certain pedagogy that they use and you know, the thrill of the chase, just thinking, alright how can I do this in [a different way] (laughs) (T1a).

More to the point is that teachers need to understand that tension is a natural part of challenge, which is a natural element of change, and that long-held beliefs, such as institutionalised emotional rules, should be interrogated (Zembylas & Barker 2007). If they are not interrogated then emotion that is faked or hidden becomes unconscious, along with associated thoughts. The teachers then become less aware of the underlying values, beliefs and judgments that motivate action. If they cannot interrogate their own action then there is no alternative than to interrogate others. Emotional confusion being pushed into the unconscious means that one's focus may be to lay blame as a way to 'solve the problem' (Turner 2009). So, rather than pin-pointing a problem or laying blame, the next chapter will look at interrogating 'the struggle' and

gaining a stronger sense of the shift from endeavour to battle — from pleasure to unpleasure.

## Chapter 8

### The struggle: from endeavour to battle

In the last chapter I highlighted the underlying struggle inherent in being human and how emotion is tied up in the struggle. For teachers in the study, defeat of some kind, whether a threatening defeat or complete defeat, was a powerful emotion. Experiencing vulnerability as a teacher is a fundamental element of the act of teaching (Kelchtermans 2009).

In this chapter I argue that the struggle for teachers features four interlinking components: limitations, expectations, assumptions and emotion. The struggle centres on trying to compromise between the limitations and expectations that are inherent in the struggle, creating an irreconcilable tension. The tension was a physical, intellectual and emotional experience captured in seven stories featured in this chapter. The emotional rules directly fed into the tension, and while this chapter predominantly explores what was conscious for the teachers by considering what was explicitly stated, it will become clear that there are unconscious forces at play. 'The teacher' discourse influenced the teachers' assumption and emotion that consequently fed into the limitations and expectations that framed their script. The predetermined script lived by each teacher will surface through the discovery of the implicated emotional rules. It was as though each script was written for the individual teacher and did not necessarily consider all of the actors involved, fuelling the tension and limiting agency.

This chapter serves as a way of getting to know each story at a more conscious level. *Chapter Nine; Reframing the struggle* then explores the unconscious thinking and emotion as well as deeper embedded emotional rules for each teacher in reference to each story.

In the last chapter, I stated that there were emotional rules at play which might determine how a teacher acknowledges, experiences and speaks about emotion. Some of the emotions are easier to speak about than others. For

example, defeat, contentment were spoken about but not easily named, whereas frustration and worry were spoken about fairly easily. All four emotions were also referenced significantly across all sources of conversation. Anger and sadness were more difficult for the teachers to speak about and love even more so. In the last chapter I noted that happiness was discussed less due to the nature of the collaborative inquiry sessions rather than emotional rules. Love was most restricted by the emotional rules and forced into the unconscious. This pattern continues through the present chapter with frustration and worry often featured. Feeling angry was recognised but limited or minimised due to the emotional rules.

There are seven stories shared in this chapter that highlight seven specific critical incidents recounted by the teacher collaborators – one narrative recount per teacher – including one of my own titled *The big guy*. Each story is accompanied by a brief analysis that has been broken up under several headings. The analysis of limitations, expectations and assumptions is addressed below. The analysis of emotion occurs under two sub-headings, ‘explicit emotion’ and ‘emotional limitations’. The explicit emotion refers to the emotion of which the teacher was conscious and was made explicit in the story. I have used ‘explicit emotion’ rather than ‘conscious emotion’ because what is spoken may not be the only conscious emotion. Emotional limitations are in reference to the emotional rules that I outlined in the last chapter. The teachers did not explicitly reference the emotional rules in their stories but how the rules are implicated is demonstrated.

I have described the summaries that follow each story in this chapter as ‘brief’ because each story is analysed regarding a particular theme that continues in *Chapter Nine*, which was the major feature of discussion from the teacher recounting the story. For example, in the first story, *The glob*, the theme that carries on through analysis centres on the teacher’s difficulty in ‘controlling’ students. This is the theme that the teacher predominantly carried on in subsequent conversation that led to once unconscious thinking or feeling becoming conscious. As an example of another potential theme the story finishes with the line: ‘Let me tell you, I needed a couple of stiff drinks that



night'. The teacher is identifying 'stiff drinks' as a support to manage the struggle. The feeling of defeat gained strength because requiring support, such as drinking alcohol, creates another struggle. For example:

I knew that was too much [alcohol] and I had been cutting that down to drinking two or three times a week rather than every other night. We know we're in a bad habit if we open a bottle and finish the bottle and often we finish the second bottle and that's — that is too much (T1a).

Even though the teacher did discuss this particular struggle further, it was discussed much less significantly than the theme of 'controlling students', suggesting that it was not as important to the teacher. So, I did not draw this particular theme out through the analysis because it featured less in subsequent conversation, even though it might be worth exploring.

The critical incidents that the teachers brought to the collaborative inquiry sessions featured struggles but the specific words 'limitation', 'expectation' and 'assumption' were not necessarily used. The following quotes highlight how I interpreted limitations, expectations and assumptions and how they became understood as significant to the research.

## 8.1 Limitations

The following quote highlights a limitation:

We've got some staff that are really willing to use [an inquiry model] and give it a go and then we've got others that have a "Nah, it's no good, I already do that kind of stuff anyway" kind of attitude. So, it's going to take some time to get everyone on board but hopefully they can because it is a good model to use (T2a).

In this example, there is a limit to what the other teachers will act on. The other teachers appear to be limiting their agency, which is not to say it is wrong to do so, as inaction can be agentic if it emerges through a process of reflexivity and awareness (Kelchtermans 2009); but the teacher perceives the inaction as a

barrier. This is an example of what I have named a *limitation in relation to collective agency* and means that the agency of others has some influence over teaching practice and can enforce a limit. There are two other types of limitation I draw out in this chapter — *emotional limitations*, and *limitations of agency in reference to self*. I am not suggesting a binary between collective and self because I have clearly stated that both collective and self are enmeshed in the space between. I am suggesting that within this set of limitations the self/other interplay is highlighted. When I use ‘collective agency’ I mean that others in the collective live within limitations that impact on the collective agency and there may be a difference between the limitations each ‘self’ within the collective faces. The teachers perceived limitations in every story that was shared.

## 8.2 Expectations

The teachers demonstrated attitudes towards perceived expectations of themselves from others. Perceived expectations are related to their responsibilities but not necessarily only their explicit responsibilities — there is a difference. While there are defined responsibilities within position descriptions and professional teaching standards, the following responsibilities or expectations of self perceived by the teachers are not necessarily congruent with defined expectations. There is again interplay between the self and collective, as highlighted in the quote below:

I'm really mindful that an administrative process to do with a child's behaviour, it's got to be fair, it's got to be transparent and you've got to be accountable (T1b).

The teacher is bound by the collective expectations of meeting standards in maintaining respectful relationships with students, but the teacher also has that expectation of themselves. When the teacher says ‘I’m really mindful’ they are also saying ‘this is something I think about’, ‘this is something I worry about’ and ‘this is something I care about’. It is more than an externally enforced expectation; the expectation also rests in the self. So, when I refer to expectations throughout the chapter I am usually drawing on collective expectations that influence the script for each teacher but it is not to say that the teacher is not

making sense of externally driven expectations in interaction with self derived expectations.

### 8.3 Assumptions

The teachers made assumptions that were intrinsic to their understanding of limitations and expectations. Assumptions are not made in isolation and again there may be difference between assumptions of self and the collective but both influence each other. The following assumption was made by a teacher and is a good example of potential difference:

I've heard things about how those boys [students] in particular, with their culture and cultural background and their upbringing, that they don't really acknowledge females too much and I've been told that by a couple of female staff and I've also heard from male staff and sometimes they'll say 'I don't respect women' to male staff. It's a known thing in the school (*T4a*).

The quote suggests that there is little difference in the assumption that 'those boys are disrespectful to woman' in the teacher collective, yet there is no way of accounting for all of the teachers' attitudes and opinions in relation to 'those boys' across 'the school'. Other teachers may or may not take issue with 'those boys' attitudes toward women and the boys that are being grouped as 'those boys' may also have varying attitudes toward woman. In order not to justify or refute the assumption but to highlight that there may be difference, I have tried to capture the teachers assumptions as they have been presented.

The following narratives have been taken from the transcripts but rewritten to present the critical incident as a story, where the story is analysed and discussed to highlight the relationship between limitations, expectations and assumptions along with the layer of emotion that overlaps. The narratives are written in first person to avoid the use of names and gender identity. If genders have been ascribed they are not necessarily the actual gender of the characters to whom they are ascribed. Some have been changed.

The narrative recounts were shown to the teachers who had the opportunity to provide feedback and have been approved by the teachers as being a fair representation of the critical incidents. The analysis discussed in this chapter and in *Chapter Nine* was also discussed with each teacher individually, with each agreeing it was a fair interpretation of their experience.

## 8.4 Narrating the struggle

### 8.4.1 The glob

Friday was the Year Twelves' last day of school known as 'muck up day'. Most of the year twelves entered into the spirit with a great sense of humour. They did a couple of practical pranks that were harmless but funny. Well, that's how it started anyway, but by recess a few of them were told to leave the school and during period three they started really mucking up. The few that were left were throwing flour bombs down the stairwells and spreading a packet of pasta down the stairs. There was water everywhere and students had put gaffer tape across the doorways creating a tripping hazard — the stairs were a right mess.

At the start of period four I made my way up the stairwell, with the stairwells being in the state they were, and with a crowd of students. It felt like the entire student population was hesitating right there and chaos was starting. The junior kids were joining in the mucking up, by chucking stuff down the stairwells so I went all 'drill sergeant' on them; "right, you've got to get to class" and off I went on a rant. I said, "right, the year twelves have been told to leave, that means it's technically trespassing now, which means we'll call the cops!" Now as soon as I said the words I knew that it sounded so ridiculous because I was actually not in a position to make that call. And besides, it had no effect at all because, of course, they were hesitating for a good reason, the stairs were actually dangerous. So, I had this bunch of junior and senior kids to deal with.

The year twelves had started the riot and were all the encouragement the junior kids needed. So, I was mad at the year twelves but you can't boss the senior kids around like the little ones. You can almost physically control the junior kids, I mean you're not allowed to touch them, but you can physically

dominate them, and I'm not saying you should, but because you're so much bigger than them you have a presence. With the bigger kids, if you want authority with them you have to earn it; you need to give respect as well as receive respect. At that point, I got a junior student to go and fetch the principal.

Anyway, blow me down if a glob of wet toilet paper doesn't simply course down the stairwell and land, splat, on my head. I turned quickly with a sudden urge to kill the culprit. I was absolutely and utterly furious. Even if it was not personally targeted at me, and I don't think it was, it's just that level of immaturity that left me gob smacked. When people are willfully stupid, this makes me angry. It is really what infuriates me, lack of intelligence infuriates me and not to say that I don't understand that people have different levels of ability, I do, it's not using what you've got. The stupid thing is, of course, this all happened right in front of the principal.

The students were just so rowdy and then I got into period four and they are a tough class at the best of times. I had to exit a couple of students because they just took things too far and I was desperate to gain control. I tried three or four different things that all crashed and burned. So finally, with fifteen minutes to go I settled with a game that usually works pretty well and it did. I'm happy to say that by the end of the lesson, I'd kicked a couple of students out, I crashed and burned through most of it but we ended on a reasonable relationship to pick up from. Let me tell you, I needed a couple of stiff drinks that night.

### ***Explicit emotion***

The emotion that the teacher defined was anger. They were mad at the year twelves and furious at the glob thrower. The teacher also expressed happiness at the final result of the lesson.

### ***Limitations***

*Emotional:* The emotional rule that was obviously at play in this story is that *teachers should not show anger*, which was difficult to maintain because the teacher states; 'when people are willfully stupid... this makes me angry'. Then the teacher went all 'drill sergeant' — the limit was crossed.

*Collective agency:* The obvious limitation the teacher had was the limited ability to control the situation and to 'command' students. The students make choices about how they act and they can collectively influence each other like the older students did to the younger students. The teacher touches on the limited authority one might have over an older student, and that authority over the older students stems from respectful relationships: 'you need to give respect as well as receive' with older students.

*Agency:* The teacher's reaction to the situation was to threaten to 'call the cops', which they described as 'ridiculous' because 'I am actually not in a position to make that call'. The teacher was still following the script where students obey teachers, or at least will obey 'cops', but the teacher was actually limited in taking that action. The teacher faced a limited ability to act in the corridor and similarly faced an inability to act in class: 'I tried three or four different things that all crashed and burned'. There was a limit to the teacher's resourcefulness at that point to have the class operate in a way that was reasonable to the teacher. This is highlighted when the teacher states that the lesson ended 'on a reasonable relationship to pick up from' suggesting that whatever came before the end of the lesson was less than reasonable.

### ***Expectations***

The teacher clearly thought they were expected to control or 'deal' with the situation. There was also an element of responsibility for the safety of all people present, as the teacher commented that the stairs were 'dangerous'. There were further expectations in the class, such as: 1) that the students should be controlled and 2) that 'relationships' should be developed with the students so that there is room for them to grow in the future.

### ***Assumptions***

There is an assumption here that junior students can be controlled in a way that the senior students could not be controlled. The script that the teacher was living is one where children require controlling by the teacher because children are small and weak and adults are big and strong. It is a script that privileges

strength but when strength is equal — for example, older students that are like adults — then developing respectful relationships is a way of maintaining control. Some of the students did not follow the script and therefore were assumed ‘willfully stupid’ and a greater show of strength was required. The teacher initially assumed authority but then deferred the authority to others like the police and the principal. The strength was then assumed in numbers — the police, the principal the teacher — the adult collective, which could ‘shepherd’ the teacher. There was an assumption that the only way to get back on script and maintain control was to exit students from the class.

#### **8.4.2 The shlong**

I have a student in my class, Stef, and I feel like I talk with him a lot about how to conduct himself appropriately. For example, I talk with him about how adults have filters on what they say and that sometimes teenagers do not, trying to encourage him to think about applying a filter of some kind. He can be quite inappropriate and I give him a lot of exceptions because he's on the very edge and just about to be expelled. I still expect him to work in my class but I let him get away with little things that he probably wouldn't get away with in other classes. I do reflect on this quite a lot.

The other day a group of students was making up a rumour about me and another teacher. They were suggesting that we could be romantically involved and the whole thing just felt weird. So, to try to put a stop to it I told them that my boyfriend wouldn't be very happy about that. Well the news that I had a partner spread through the school like wild fire and in the next class I was fielding questions left, right and centre about my romantic life. Then Stef asks loudly and in front of the class, “does your boyfriend have a big shlong?” The question hit me like a ton of bricks because it was just completely inappropriate and to be honest, I didn't really know how to respond. I just — I didn't really discipline him, I just turned around and put his name on the board and let him know that he was on his way to an exit from the class. I didn't pull him aside and actually say, “that's not appropriate”, because I feel like I had already had that conversation with him. I thought that if I gave him the attention then everyone else would make a big deal of it.

I think, more than anything, Stef was asking me to piss me off because I feel like that's the only way that he's ever known to act with a teacher. He hasn't really ever developed positive relationships with his teachers. I remember a colleague once mentioned something about when students are actually disrupting the learning of others then you exit them. This was when I was having trouble working out when to exit students, because sometimes they really push my buttons so much and I just want to exit them! But then I think that Stef saying "does he have a big shlong?" and me just writing his name on the board, completely didn't disrupt anyone.

Later on, I mentioned the incident to another teacher colleague who was very much of the belief that, "he should have been exited and he should have been disciplined". The conversation was full of things I should have done and it made me wonder that maybe the things that bother me are not the same as the things that bother the rest of society. I mean, the rumour spreading is just so typical of teenage kids and the question Stef asked didn't really bother me either. I felt annoyed that he was just being stupid but what really bothered me was wondering whether I had dealt with it appropriately. Especially after the conversation with my teacher colleague my confidence was even more shaken and I was thinking "Oh, I should have done this, I should have done that" and taking the whole incident apart. But in the moment, I was feeling mostly like, "Oh what do I do with that?" and because I didn't quite know what to do I kind of let it slide. I wondered whether he might have reacted violently if I tried to reprimand him in class and wondered whether I was avoiding a confrontational path with him.

### ***Explicit emotion***

The teacher expressed an uncomfortable feeling when it was stated that the 'whole thing just felt weird'. The teacher expresses frustration at Stef's behaviour and perhaps even frustration with their predicament of feeling 'frozen'. As well as frustration, there was annoyance or feeling bothered about 'wondering whether I had dealt with it appropriately'. There was frustration in the moment and then continued frustration afterwards.

### ***Limitations***



*Emotional:* Teachers should not display anger again is an obvious rule at play in this story. While the teacher has a high tolerance of behaviour that is not acceptable to other people it is also stated that 'they really push my buttons so much and I just want to exit them'. There is still a limit to what the teacher can tolerate from others' behaviour before a heightened emotional response is stimulated.

*Collective agency:* The teacher was faced with a limitation of trying to get Stef to understand the concept of appropriate behaviour. A difference between social filters for teenagers and adults was cited as a limitation to the process. The teacher highlights a limit to what Stef is capable of. Stef was also 'on the very edge' of being expelled from the school, suggesting that there is a limitation set by the school, and the teacher is trying to control it by allowing exceptions.

*Agency:* The teacher was limited in their own ability to respond to the situation and was paralysed to act. The teacher 'didn't really know how to respond'; therefore their ability to act was limited but this was also limited by not wanting to give Stef attention because then 'everyone else would make a big deal of it'.

### ***Expectations***

The expectations of the teacher were articulated; they were trying to teach the student what is socially acceptable because it is the school's responsibility to prepare Stef for work life. There is also a perceived expectation that the teacher is responsible for keeping Stef in school by allowing him exceptions, but at the same time the teacher is expected to exit students when they misbehave. This is also reinforced through the existence of the behaviour policy and the conversation with the teacher colleague who stated that Stef definitely should have been exited.

### ***Assumptions***

There are assumptions about Stef and how he interacts with people. Stef's script has been written where he has difficult relationships and is potentially violent. The script seems to impact on the way in which the teacher interacts with Stef and their role in Stef's script is unclear to them.

### **8.4.3 The uniform**

Our school has a uniform. When we originally voted on whether or not to have uniforms I actually voted “no”. Once the uniform was introduced we were instructed to keep an eye on the students and report children who were not wearing the correct school uniform. I did this on a regular basis, on a daily basis actually, and whenever I came in from yard duty I would have a list with about fifteen to twenty names on it. You see, I started getting so frustrated because I felt I was one of the only people doing anything about it, and every time I brought a list to the coordinators I was apologising because they then had to follow it up. I remember one day saying to the deputy principal, “I feel as though I am hitting my head against a brick wall because I’ve been doing this for over a year now”.

Some days I wouldn’t even check uniforms at all because I just couldn’t be bothered with the hassle with the kids. I was regularly asking: “should I keep doing this? Am I stupid for persisting with this?” So, frustration was getting really high. I would start to send emails to appropriate people but then I would read it back and thought better of it because they were too personal and full of anger. So, I let it all out in the emails that I trashed.

The whole time I thought it was important for me to correct the uniform because that was my job as a teacher. If we are going to have a rule there, why is it there? It’s not life threatening I know, but it was getting me really angry and frustrated and I had to tell myself that, “it’s not that important in the world, it’s only minor”. But it was making me feel angry and frustrated because I was just trying to do what I was told. I was more frustrated with the lack of support because other staff weren’t doing it and also leadership kept changing the rules and allowing it. There was this watering down of the uniform policy and so it became really hard. Sometimes a student would answer back with, “oh but so and so said we could wear this”. I would reply, “Yes, but what is the school rule? I’m just doing my job”. The reason for rules, particularly in a place like this is for conformity, which is essential when you’ve got a mass group of people and you need them to behave in a similar way so that they are manageable.

### ***Explicit emotion***

The teacher expressed frustration over being, 'the only [person] doing anything about [monitoring the uniforms]', which grew to anger.

### ***Limitations***

*Emotional:* The obvious emotional rule implicated in the story is that *teachers should not display anger* because despite the teacher commenting 'I felt like I was beating my head against a brick wall' they 'let it all out in the emails' but then 'trashed' them. Another emotional limitation is clear in that the teacher states, 'It's not life threatening I know', suggesting that one should perhaps tolerate things unless they become life threatening.

*Collective agency:* The school had collectively agreed to implement the uniform policy, which went against the teacher's wishes. The teacher was limited to do anything about this. The teacher was 'more frustrated with the lack of support' from the collective, so there was a limit with what the collective could contribute to the cause. The teacher continually asked the deputy principal, 'should I keep doing this? In a way, the teacher was pressing the point that no one else was contributing and that perhaps something ought to be done about it. The teacher was trying to influence the collective. The teacher acknowledged that limits, or rules, are important to achieve conformity, which makes the students more manageable, but that students have limits on how they react to the rules. Some students respond with anger to a uniform reprimand; their limit had been met, which in turn constrained the teacher's ability to act.

*Agency:* A limit on the ability to act was evident when the teacher wanted to express their frustrations through email but could not. Eventually this limit was broken by visiting the deputy head. Another limit on the ability to act was the changing stance on the uniform policy where the teacher would find themselves in a debate with students about what they should be wearing and defer to: 'I'm just doing my job'. But there was a limit on the teacher doing their job on the days that they 'just couldn't be bothered'.

### ***Expectations***

The teacher was expected to 'keep an eye' on the uniforms and highlighted that, 'that's my job'. Moreover, the teacher was expected to enforce a rule and accept the response from the students even if it was angry. The teacher expresses the view that the expectation of a teacher is to manage students. There was also a perceived expectation about how the teacher should interact with other staff in the school because interaction should not be 'too personal'.

### ***Assumptions***

There was an assumption that the teacher was 'being stupid' and that they were doing something wrong and needed to 'apologise' for doing their job. In some way, the teacher was assuming that because it did not seem important to other school staff that their own initial assumption of the importance of the uniform policy being adhered to was wrong. The teacher was following an assumed script where teachers have control over students through applying rules and conformity. The conformity extends to teachers as well. All of the teachers should be acting cohesively but they were not. Everyone was off script.

#### ***8.4.4 The fragile kid***

Yesterday I was handing back my students' assignments and one student in particular failed. She's an especially fragile kid and I anticipated that she might get a little hysterical. Actually, she's not the only one that failed, there were quite a few. So, I explained that I could set a supplementary assignment, like a do-over, but that we had a bit of work to do in between. At first, she handled the news pretty well; she was quite stoic and seemed unfazed, maybe a little disappointed. While I was talking the options through the fragile kid broke down in tears. I noticed this and allowed, even encouraged, some of the other students to offer support discretely. I just continued with the class because I didn't want to make a spectacle of it. I was thinking: "wow, I have 24 kids that are a bit of a hard bunch, what should I do?"

I knew it would take time for me to get the class on track and that I needed to keep them busy because otherwise they'd all fuss over her and I knew that would make her feel worse. I also knew it would take me about five minutes to

explain what the class had to do and once I had gotten them going I was then planning to talk to her and reassure her that it's not the end of the world. I quickly just told her that she could take some time. Or, if she wanted to she could step in the hallway and I would talk to her once I had started everyone else on the next activity. But I didn't get the chance to have that chat because soon after she just up and left. I let her go because I know her and I knew that was what she needed, but I was really frustrated because I wanted to go and talk to her, but that would have been really impractical. I still had my class.

I felt torn. I have taught this student for a while now and I know she's capable of doing some really good work but she missed out last term. She had had some personal difficulty and was away from school a lot. She had been trying really hard to catch up and on other assignments she had gone really well. I think this was a real personal let down for her and I felt sad for her. I just knew she would need some time and perspective and a one-to-one conversation. I needed the chance to talk through my feedback, there was a lot, but a conversation is different than written comments. I really wanted to highlight and praise her for what she had done really well and what she could do to improve the next assignment. Mind you, like I said, I have taught her for a while now and sometimes she's on her game and sometimes she's not. I was not expecting any great score but at the same time it wasn't that low of a fail, it was kind of on the cusp.

Later on, I was driving home and it struck me, "shit! I forgot to actually check and make sure she was alright". I had been running around like a headless chook all day and I didn't even have the time to follow up and find her to make sure she was all right. I was actually quite worried about her. I thought about it all night, "how could I have just left her go home freaking out that she has failed and believing the world is crumbling up?" I hate the thought of students going home thinking that, I wanted a chance to make it straight. You know, this job is made of many roles: you can be mate, you can be a parent — you can be many things. It's emotionally hard work. I think I was aware of the emotional toll going into the job and it might have even been part of why I wanted to get into teaching; because I mean a lot to a lot of kids.

### *Explicit emotion*

The teacher expressed sadness for the fragile kid in failing the assignment. There was a feeling of frustration that the teacher's ability to support the student was taken away and a feeling of hate in disappointing the student. There was also worry expressed when the teacher realised that they had forgotten to check up on the student.

### *Limitations*

*Emotional:* An obvious emotional rule that was broken is that *contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students*. In this situation, the teacher states 'I hate the thought of students going home thinking ... [they have] failed and believing the world is crumbling up'.

*Collective agency:* Collectively there is a limit to what work is considered acceptable and what is not. The teacher has to act within these limits and so does the student who is trying to follow the script of 'a successful student', but there are limits to the student being able to fulfil that role.

*Agency:* Even though the teacher is limited by assessment criteria they articulated that they still had the ability to support the students in a future assessment and had the ability to work within the limit. Limitations to the teacher's ability were expressed through the question, 'what should I do?' The experience of the fragile kid's limits being reached — the student could not remain in the classroom — put the teacher in a position of inaction briefly but then other possibilities of how to address the situation emerged. The difficulty was that there were multiple possibilities of action that conflicted. The teacher: 1) 'didn't want to make a spectacle of it', 2) wanted to talk to the fragile kid and 3) needed to get the other students engaged in the next activity. Throughout the day there was limited time to even follow up with the fragile kid.

### *Expectations*

The teacher expresses a perceived expectation to do right by everyone and to be mindful of everyone's state of mind at all times. There is another perceived expectation that the teacher takes on many roles and should perhaps switch

between them depending on what is needed, implying that they are expected to be extremely flexible and know 'what to do' when things pop up out of the blue.

### ***Assumptions***

The initial assumption made was that the fragile kid would not respond well to the results, which was then justified because the fragile kid acted out the assumed script. The teacher's script also featured assumptions about why the student didn't do so well in the first place, what they may have been capable of and why the student was so upset with the result. Assumptions were made about the collective script for the class in how well the class could, or could not, handle the teacher diverting their attention for a short time. There was also an assumption about the teacher's unspoken discussion — that they didn't get a chance to deliver — actually making a difference to the student. The script that the teacher assumed for oneself placed the teacher in a significant role in the student's script as supported by: 'I mean a lot to a lot of kids'.

#### **8.4.5 The textbook**

At the moment, there is this situation with textbook selection. At the beginning of the year I had started discussions with the subject coordinator about changing the textbook for next year. The current subject text is dreadful and now the subject department, my teacher colleagues, are asking me to stay using a textbook that I don't like, and the students don't like it — just for the sake of money. It's all just come to a head in a group meeting in the last hour. It's frustrating when everyone else seems willing to take the lesser quality textbook but I'm putting my foot down. There is a fantastic textbook that we could maybe swap it to that's being investigated, which would be great if that could happen because I'm using an edition of the fantastic textbook as an additional resource at the moment and it's great. It's the textbook I used at my last school.

Actually, some staff prefer the existing textbook but there are others that I know of that don't like it either but they are still pushing for the existing text — even spearheading the campaign. Some people are getting quite aggressive about it, like singling me out in group meetings as the person that is going

against the decision. I have a fairly thick skin though, actually I don't, but I feel like I'm right. They could just have a slightly different booklist for my class but they won't want to make me an exception to the rule. I think some of the teachers have a 'who do you think you are?' kind of attitude. I don't know that I'm managing it at all well.

I have talked about this to the students because they don't like the current textbook either. I have warned them that we might be forced to stick with the current textbook and they said that they would go and buy the textbook I prefer in addition to the existing text. They're saying: "you're our teacher, you know". I may even end up asking them to do that. I don't know. I understand the great deal that the kids would be getting. Maybe I'll chat about the textbook with the students tomorrow, and talk to them; because essentially, it's about them, isn't it? That's why I gave them an inspection copy of the fantastic textbook to look at and they liked it and want the change. Mind you, they don't really know about the potential savings and maybe they would prefer to save money.

I share things with my class for this subject, I try to make them partners in learning, it helps because I haven't been teaching this subject for very long and there are times when we are definitely partners in learning. It's also the way I like to learn. I just get frustrated with the dreadful textbook as opposed to working with a textbook that I know and trust and can use with ease. Teaching this subject is challenging and it's challenging for the students and then it feels like I've just got one more hurdle to overcome and that's the dreadful textbook.

I'm definitely feeling like maybe I should just give in. The head of the department actually supports me but how long will she continue supporting me? That last hour, the meeting, took a lot of energy. I actually feel battered, I'm so tense in my shoulders, I can feel it in my breathing. I just felt really uncomfortable. I am just fearful of my colleagues' opinions of me if I stand up for this. It makes our lives a lot easier when there's a team of us and we're lockstep, working together, that actually makes life a lot easier.

### ***Explicit emotion***



The teacher finds the situation frustrating. A feeling of righteousness is expressed when the teacher says, 'I feel like I'm right'. They also express feeling uncomfortable about the position they are faced with and fear of what their colleagues may think of their action.

### ***Limitations***

*Emotional:* The emotional rule that *contentment is evoked by the act of teaching, students and other teachers* is being challenged in this story. The teacher is less than content with teaching the particular subject featured in this story and the teachers that also work in the collective department.

*Collective agency:* The teacher is faced with a collective decision that is in opposition to action that the teacher wishes to take. The teacher is trying to work around the limitation by having other options 'being investigated' or wanting to be the 'exception to the rule'. While the teacher is limited to influence the agency of the teacher collective they are attempting to increase the limits by trying to influence the students' attitude toward the 'fantastic' textbook by opening up the discussion but by not disclosing what savings might be had with the existing textbook.

*Agency:* There is a limitation in regards to the teacher's ability to act because they do not have great confidence in their ability to teach the subject as highlighted in this statement: 'I haven't been teaching this subject for very long and there are times when we are definitely partners in learning.' The teacher attempts to overcome the limitation by involving the students in the decision but there is also a suggestion of another limitation when the teacher states, 'I may even end up asking them to do that'. The statement suggests that asking the students to purchase an additional textbook is beyond what is acceptable but that the teacher may 'even' need to do this to have the preferred textbook as a teaching tool.

### ***Expectations***

The teacher is being expected to follow suit with majority opinion on the choice of textbook resulting in the teacher gaining a sense of 'who do you think you

are?’ The teacher also seems to be expected to tolerate bullying tactics directed at them for having a differing opinion; for example, the teacher was ‘[singled] out in group meetings as the person that is going against the decision’.

### ***Assumptions***

There is an assumption that the textbook is completely dreadful for ‘everyone’ but this assumption is then contradicted with the teacher declaring that the current textbook is preferred by some staff. There is also an assumption that the textbook selection is central to the success of the class; without the ‘right’ textbook the class will fail. The teacher has a script for the future that is dependent on the ‘fantastic textbook’ and if that textbook does not feature as a prop in the teacher’s script then the future story will be ‘dreadful’.

#### **8.4.6 The bite**

There was a particular incident just yesterday actually. Everyone was in class and busy, working in groups and the students’ pens got messed up. Nick thought another student, Miriam, had his pen, which wasn’t the case, but nevertheless Nick yelled: “hey, give me my pen” and he was starting to get really aggressive. Sometimes I step in front of Nick and ask him to just look at me for a second and just calm down because I don’t know if a fight could potentially happen. If I’m on the outer, for example, if I’m just yelling at him from the peripheral, he’s not going to see me; he’s only going to hear me. He then tried to wrestle the pen off Miriam and she was saying: “this is not your pen, this is not your pen” and she wouldn’t let it go.

So, Nick was still trying to wrestle it off her and then, eventually, he bit Miriam on the arm. I just thought: “holy shit! What the hell? Why would you bite someone?” I was frustrated with the situation, and he was getting quite aggressive towards me, and I was sort of back-peddalling a little bit when he was getting closer. I found his pen and I was trying to give it to him but he was yelling at me and I was sort of a little bit threatened in a way. I was wondering: “is he going to hit me?” This all happened towards the end of the class, which was lucky because the kids were winding down anyway.

I'm used to him losing it sometimes. I've got a pretty good rapport with him. I was fairly confident, and I trusted him that he wouldn't hit me, but he does flip easily. Sometimes he doesn't calm down but you don't want students to ever think that you're scared because then they just feel like, "Oh, the teacher's scared of me", and they think they have control. I can't just exit him from the class because I don't know where he will go or what he will do. Similarly, if I send him with another student then I could be putting another student at risk. I always have a support staff member come down to collect him and then he usually calms down. At the same time, I still have a class to run so I'm trying to keep them going too. I wouldn't necessarily say that I feel stressed after such an incident but I always question whether I should have been more proactive to reduce the risk of conflict.

Nick has sort of got two personalities. He's this charming, lovely chap and then he's this angry kid who does cause violence in my class because he can get quite aggressive.

### ***Explicit emotion***

The teacher describes the feeling of worry about 'when kids get angry' but also expressed a feeling of trust towards Nick in regard to his interactions with them. The teacher expresses frustration over the situation.

### ***Limitations***

*Emotional:* The rule that *teachers should not show fear or anger* is an obvious limitation in the story, where the teacher explicitly states that 'you don't want students to ever think that you're scared'. Additionally, despite the teacher stating: "holy shit! What the hell? Why would you bite someone?" and explicitly saying they were frustrated not even a hint of frustration or anger could be exhibited. Everything had to be 'calm', Nick had to be 'calm', and the teacher had to be 'calm'.

*Collective agency:* The students have agency over their expression of aggression. The teacher does allude to the idea that perhaps they do have a little agency in relation to Nick because they have a 'pretty good rapport with him' and that makes the teacher 'fairly confident' that the student will not cross

a limit in regard to physical contact with the teacher. Nonetheless, the teacher's rapport with Nick might influence Nick's aggression toward the teacher but might not have as much influence on Nick's aggression to other students. Also, the teacher recognises the potential for a limit to be crossed when the teacher states that the students might 'think they have control'.

*Agency:* There is a limit on how useful the teacher finds themselves in the situation of dealing with two aggressive students, particularly when they are 'on the peripheral' and to overcome this limit need to physically place themselves between the students. There are limitations on the teacher's options in regard to how to address such a situation. The teacher cannot: 1) exit the student, 2) keep the conflicting students in the same space, and 3) send the aggressive student out with another student. These limitations on action force the teacher to work within the limits and they send for the support staff member. Although, the teacher acknowledges that their ability to act within these limitations would have been restricted even further if the incident took place earlier in the session, the incident being at the end of the class had its own limitations on time. The limitations on action are also acknowledged when the teacher states, 'I always question whether I should have been more proactive', suggesting that the action taken may not have been ideal.

### ***Expectations***

The teacher sees it as their responsibility to put their own body on the line to prevent a fight, which is highlighted by: 'I step in the way because I don't know if a fight could potentially happen'. There is also an expectation that they are responsible for developing a 'good rapport' with each student. The teacher also perceives an expectation that they must remain in control of their class.

### ***Assumptions***

There were assumptions about whom or when Nick would or would not hit. The teacher states that they were 'fairly confident' in their assumptions based on past scripts. The script for the story was built on the 'rapport' between Nick and the teacher where no matter what happens the 'rapport' between student and teacher can make things right. The teacher's script assumes that a good rapport

between teacher and student will allow the teacher to control the class and that the building of the rapport is 'controlled' by the teacher because they could have been 'more proactive'. The script already assumed that hiding emotions helps control a class, which the teacher did, but the future script for the teacher will have them do even more.

#### **8.4.7 The big guy**

It has come to the end of the year and it is 'grade' time. Throughout the year, I have had a few students that have been really struggling but one in particular really bothers me and I'm not quite sure why. The fact that I'm not sure why I'm bothered bothers me even more. I get my students for one class a week. When I met this student that bothers me in the first class, he had a "deer in the headlights" look about him. It was the first time I had taught the subject and throughout the semester I pretty much "flew by the seat of my pants". I stuck closely to the unit plan and what other teachers had done before me, which meant that the first class was pretty heavy with theory. As that first lesson went on I could just see that he began to disappear. He was sinking into himself. I went around to each student to try to gauge where they were at but he gave me little to work with.

You know what? While I hadn't met him before I did know about him. He had a reputation as an outstanding athlete and I suppose I expected a bit of a "go get 'em'" attitude. Also, he's giant, bigger than the average man even, so I was surprised to see him as this scared little thing.

After that first class, he started skipping classes. There was also a work placement that he was meant to attend. He attended most of the work placement and then stopped attending toward the end. When he didn't hand in the first assignment, I started to chase him down to see what was going on and to see if I could help him. I got nothing back. When he stopped going to the work placement I felt really embarrassed

because people, external to the university, were dedicating their time to him and they commented on his absence.

He sent me an email two weeks after missing the work placement saying that he had to get his hand x-rayed, which may have been the case, but that doesn't take two weeks. Really, he had simply gone missing. At that point I was getting really frustrated and angry because I was trying my best teaching this subject for the first time and I had this student who was just not turning up, not responding, likely to fail. He has actually failed even though he had shown so much promise in the past. Then of course I get the questions, 'why has this student failed?' and I'm left feeling really sad and hopeless.

### ***Explicit emotion***

I described feeling 'surprised' by the big guy because he did not behave in a way that was expected. I explicitly state feeling embarrassed because the student stopped attending the external sessions. Also, I identified anger and frustration with the predicament of trying my best but failing to help the student as well as sadness, hopelessness and guilt in regards to the student's eventual failure.

### ***Limitations***

*Emotional:* The emotional rule that *contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students* is challenged in this story. I state that I was 'bothered'. The emotional limitation was met and I then felt an un-ease but I was unsure of why, which added to the emotional limitation being crossed.

*Collective agency:* The students' abilities and action determine whether or not they might 'struggle' to achieve academic success, which impinged a limit on what I could achieve as their teacher. I state that, 'I get my students for one class a week', highlighting that there was a limit on time to work with the student. The collective makes that decision. There is evidence that there was a unit plan that had already been acted on by the collective so I was limited in how much I could deviate from the unit plan.

*Agency:* I ‘flew by the seat of my pants’ suggests that I was not particularly agentic at that time. I was not always able to make considered choices about the action that I took or reflexively consider the unconscious motivations. I was relying on the collective agency more than agency of self because I mostly followed unquestioningly ‘what other teachers had done before’. It was after the first class that a sense of questioning is evident when I state the ‘first class was pretty heavy with theory’ and there is a sense that this was not a great predicament for the ‘big guy’. There was also a limit to how much I could help the big guy despite ‘best’ efforts.

### ***Expectations***

There is a sense that I was expected to ‘stick to the unit plan’ somewhat and to engage all students in learning. I took on the further responsibility of trying to re-engage the student outside of class time, which was a response to the expectation that students should pass classes.

### ***Assumptions***

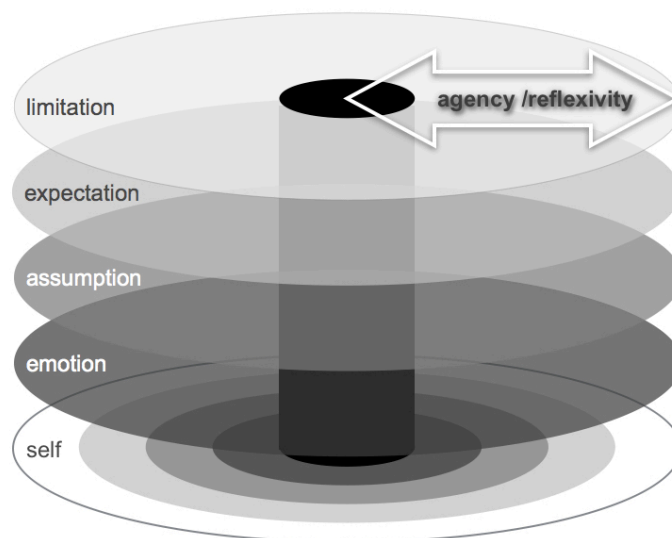
I made assumptions about ‘the big guy’s’ competency based on previous athletic achievements and other successes as well as his size; ‘I was surprised to see him as this scared *little* thing’. There is an assumption that the big guy not attending the work placement was a reflection of me and that the big guy’s disengagement was a simple matter in that he ‘was just not turning up, not responding’. My assumed script involved me being a successful teacher with happy, engaged and successful students; the script failing, meant that I failed — leaving me feeling ‘hopeless’ and guilty.

## **8.5 Tension**

‘[T]eaching is a risky endeavour’, which can be discomforting because there are varying opinions, practices and beliefs that may be contradictory to one’s own (Kelchtermans 2009, p.270). In each of the stories there is a threat to ease-of-mind and a process of reality testing, where the reality — the script — has failed in some way (Bruner 2004). The teachers were endeavouring in their work that

turned into a battle. The life scripts of each of the teachers was challenged or rewritten, which prompted a struggle where the teachers were either trying to keep the script on course or battling to make sense of the script and play a part.

If the mind is not at ease then it is in a state of discomfort or displeasure. In each of the stories, as Turner (2009) suggests, displeasure was evoked by either not meeting expectations or being confined by negative impacting limitations. Table 8.1 illustrates how limitations and expectations are bound up in the scripts that are built on assumption. In each of the stories there is an irreconcilable tension between the limitations, expectations and assumptions that are all woven in with emotion. Figure 8.1 represents how emotion, assumption, expectation and limitation are mediators between the self and one's agency. Where greater agency occurs with greater reflexivity, or in the case of the stories shared in this chapter the teachers felt less agentic; they often did not know what to do. They were not necessarily aware of the interplay between emotion, assumption, limitation and expectation. I use the word interplay because, while in Figure 8.1 each layer looks discrete, Table 8.1 suggests the opposite where emotion and limitation overlap, and displeasurable emotion might be evoked by failing to meet expectations and assumption feeds directly into the told and acting self. Figure 8.1 represents a complex system where the whole can only make sense through the connection of its parts.



**Figure 8.1** The self and layers that impact on agency-reflexivity



In creating Figure 8.1 I am not suggesting that each story is the same but that each story has similarities. I have specifically drawn on certain aspects of each story that I have interpreted as being the most significant due to the teachers' emphasis on those specific aspects in subsequent conversation. The emphasis of this thesis though is to highlight that the struggle is complex but in each struggle there are some similarities that interact in a similar way.

		Emotion	Expectation	Assumption	Tension	
Limitation					<i>Discomfort – failure to meet expectation</i>	<i>Dysfunction – negative impacting limitation</i>
<b>The glob</b> Difficulty controlling 'rioting' students	Teachers should not display anger	Mostly anger and some happiness	To control the situation	Students need to be controlled and maintaining respectful relationships between adult-like people is a way to gain control	Could not maintain control of students and display of anger for some time	The limitations prevented the teacher from following their life script. Future action was paralysed
<b>The shlong</b> Difficulty responding to Stef's comment	Teachers should not display anger	Discomfort, frustration, anger and annoyance	Educate students and prepare them for life but exit them from class if they are disruptive	Stef is volatile so the teacher has to tread carefully with Stef	Controlled anger but could not meet both expectations - exit Stef and/or educate him	Being caught between trying to educate Stef yet exiting him left the teacher unable to act – both expectations are contradictory
<b>The uniform</b> Difficulty in implementing uniform policy	Teachers should not display anger	Frustration and anger	To manage students and enforce uniform policy	Conformity enables teachers to have control	Controlled anger but could not meet the expectation due to lack of collective cohesion	The teacher had a script that no one else was following and wanted to give up on it too. They were not sure how to move forward
<b>The fragile kid</b> Unable to support student through a failure	Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students	Sadness, frustration, hate and worry	Teachers have to take on any role necessary to meet the interests of others	Some students are too fragile to handle difficult things and teachers need to nurture them through	The teacher failed to be content with the situation and could not be everything to everyone	The teacher had to choose between actions, which meant that there was an inability to support the fragile kid
<b>The textbook</b> Limited staff cohesion regarding textbook selection	Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and other teachers	Frustration, discomfort and fear	Teachers should agree	The success of a class is dependent on the correct textbook selection	The teacher was not content with the situation and could not bring themselves to agree with the majority of teachers	The limitations prevented the teacher from following the script of 'a successful class' and left the teacher not knowing what future action to take
<b>The bite</b> Difficulty controlling Nick, the aggressive student	Teachers should not display fear or anger	Frustration, worry and trust in Nick	Teachers should prevent violence in a class at all cost	A good rapport between teacher and student will allow the teacher to control the class	Controlled anger but displayed some fear by 'back-peddalling'. Could not prevent the violence	The limitations left not much else for the teacher to do other than to put themselves between the two students, which failed regardless
<b>The big guy</b> Unable to engage student in class	Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students	Embarrassment, sadness, guilt and hopelessness	Teachers stick to the unit plan and pass students	Successful teachers have happy, engaged and successful students and successful students can be determined by appearance	I was not content with the situation and while I stuck to the unit plan I had to fail some students	I tried to re-engage the student to help him pass but the limitations were too great

**Table 8.1** Emotion, assumption, limitation and expectation (part 1)

Zembylas (2005, p.484) observes that: 'The conflict of goals, in concrete form, is the emotional tension between the cognitive and emotional perspectives as it is realized [sic] in the lives of teachers'. Table 8.1 shows interplay between emotion and limitation as well as emotion and expectation. Unpleasure often stemmed from failing to meet expectations that were connected to limitations, just as Winograd (2003) asserts; emotion can be dysfunctional, and the teachers experienced dysfunctional emotion that played a part in preventing them to act. Even so, Table 8.1 is only part of the story.

I have outlined in this table what has been made obvious and what the teachers talked about. There is a whole other level — the unknown elements of the story. For example, each story highlights an underlying process of reality testing. Each teacher assumed the script to take a certain structure but the story did not unfold the way it was intended so a sense a defeat might have also been at play. Defeat is implied in all the stories but whether or not this sense of defeat was conscious at the time of retelling is unclear. The teachers may have felt defeat but were unable to speak about it or perhaps did not know it.

On the surface only three emotional rules, or variations of these, seem to be at play in the stories. The rule that *contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students* is actually challenged in every story. The next chapter will highlight how underlying emotions are directly related to underlying emotional rules that are less obvious to the teachers who are struggling with them.

Due to the failure of the script to unfold in the way it should in the teacher's perspective they were left in a moment of dysfunction — their agency was limited. Most of what teachers acknowledge that they do is at a process level and the long-term significance of teaching is not considered, including the underlying beliefs, values and motivations (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). This means that the collective script was not necessarily considered. The teachers were not automatically considering the agency of the others in the script so each of the stories featured conflict and left the teacher uncertain about their role in the script once it had deviated from the intended version.

The next chapter looks at the unknown or implied elements of the story and draws on the discussion that stemmed from the collaborative inquiry process post recounting the story. Recognising the struggles and discomfort through the reflexive process helped trigger an understanding of one's personal interpretive framework (Kelchtermans 2009); in other words, one's shifting script. This chapter looked at where conflicting scripts lived side by side. All of the actors were in the same space but they were playing out very different scripts that were in tension. The next chapter looks at where the tension is recognised and the script for the future can contain a cohesive part for each actor in the collective.

## Chapter 9

### Reframing the struggle

The last chapter featured seven stories accompanied with a brief analysis of the limitations, expectations, assumptions and emotion involved in each. This chapter features quotes from the conversations that flowed in the collaborative inquiry sessions after the stories were shared. The specific collaborative inquiry process is explained in *Chapter Ten; Reflexivity*, which will outline the process of reflexivity. This chapter outlines the reflexive content of the conversations — the discoveries that the teachers and I made about ourselves and each other. The emotional rules that are fuelled by ‘the teacher’ discourse demanded that the teachers either fake or hide their emotions, which possibly forced their emotions to be unconscious. I argue that this process poses a difficulty for teachers in understanding their underlying assumptions, values and beliefs because emotion and thought are entwined. So if the emotion is forced to be unconscious, the thought is forced unconscious too. To have limited awareness of one’s motives is to also have limited agency. I propose that a way to overcome this difficulty is to reflexively interrogate the emotion and the emotional rules that lie beneath the surface.

This chapter looks at the underlying emotion of each story and how the reflexive process helped rewrite the collective script. A story script for each recounting teacher was identified in Table 8.1. The rewritten scripts that evolved became scripts for the collective, as detailed in Table 9.1. The discoveries made by the teachers allowed a reimagining of the assumptions related to the struggle that impacted on the way they understood the limitations and the expectations tied up in the struggle.

As each of the stories are teacher recounts, the first quote presented in the section is referred to as T1, to signify the recounting teacher, with each subsequent quote numbered T1a, T1b, T1c and so on. Sometimes there is

dialogue between the recounting teacher and other teacher collaborators. They are referred to as T2a, T3a and so on.

## 9.1 The glob

The implied defeat in the story stems from T1 trying to control the ‘rioting’ students and trying to seize authority, which was a struggle. T1 took on the challenge at a point of endeavour — they could have ignored the situation all together — but the struggle turned into a battle that was felt to be lost quite soon after the struggle began. T1 called for support after having felt defeated.

The discussion that followed the recount featured exploration of the emotional limitations T1 faced where anger must be concealed. The following quote was shared:

In that moment to have the energy and the presence of mind to realise, defuse is what I want to do, or need to do, the right thing to do, but it's that mental control, that filter, you have to have switched on and be so in the moment, it's exhausting ... You can't react from the hip. Fear ... immediately takes away your higher function (*T1a*).

This quote shows recognition of the emotional limits on the expression of anger but also names another emotional limit — fear — that was originally unnamed, perhaps in alignment with the rule that *teachers should not feel or display fear*. T1 has made a connection that the fear, that had previously remained unknown, inhibited the acting self. It was dysfunctional emotion at work preventing action and so instead T1 ‘react[ed] from the hip’. A second quote also features agency as a theme.

Reflecting back [I should have reacted] in a calm way to sort of model it — raise their grievances with them. I mean it depends though. You've got to read the situation (*T1b*).

In this quote T1 again is discussing the limitation of agency but is also regretful not to have followed the emotional rule of not displaying anger — they should have

stayed calm. They could have ‘raised grievances’ with the students rather than yell. T1 is suggesting that they may feel whatever they feel but the response, the acting self, ought to be less aggressive. There is also an understanding that each incident is unique and may require something different, but that the automatic desirable response for T1 might not be the most useful. For example, T1 assumed that junior students could be controlled through an authoritative approach that relies on physicality — in this case yelling — by suggesting a calmer alternative, T1 was also suggesting this assumption may have shifted. The following quote also discusses limitations but has expectations and assumptions entwined.

We have more pushback than we think we do often, but then we also shouldn't beat ourselves up over that, there are limits to what we need to do to survive (T1c).

When T1 states, ‘there are limits to what we need to do to survive’, what is meant is that to survive, the acting self has to sometimes limit action. While limitations of agency exist at times there is often other ways in which T1 can be agentic, for example, making a considered choice to not take action might result in a different kind of ‘pushback’. Considered inaction can be agentic and if expectations are not met then sometimes that result has to be acceptable. Recognition of the necessary compromise between expectation and limitation was being signalled.

On another occasion T1 had a second incident that was very similar to the recount of *The glob*; T1 yelled at a group of younger students in the hallway. T1 raised the second incident at a group collaborative session and made a connection between the two incidents. In a discussion related to the second incident T1 stated:

[After the emotional response] you figure out, what's the right thing to do? And I thought I shouldn't have done that, I need to acknowledge the mistake but it's more than that. I'm in the wrong, not just for the mistake, but for the treatment of people. So, the right thing to do was for the students that copped it to go and say sorry. It relates to the fear [of what people think of me now]. I want to change how I react in a stressful situation like that. I suppose take pause and gain some perspective. [Letting myself down] is part of the embarrassment reaction (T1d).

Again, T1 was highlighting limitations of agency and while in the first incident the acting self was inhibited, in the second action was taken. The initial action of T1 in the second incident was still not desirable, but T1 was able to move forward from that. T1 was also able to recognise the defeat and the embarrassment that stemmed from it. T1 saying sorry to the students suggests that there was some underlying sadness in the situation and breaking the rule that *defeat and sadness must not be displayed* actually resulted in a pleasurable outcome; 'it was the right thing to do'.

T1 was shifting the script to a point where maintaining respectful relationships is important for both younger and older students. The following quote shows the script also shifting in regard to students needing to be controlled:

I reconciled myself a little while ago that a lot of authority as a teacher is entirely bluff. But then it's not bluff really because in fact authority is invested socially so if it's actually about leading in a community, a classroom or a yard or whatever, you standing up and asserting yourself is part of a picture ... Know your stuff but when you come across stuff you don't know be honest about it and say, "look we're going to find out because this is important"... That's a tool for getting through an emotional maze, I suppose. There are just moments with kids ... they push your buttons (*T1e*).

This quote touches on the issue of expectations; T1 initially perceived an expectation that they would act as the authority because that is part of the role of a teacher. Here T1 explores 'authority' not as something someone assumes but something that develops within a system of people. Authority is shared in a collective and everyone has something to contribute, but everyone sometimes needs support.

The future script was rewritten through the collaborative inquiry sessions where T1 became more aware of the role fear and defeat played in the script and rethought the assumption that people can be controlled, which is far more complex and is discussed later in this chapter. Also, T1 articulated that respectful relationships are



important with all students and there is recognition of the dynamic interplay that binds the collective.

## 9.2 The shlong

The feeling of defeat is present throughout the story. There is a struggle on two different levels; firstly, the struggle to reign in Stef's behaviour and secondly the struggle to feel confident about the choices made and future choices T1 may face. T1 expresses a feeling of defeat in relation to trying to teach Stef about appropriate behaviour. In relation to the struggle of being confident in the decisions made and future decisions, T1 is threatened by defeat, but not completely defeated. This struggle sits somewhere between endeavour and battle, there are markers that this is a battle, but there are also markers of progress.

While at the time of the incident T1 was unsure of what to do, the following quote highlights that they had a plan of action moving forward:

I think that the different setting and testing of boundaries is also so multi-levelled that my expectation of Stef in class, in terms of work, is more than in other classes. But in terms of behaviour, it's probably less ... I don't think he'd do the exact same thing again but if he did do it again I feel like if it was the same level of inappropriateness I'd probably pull him aside at the end [of the class] and try and have a quiet word ... [I would reiterate] what I expect of him in class and the general rules (*T1a*).

T1 has identified that Stef's role in their script was limited. T1 expected less from Stef and the student posed a threat because he could potentially do the same thing again. T1 was preparing for the future script. The teacher was also exploring — what behaviours should I not accept? Should I intervene? And, if so how? These questions suggest an element of worry. Worry was not named in the story but T1 is querying their acting self.

T1 was figuring out how to intervene in future but could not really address what behaviour should be acceptable without exploring the assumptions behind why

they had varying expectations for Stef. The following quotes were taken from the subsequent group collaborative session where T1 shared a similar incident with another student that behaved inappropriately in class and caught T1 off guard. T1 connected the two incidents and discussed them within the group. The next quote starts to touch on why Stef might require different expectations from the teacher compared to other students:

I have this theory that Stef and [two other students] only really have negative relationships ... I think, at least with adults. But to different extents, I think that they're different in each class ... [Other students] have told me that in other classes they get sent out way before the white boys, because they just get picked on by other teachers so they think it's unfair. Whereas they said to me that in my class I don't do that so they think it's fair, so then they think they can act differently because they feel like I'm not being racist. If I throw them out of class I am not assuming something about them or that group (T1b).

It is assumed that Stef has 'negative relationships' with adults and could potentially have a negative relationship with T1. There is an implied sense of worry about the potential 'negative relationship' that was also present in the story when T1 stated 'I wondered whether he might have reacted violently' — perhaps even fear over the prospect of violence. The questions around what behaviour should I not accept and should I intervene? is enmeshed with worry. T1e outlines T1's worry around being perceived as racist if they exit a student that is non-'white'.

In the original story, there were also expressions of sadness and perhaps even care or affection and these are entwined in T1b, where T1 was not exiting the students because they wanted to create a positive adult relationship with the students, to ease the sadness of the situation, and offer a caring environment for the students. So, the emotional rule that *teachers should not feel or display love for their students* was impacting on the script. T1 was clearly concerned over what happened to Stef in other classes and the quality of the attachment that they had with Stef, which most likely entailed some level of affection, none of which could be acknowledged so it had to be framed in another way. T1 assumed to know

something about relationships that Stef had with other adults, more specifically other teachers. Another teacher in the group helped address this assumption when asked whether they thought Stef and the two other students were exited more than the 'white' kids:

It's sort of hard to judge when you haven't been in any [other] classrooms ... I know for me, I'll exit a student regardless of the colour of their skin but if they've done the wrong thing, they've done the wrong thing (T2a).

T2 challenges the assumption that Stef is being exited because of his skin colour in at least one other class and that it is an issue of behaviour management not racism. T1 then went on to explain another incident:

There were four boys, when I first started at this school ... they all had similar behaviour. They were all a similar race so when I got their names confused they said I was racist but no ... "it's just that I haven't learnt your names yet". It's an issue of behaviour. They always think it's race (T1c).

The above quote shows the catalyst for T1's worry. Being referred to as 'racist' made T1 fear any future action and racist connotations that such actions may have. Worry was generally accepted and talked about throughout the fieldwork, and given that fear was often nested in worry, perhaps fear plays a stronger role in this story than first obvious. There was another emotional rule at play — *teachers should not feel or display fear*. Due to this rule T1 had disconnected the felt fear from the situation, and rather than being able to acknowledge the fear of seeming racist and the shame of being identified as racist, T1 projected the racism on other teachers. Projection is a defensive process employed when emotion is too painful to contain so a person might project it on another (Bion cited in Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p.46).

The future script was beginning to make a shift because T1's assumptions about why their expectations of Stef were different, and consequently the role that fear or worry played, began to be questioned. The defeat and worry was lifting through collective cohesion derived from the collaborative inquiry process, as can be seen

in the following quote where there is a certain level of acceptance over some defeat:

This is just a really weird job! Your responsibilities but also what's the right thing to do and the proper way to work that with [the student] ... I feel there are ways that I could deal with it better and there's always things that I could do more but I feel like I did as best as I could and I think that that's all I can do at the moment (T1d).

A rewrite in the script allowed T1 to recognise the tension between limitations and expectations resulting in a compromise.

### 9.3 The uniform

In this story, a battle is signalled when T1 felt like they were 'hitting [their] head against a brick wall'. There was a struggle that started out as endeavour but over a period of time ended up being more like a battle. Each day was a battle in regard to the school uniforms. Some days there was a feeling of defeat — the days T1 'couldn't be bothered' recording student names. And some days, defeat threatened — the days that they acted.

The script for the story centres on the assumption that conformity enables teachers to maintain control and therefore enforcing the uniform policy was important. There was also an implied feeling of worry over losing control of the students. The problem was that other teachers did not think that enforcing the uniform policy was 'important' and because of this T1 must have been 'stupid' for doing so. The predicament was bound up with feelings of anger and frustration. The following conversation took place in the collaborative inquiry session that 'the uniform' recount was first shared. The first quote is actually from T2 rather than T1:

Back to the uniform thing, I mean I wasn't good on the enforcement I was just overwhelmed [with coming into a new workplace] (T2a).

T2 identified themselves as a teacher that did not enforce the uniform policy. The quote opened a consideration — was it that other teachers did not think enforcing the uniform policy was important or was it that other teachers had reached a limit of agency that made the acting self unable to address the uniform policy? T1 considered this also and was able to identify with T2, as shown in the following quote:

You weren't focusing on that. I remember when I first started teaching all I was trying to do was get enough classes to be organised, to be ahead of [the students]. Then try and make sure you could semi maintain your class ... It's focusing on what the immediate thing is and so little things like uniforms ... I think it's survival sometimes (T1a).

T1 has outlined that they understood why they may have been faced with a 'lack of support' in relation to other staff enforcing the uniform policy and also recognised that there were limitations to what their teacher peers can achieve at certain times. T1 was alerted to the tension and responded with compromise. The assumption that enforcing the uniform was not important to other teachers might have been justified but not necessarily due to lack of care. Likewise, the conversation alerted T2 to consideration around teachers feeling unsupported and discussed what might be achieved:

When there are conflicts that pull in different directions it really is easier when you can take a side, so much, but there is also a limit to your power, in terms of the number of hours you have available in the day to reflect, to do and take action, and figure out the correct course, so it is survival ... It's about gathering other people around you; what can, not just I, but we achieve together? That keeps the integrity of the community so you are still relating and not just being out there on your own (T2b).

This comment from T2 also clarifies for T1 that T2 recognises the need for T1 to 'take a side', the aloneness of the situation, and the need to survive. The aloneness was highlighted in the story but the underlying sadness and defeat was not. The emotional rule regarding sadness suggests that *sadness is not typically*

*displayed in front of students* but T1 has perhaps defended against feeling sadness or aloneness altogether. Here is where both T1 and T2's position intersect. They both were facing a struggle to survive with the looming feeling of defeat; T1 while trying to enforce the uniform policy alone and T2 in adjusting to a new workplace alone. By T2 acknowledging this T1, who felt 'stupid' for struggling through, is also recognised for the struggle and that it is not a question of 'stupidity' but of: what are our goals? And how can we achieve them together so that surviving is a given? T2 then goes on to ask questions about the common goals of the school in relation to the uniform and more broadly:

To what extent are we enculturating our students? The answer is, we have to be because language is a cultural tool, we use it, but it extends to dress as well and presentableness. But it extends to other cultural assumptions ... Westerners are obsessed with the clock ... But we know we are obsessed with the clock. The bell is the primary cultural tool to that benefit. In terms of enforcing uniform, enforcing attendance and not being late ... How alone am I in that expectation [students arriving to class on time]? I don't think I am, but you wonder in terms of the transfer from class to class too, how are we together going to raise students' understanding that efficient transition is important. And are we indoctrinating them on some level? [That] is the other question I ask myself (T2c).

T2c starts to address assumptions around the importance of rules to foster conformity. In the initial story T1 assumed that conformity provides control but the next quote shows that there are other reasons to consider school rules:

We're trying to get [the students] prepared to realise that a) they've got to work with a bunch of people and what the expectations are when you work with a bunch of people; [b)] how you move around; [c)] how you converse; [d)] getting to places on time ... (T1b).

Initially T1's acting self believed the teachers were expected to enforce the uniform policy because it was a teacher's job. T1b shows that the reason for T1 to enforce the uniform policy is ultimately for the benefit of the student to have the ability to meet future expectations. T1 had previously been saying that enforcing

the uniform policy may have been ‘stupid’ or not that necessary. The conversation led T1 to rediscover why it was important to enforce the school rules, which goes beyond measures of conformity to control student behaviour. The conversation ended with the following dialogue:

T2: It is good to reflect how [school rules] relate to a bigger whole, how do we negotiate our community and what we want it to look like and feel like and be part of ... I also think how we back each other is also something we have learned here. Turning to other people, well if these are the rules, how are we going to enforce them together. As new people enter our community ... keeping the integrity of the community (*T2d*).

T1: I think it should be an ongoing [discussion] (*T1c*).

These comments demonstrate the importance of ongoing dialogue to ensure that assumption is not isolated and disjunction between varying assumptions can be broken down in some way. T1’s story would have been a very different script to that of T2s ‘enforcing the uniform policy’ story. It is not to say that T1 and T2 cannot have differing opinions, beliefs or values but that there is a shared understanding of what those varying opinions, beliefs and values are so that motivation and agency can be more cohesive (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015).

## 9.4 The fragile kid

The struggle for this teacher was in managing multiple tasks at once and ‘running around like a headless chook all day’. T1 endeavoured to manage all tasks with duty and care. However the endeavour turned to battle when the fragile kid exited the class and the chance to undo the sadness was lost. There was the threat of defeat through the day, which tipped to complete defeat at the end of the day when T1 realised that they had completely forgotten to check up on the fragile kid.

The following quote demonstrates a train of thought that focuses on the assumption that some students are too fragile to handle difficult things so they require extra nurturing. It highlights T1’s perceived expectation that they need to be flexible and take on multiple roles.

I just had to draw the line and sort of say, well, as much as I'd love to go and console her, if we stop the class every time that someone was affected or disappointed or upset, nothing would ever happen and it's my duty to make sure the other [students are being taught]. That when it comes down to it, it is my primary role and when I'm doing that well enough then you can dedicate more effort to the other roles (T1a).

The T1a quote formed part of the conversation near the end of the collaborative inquiry session when the 'the fragile kid incident' was first recounted. The quote highlights a feeling of sympathy, or a sadness, that T1 felt. They would have 'loved' to 'console' the student, which also suggests a certain level of care and affection. Also, in the story T1 was concerned about having the fragile kid not feel worse, suggesting an underlying feeling of worry. But *teachers should not feel or display love for their students* and *teachers should not display sadness to students*. Perhaps these rules influenced T1 to encourage student peers to support the fragile kid rather than T1. In a separate conversation, related to comforting students in the background interview, T1 stated:

That's also something that's in the back of my mind too. You've got to look after yourself. What this [student] probably needed was a friend ... a hug or something. [It was] really confronting but I had to be a bit calculating [and stand back] (T1b).

T1b shows another circumstance when T1 was trying to strike a balance in the assumption that eliminating students' worries was their responsibility. While soothing student's worries around assessments can be part of the work of teachers, T1 recognised that a balance between eliminating their worries and ignoring their worries is necessary. A teacher cannot be all things, to all people, at one time. T1a articulates that there are primary tasks that need to be managed first and that while there were limitations of agency in relation to supporting the fragile kid, T1 was agentic in relation to continuing the lesson for the other students. Compromise had been met in what T1 perceived was expected of them to regard students on an individual level while at the same time regard the class



as a whole, but not one at the cost of the other. T1c looks more closely at the assumptions around how the class as a whole or the fragile kid might be expected to behave. The following quotes were taken from the subsequent collaborative inquiry session when another teacher recounted a similar incident featured in *the fragile kid*.

I think in terms of work and academics if you set low expectations, sometimes it can teach kids learned helplessness ... where they say, "I can't do this so I'll just wait for [the teacher] to come and 'I'll rely on [the teacher] to do this". That's not what I want to teach. So, I'm guessing the same thing sort of applies to behaviour ... But everyone's involved and it's a long term process so it's not as though what I do makes or breaks it, it's just a building block (T1c).

T1c draws out the assumption that the class could not handle T1 deviating their attention to the fragile kid, and also the assumption that the fragile kid may have fallen apart because the conversation about the failure did not take place. T1 recognised that while students need support they should not be supported so much that they do not learn how to self-support. Support can also come from many sources, not just from T1. The script began to shift from one involving T1 and the less agentic students to featuring the more agentic students as well as the teacher collective. T1 was striking another balance between being of no or little support to their students and being supportive to the extent that students become helpless; where finding a position in the middle is optimal within a professional team that is also part of the support structure.

There was unexamined underlying emotion. In the initial recount T1 expressed a struggle in managing multiple tasks at once and 'running around like a headless chook all day'; there was a threatening sense of defeat and worry. The above quotes indicate a train of thought for T1 that recognises T1 was trying to be more than was possible. The inability of the acting self to both manage the class and take away the sadness for the 'fragile kid' was not possible, but it was also not necessarily required. T1 was taking on too much responsibility for outcomes that

were beyond their control, leading to feelings of defeat or worry. This position shifted after the assumptions around the recount were examined.

## 9.5 The textbook

A threat of defeat began some time before this story was recounted. At the start of the year T1 endeavoured to get the textbook changed: 'I had already started discussions with the subject coordinator about changing the textbook for next year'. This statement suggests that the struggle had shifted into a battle and that the threat of defeat was greater. T1 was resisting defeat because they were 'putting [their] foot down', though the resistance seemed to weaken when T1 said: 'I should just give in' or 'I feel battered'. The battle is compounded by other related battles, signalled when T1 states: 'it feels like I've just got one more hurdle to overcome and that's the dreadful textbook'. There is another struggle in teaching the subject in the first place.

This story was fuelled by a script where T1 could only be successful if the right textbook was selected and the acting self was limited to follow the script by the actions of the collective. The acting self did not 'know' what to do despite the students saying 'you know'. This quote of T1a is from a subsequent collaborative inquiry session:

Being in a new situation you don't know who you can trust. You don't know who is going to help and who's going to make it more difficult. It has always taken me a long time to trust and be willing to ask for help. I'm getting better at being willing to ask for help. I'm a bit of a control freak ... After our conversation about the textbooks I just went home thinking "what am I going to do?" And we'd talked about asking [for help] so the very first thing that I did the next day was start to actually do that and ask for help, "What do you think I should I do?" I asked the team leader. So, it helps, I mean, I definitely act on what's brought up during these sessions (T1a).

By T1 describing themselves as a 'control freak' they are acknowledging that control is the ambition and to control is to 'know'. When control is threatened a struggle ensues. The textbook symbolises 'control' and freedom from a limitation on two

levels. Firstly, T1 would not be limited by the collective choice of textbook; and secondly, T1 would not be limited in their ability to teach the subject with the 'right' textbook. T1 was desperately trying to fight these two limitations and was feeling like they had been fighting the battle alone, which possibly stems from not being certain who they can trust.

The aloneness in the story gives the impression of an underlying feeling of sadness. Sadness or hurt was implied when T1 explained in the story that 'I'm not really taking it personally', which indicates that there is at least a small element of things actually being taken personally. The lack of acknowledgement of this sadness might stem from the emotional rule that *teachers should not display sadness*.

There was also an implied feeling of worry in the story about whether or not T1 is 'managing it at all well'. Implied worry is further supported by the above question, 'what am I going to do?' T1a not only demonstrates T1's need to feel in control but also their potential to release 'control' and to trust by asking the team leader for help. In the story the 'trust' was placed with the textbook, in T1a the 'trust' was placed with the team leader. The shift from the script featuring T1 succeeding due to them being able to make 'right' decisions to a script where they succeed through a collective effort is evident in T1a. In T1b's quote below the aim to 'control' is confirmed and linked to the desire to make 'the right choice' as well as have the outcome reflect well on T1. There is also recognition that there may not be one 'right' choice.

I feel like there's — and this is something that I know I do a lot — I feel like there's a right and wrong. I feel like there must be a right choice and if there's a right choice then there must be wrong choices. And I'm very aware that I do that a lot. I continually look for the right choice when in fact there might be multiple choices. There might be lots of right choices. In fact, there might be no wrong choices at all ... And that's the thing — obviously I want [the decision] to reflect well on me (*T1b*).

There was recognition that perhaps the existing textbook or any other textbook for that matter might not be so 'dreadful', and that each 'textbook' or 'choice' might have their own merits. The tension provoking the struggle was realised, a compromise was found, and T1 was able to take action collectively to reduce the tension.

## 9.6 The bite

In this story, there was a struggle in trying to control the situation that arose between Nick and Miriam. The endeavour began by T1 thrusting themselves into the situation to prevent more harm, but when Nick bit Miriam T1 felt they were losing the battle and sought outside support, and was left feeling defeated.

The consequent discussion in the collaborative inquiry session led to exploration of the perceived expectations of the acting self, in particular how and why T1 sees it as their responsibility to build a good rapport with each student and to put their own body on the line to prevent conflict.

Obviously, our main role is to teach the kids and if you're probably focusing too much on being their friend and getting on with them then sometimes it doesn't actually work in your favour. Some kids can take that for advantage ... I think it's important that you keep teaching them and making them learn. Strike a balance (T1a).

T1 touches on an element here that also feeds into the assumption that a good rapport between teacher and student will allow T1 to control the class. There is evidence of this assumption in the story when the teacher talks of 'trusting' Nick. The teacher has built a rapport and so 'trusts' that Nick will do what is expected. T1a shows that T1 recognises an urge to think of students as friends as a way to build a rapport.

There is an implied feeling of love through friendship because friendship requires some level of attachment. In the story T1 states that Nick is 'this charming, lovely chap'. The emotional rule that *teachers should not feel or display love for their*

*students* has influenced this story. The power that the loving feelings have is being avoided. T1 has also assumed that the care and affection are being reciprocated; they are fairly confident Nick would not hit them but in T1a they recognise that ‘kids can take advantage of that’.

In the story T1 states that Nick has ‘sort of got two personalities’; he can be charming and he can be violent. When Nick has ‘taken advantage’, T1 loses their confidence and trust in Nick — the rapport is damaged. Given this loss there are implied feelings of sadness. T1 then also had to manage the emotional rule where *teachers should not display sadness to students*. In T1a the teacher was ‘striking a balance’ between how far Nick can test the rapport and push the boundaries at one end of the spectrum and how much T1 calls Nick on his behaviour at the other end of the spectrum, as evident in T1b.

... you don't want to point out the same kid over and over because it doesn't really work sometimes with some students, and you're just yelling. I generally call over the kid and ... just talk to them while the kids are still doing their work. [I ask], “why are you behaving this way today? What do you need to do to improve your behaviour?” And talk them through it, rather than me just saying you're not behaving correctly. So, they sort of take responsibility on how they can improve their behaviour ... I've probably always done [that] but I'm probably more conscious of [talking them through it] now and so I'll probably do it more rather than yelling (*T1b*).

T1b demonstrates a compromise between being able to control students with good rapport and losing control due to the rapport being damaged in a way that involves students taking responsibility for their own behaviour. It was recognised that students have agency. Initially T1 took responsibility for diffusing the conflict by putting their body on the line and assumed that they could have been more proactive to prevent any confrontation, but in T1b the teacher outlines that the student was responsible for their behaviour too and there is a ‘balance’ between the two — there is collective agency.

The sense of worry was highlighted in the story with the statement: 'I wouldn't necessarily say that I feel stressed'. T1 was minimising the stress or worry, further indicated by the comment they were 'a little bit threatened'. The rule that *teachers should not feel or show fear* influences the script. In the story T1 recognised the rule, because if students think a teacher is scared then 'they think they have control'. Later on, T1 notes that: 'I was probably a little bit scared in a way' (T1c).

The fear was still being minimised. Even though in the story T1 was 'back-peddalling' away from Nick's potential violence, there was at least a higher recognition. T1's initial struggle was to diffuse the conflict between Nick and Miriam but another more persistent struggle emerged in the sessions. T1 was also struggling to balance the expectation of preventing violence with complex emotional rules and managing a constellation of conflicting emotion. The script shifted from T1 being able to control the situation through their attachment with Nick to the student taking responsibility for his actions and understanding that he is also part of the collective.

## 9.7 The big guy

In this story, there was a struggle to try to engage the big guy and facilitate his learning while learning how to teach the subject, with a student that was resisting engagement. The endeavour began by me reaching out to the student and offering support but the more I tried to support them, the more I was losing the battle. While I did not explicitly state that I felt defeated I did declare a feeling of 'hopelessness'. Additionally, defeat is implied in the statement: 'He has actually failed even though he had shown so much promise in the past.'

The conversation that flowed from the story highlights that I quickly identified that I had made assumptions about the big guy: 'I had gone [into the class] with assumptions. He presents so confidently' (Jean).

T2 and T3 note that the big guy not turning up to class and disengaging from the class might have very little to do with me and more to do with his world outside of

learning. The conversation also considered the expectations that might be placed on students:

I was that student ... there's a whole slew of semesters where I got medical withdrawals ... it was all high distinction [then] fail, high distinction [then] fail so it could be that it's simply about him (*T2a*).

[The expectation that students will pass] adds a lot of pressure, it doesn't mean you should drop your standards and expectations as a teacher (*T3a*).

This discussion opened dialogue about teachers feeling personally responsible for students that fail and recognising that they are part of a collective and their collective agency is much more powerful than their individual agency.

T4: [I've realised] it's not just my job to teach this student, it's the school as a community who has to respond (*T4a*).

T3: Yeah and if we can find another way to help them and support them and get them through — a different way of approaching learning — we are still succeeding even though they might withdraw ... there [is] progress ... so it's a partnership (*T3a*).

I recognised that I had done my best for the big guy but there was something else that still bothered me:

... there's nothing else that could have been done ... I can accept that but he's not the only student in my class that failed. There were others that failed as well [but this failure bothered me] (*Jean*).

I was clearly worried in the story without explicitly mentioning it, but worry is reiterated in the above quote. I described myself as 'bothered' in the story and I continued to be 'bothered'. T2 responded with:

Sometimes we have expectations [of people] and there's actually no grounding for it but we all do it. It could be the way they speak, it could be the way they

dress — sometimes people just come in and you think “man, they have got it together!” and they can be a complete mess inside and you don't know that (T2b).

I had used the word ‘worry’ but it was so persistent and discomforting that I believe was closer to fear. A conversation about the assumption that the big guy is generally more competent than others, that he has ‘got it together’ based on his size and athleticism, opened up. The expectation that the big guy would be more competent in general led to a discussion that if he was not competent in a particular area, if the assumptions were incorrect then surely, he should be ‘grown up’ enough to ask for help. Then the issue of gender was explored:

T2: [not asking for help is] something in [a male's] make-up (T2c).

T3: ‘... It's a boy thing (T3c).

T4: I think, when you're talking about how men don't ask for help, it's a classic one ... and [the big guy] coming out of a [sporting] culture ... it's not a question of maturity or stupidity, it's cultural (T4b).

The discussion led me to realise that I identified with the big guy. The student ‘not asking for help’ represented an unknown self in me:

[The big guy] had gone through some ... stuff, similar, actually now thinking about it, similar — not the same, but similar, to when I was at [school] ... I actually had some of the same difficulties, going up and down with results and stuff like that and I think that is probably why I feel most sad ... That could have been me, it could have been me and I then think I know what he could have done ... I think that the sadness that I felt, which I thought was for him, was actually for me (Jean).

The sadness was likely for both the student and for me, but had been connected in an unknown way. It is an example of intersubjectivity and the external other being used to develop the identity of the self. So, the student's failure was also my failure in a more intimate way than the other students' failures. At the following session, after some further thinking, I shared some further reflections:



I discovered that helplessness frustrates me and someone choosing to be helpless I find very frustrating ... And I know that that frustration comes from my background — you can't be helpless and that's it (*Jean*).

Frustration was also not mentioned in the story but was obviously underlying. I actually think it was deeper than frustration, it was more like an anger. Due to me identifying with the student, when the student appeared helpless I also felt helpless and in my reality 'helplessness' is not allowed. My acting self would not allow it and that was the source of the frustration and anger. It was not that the big guy elicited the frustration; it was through our connection that I felt frustration, anger and sadness about my own helplessness that had to be resisted. The following quote came from a conversation a week later in reference to the big guy story:

I assumed he was competent because he gave off an "I'm a big strong guy that is too cool to answer your silly questions" vibe because he never offered anything, never interacted ... I take great offence to [the strong guy persona] because it often suggests that toughness is preferable to vulnerability ... and that the qualities often regarded as valuable are assumed inherit in men. I felt I was viewed as less ... [But] I actually fuelled the [perception] because they were all my assumptions ... How do I know why he didn't seek help? (*Jean*).

On the one hand I was saying that helplessness is not allowed but on the other that people not showing vulnerability is offensive. The language I used, 'offensive' and 'he was too cool to answer [my] silly questions', was rather aggressive and to read it back shocks me, which is why fear was implicated. I was afraid of my angry feelings, I was afraid of being exposed and of being vulnerable but *teachers should not feel or display fear*. There was a conflict between the unknown self and the acting self and I was connecting much of the related emotion to the big guy through intersubjectivity. So, when I was feeling frustration and anger it was also directed at the acting self who could not appear to be helpless or show a struggle but the unknown self needed to ask for help and show vulnerability. I saw what I

assumed to be a similar conflict in the big guy, and therefore his actions were a reflection of me.

A less obvious emotional rule at play in this story was that teachers should not feel or display love for their students; through intersubjectivity and my identification with the student I considerably cared for him and his future. I stated: 'I then think I know what he could have done' — I wanted to give the big guy the future that he appeared to require but was not managing to accomplish. Teachers are care-givers' and they need to develop an attachment with their students of all ages (Bergin & Bergin 2009), for the benefit of both the student and the teacher's developing sense of self. Educational institutions may promote non-attachment which diminishes the loving feelings because love is regarded as an obstacle to learning (Stebbins 2010). It was love that motivated me to give to and work for my student, but rather than recognising my loving feelings the emotion turned into fear of possessing such feelings and consequently I was less agentic because my motivations were not clear to me.

Another rule influencing the story was that I could not feel defeat — or any of the emotions clustered with that defeat such as frustration or sadness. There was plenty of emotional avoidance going on that did not alert me to the script in which my acting self played a role, where teachers have happy, engaged and successful students and successful students can be determined by appearance. I was also avoiding a significant other component — that being vulnerable is part of being human and acknowledging it maintains a balance in life. The script was rewritten to: successful teachers have students and they endeavour to teach but recognise the struggle.

## 9.8 The role of defeat and emotional rules

In all of these stories the emotional rule that *defeat must not be shown* influences the story. Each story features a struggle and the actors have to apply either faking or hiding strategies to act as though the struggle is not a bother. In *The bite* the teacher had to fake being calm while they feared violence, in *The uniform* the teacher had to hide their anger. In *The textbook* the teacher states; 'I have a fairly

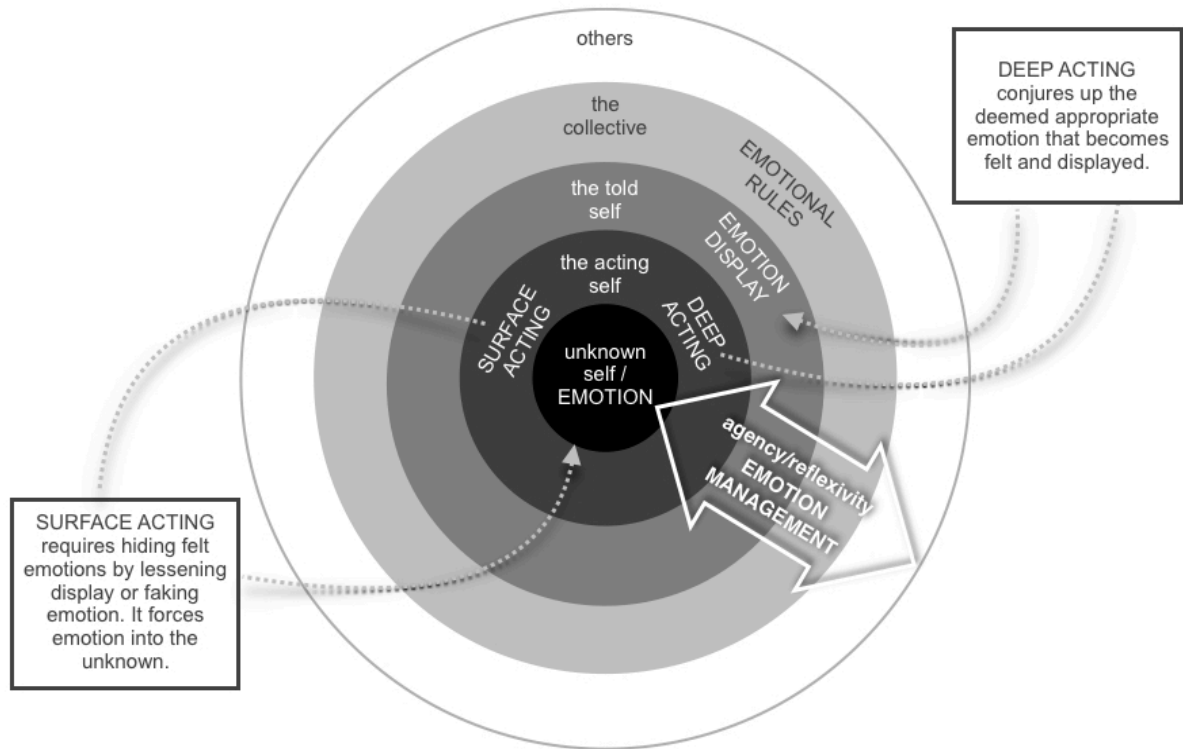
thick skin though, actually I don't'. But the teachers were expected to have a thick skin because the emotional rules, while they are not articulated or taught to anyone, exist (Winograd 2003). Table 9.1 shows the array of emotional rules that played a background role in the stories that unfolded. The emotional rules and emotions that are faded out in the table were explicitly acknowledged in the story. The other rules listed were not necessarily clear to the recounting teachers or to those that shared in the story. All the teachers could be conscious of was a struggle and sense of being overwhelmed — of fighting or losing the battle — and defeat threatening or feeling defeated.

	Emotion		Expectation	Assumption	Agency
	Limitation				
<b>The glob</b> Difficulty controlling 'rioting' students	Teachers should not display anger. Teachers should not feel or display fear.	Mostly anger and some happiness Worry, embarrassment, fear sadness	To act fairly	Teachers and students work together as collective agents	The teacher can recognise errors in judgment and attempt to repair mistakes
<b>The shlong</b> Difficulty responding to Stef's comment	Teachers should not display anger Teachers should not feel or display fear Teachers should not feel or display love for their students	Discomfort, frustration, anger and annoyance Worry, fear, sadness and love	Educate students and prepare them for life	Students should be expected to be respectful	The teacher can have a quiet chat with Stef later to remind him of what is expected
<b>The uniform</b> Difficulty in implementing uniform policy	Teachers should not display anger Teachers should not feel or display sadness	Frustration and anger Sadness and worry	To prepare students for life by enforcing uniform policy	Teachers and students work together as collective agents	By understanding the complications of enforcing the uniform policy the teacher was more content to do so
<b>The fragile kid</b> Unable to support student through a failure	Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students Teachers should not feel or display love for their students Teachers should not display sadness to their students	Sadness frustration, hate and worry Love	Teacher's primary role is to teach	Students can be supported to take responsibility for their action	More comfortable with taking some action (teach the class) rather than attempt to take on all action
<b>The textbook</b> Limited staff cohesion regarding textbook selection	Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and other teachers Teachers should not feel or display sadness	Frustration, discomfort and fear Worry and sadness	Teachers do not have to agree but can support each other	The success of a class is dependent on a collective effort	The teacher had greater confidence to teach future class knowing that they had support
<b>The bite</b> Difficulty controlling Nick, the aggressive student	Teachers should not display fear or anger Teachers should not feel or display fear Teachers should not feel or display love for their students Teachers should not display sadness to their students	Frustration, worry and trust in Nick Worry, fear, sadness, love	Teachers should support students to manage their behaviour	Students can be supported to take responsibility for their actions	The teacher has rethought strategies to try to support Nick in his behaviour management
<b>The big guy</b> Unable to engage student in class	Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students Teachers should not feel or display fear Teachers should not feel or display love for their students	Embarrassment, sadness, guilt and hopelessness Worry, fear, frustration, anger and love	Teachers mostly stick to the unit plan and hopefully pass students	Successful teachers have students and they endeavour to teach	I can work on engaging students in future classes

**Table 9.1** Emotion, assumption, limitation and expectation (part 2)

Table 9.1 shows that there is not a single pattern of emotion the teachers felt they needed to defend against. For example, worry was more conscious for some than others, anger was more conscious for some than others. The only real constancy is that love was consistently less conscious but played a significant part in most of the stories. For example, in *The shlong*, *The fragile kid*, *The bite* and *The big guy* the teachers cared about the quality of attachment with their students. It is also noticeable that worry and sadness play a role in all of the stories. While worry was easily recognised and discussed sadness was less so. The rule that *teachers should not display sadness to students* was articulated through the thematic analysis but the narrative inquiry highlighted the unconscious ways sadness is defended against. The rule being lived by the teachers is more stringent: *teachers should not feel or display sadness*.

Figure 9.1 demonstrates the interplay between Hochschild's (2012) deep acting and surface acting with the self. Deep acting can conjure up the deemed appropriate emotion that becomes felt or displayed through the told self. The process influences the script of one's life and can be seen in Table 9.1 as the faded out emotions — the more obvious emotion in the story. Surface acting, on the other hand, requires hiding felt emotions by lessening the display or faking emotion, where the emotion of the 'genuine self' is pushed into the unknown. It is the emotion that became more visible through rewriting the script. The problem with the emotion being unknown is that the thought to which it is connected also becomes unknown (Pitt & Brushwood Rose 2007). It is thought and knowledge that form the assumptions that write the scripts of each actor and collective.



**Figure 9.1** The self meeting emotional rules

Many of the assumptions and expectations fuelling the scripts featured the teacher having, or needing to have, complete 'control'. Foucault (1979) dispels the idea that anyone can have complete control. To assume control over someone assumes they have no agency and all living functioning people have agency. The idea that people are all agents making conscious choices may appear to be in opposition to the idea that we have unconscious forces that compel us (Rycroft 1995); however, it is not that a person is either agentic or unagentic, because one is compelled by both conscious and unconscious forces. A system of unconscious thought and emotion is necessary to psychic functioning so agency could never be achievable if it relies on complete consciousness. A person can then be either more or less agentic depending on whether or not the unconscious habits of mind that lead to action can become conscious (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). If a person does not reflexively interrogate their underlying assumption and motivation then they may be less agentic. On the other hand, if they reflexively interrogate their assumption and motivation they may be more agentic. Table 9.1 also indicates how the scripts were rewritten for the teacher/collective future stories via the uncovering of

emotion and assumption, which consequently shifted the expectations and alleviated some of the limited agency of the acting self.

Emotions evolve over time and the emotion captured in the classroom at one point in time can shift and change into something else (Fried, Mansfield & Dobozy 2015). The script rewrite is a shift in which there is something rich to be discovered, but with a shift there is change that can be confronting because with change comes uncertainty (Steeves 2006, p.106). It is the uncertainty that provokes anxiety and consequently discomfort and dysfunction. But 'in movement there is energy, in movement there is education, and in movement there is life' (Ibid). Exploring the shift helped the teachers illuminate the collective script — and see new ways of thinking, feeling and ultimately being. While other scripts and actors may exist in the teacher's reality, they could not be seen clearly. Interrogating the unknown self allowed the teachers to consider their value, the importance of their role in a collective agency and the pleasure in what they do (Turner et al. 2009). It motivated them to struggle on and 'improvise' in a relational space (Steeves 2006, p.106).

## Chapter 10

### **Reflexivity: from unconscious to conscious**

This chapter examines the specific collaborative inquiry process that evolved from the project. The final collaborative inquiry process had four stages; *sharing, identifying strengths, perspective and inquiry*. The sharing of stories was the articulation of the teacher's struggle and why and how it was necessary for them to articulate this struggle is considered. The chapter highlights why it became important to identify the strengths in the teacher's action as recounted in their stories. I argue that some stories are more difficult to share because they are only partially conscious and the conscious element signals discomfort and dysfunction: in other words, unpleasure and a lack of agency. The collaborative inquiry process offered a safe space to share the typically difficult stories with a group of teaching peers that had a shared understanding of such struggles which, like a metaphor, provided alternative perspective. Through the shared perspective the teachers began to understand something new about their shared world, but it was the inquiry phase, detailed for each teacher in *Chapter Nine*, that was truly reflexive and led to unconscious thought and emotion becoming conscious. The last part of the chapter details the teachers' reflections on how a collaborative inquiry process might be implemented in a school and brings together the ideas highlighted in this thesis through Figure 10.1, a visual representation of the possible 'movement' or the shifting script for the teachers involved in the process.

Each Action Research Cycle followed a process of plan, act, observe and reflect (Kemmis & McTaggart 1982). In the first action research cycle (ARC1), when I worked one-to-one with each teacher, we met and conversed with no guide. The plan was to use something similar to Hollway and Jefferson's (2013, p.49) free association narrative interview, which meant that the teachers could also express the unconscious meaning and emotion behind the stories. The method suggested is to 'use open questions, elicit stories, avoid 'why' questions and follow respondents' ordering and phrasing' (ibid). The reason for avoiding



‘why’ questions is that they encourage an intellectualisation of the story that disconnects from the emotion.

	Start of ARC 2	Start of ARC 3
Initial stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing</li> <li>• perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing</li> <li>• identifying strengths</li> <li>• perspective</li> </ul>
Inquiry	What did I do? How did I reason? How did I feel? Why would a person reason/feel that way? What will I do?	How did I feel? What was expected of me? In what ways did I feel limited? What assumptions were made? What have we learned?

**Table 10.1** Initial collaborative inquiry process guides

By the end of the first action research cycle I had a collaborative inquiry guide that I took into the second action research cycle. Table 10.1 provides a brief description of the collaborative inquiry guide that was used at the start of action research cycle two (ARC2) and then again at action research cycle three (ARC3). I included a ‘why’ question in the lines of inquiry because in ARC1 I was working one-to-one with each teacher and I was familiar with interpreting unconscious expression — thinking about why someone might think, act or feel the way they do (Brenner 1974a; Frosh 2012a). ARC2 was a group inquiry and the ‘why’ question was more for the teacher collaborators to think about why the teacher sharing their story, or the characters in the story, might think, feel or act the way they did. The ‘why’ question was not really needed in ARC3 because uncovering limitations, expectations and assumptions ultimately answered why.

At the start of ARC1 the initial stage of the process was ‘sharing’ of stories, when a teacher would share the story of a ‘critical incident’. At the start of ARC2 another stage was introduced where the other teacher collaborators would each share a similar story to offer an alternative ‘perspective’. Throughout ARC2, when the teachers and I had come together as a group, changes to the process

emerged. At the start of ARC3 another initial stage was formally added where the teacher collaborators identified the strengths in the role that the recounting teacher played in the critical incident. Identifying strengths had started to surface as an important part of the process in ARC2. Also, the lines of inquiry shifted to include questioning around limitations, expectations and assumptions. Each of these stages are explained in more detail in the following sections throughout this chapter.

The pseudonyms established in the Introduction have mostly been used in this chapter, aside from in the *Identifying strengths* section and the *Inquiry* section, which uses the T1, T2, T3 and so on system. In the *Identifying strengths* and *Inquiry* sections pseudonyms have been withheld because some of the quotes link to particular stories in *Chapter Eight*. The teachers have been quoted a similar amount of times across the chapter: Alex five times, Ash, Chris and Terry four times, Drew and Jordan three times.

## 10.1 Sharing

The first action research cycle was a time for us to determine the incidents that were the catalysts for a perplexing emotional response and to name the conscious emotions. In that first cycle, it also became clear that the incidents were not necessarily problems that needed solving. Frequently, there was not a solution, not even multiple solutions. They were not necessarily current dilemmas because typically the time for action or a solution had passed. Or, they were dilemmas but they were collective dilemmas where one person's action was limited to make any impact on the future. There are often hidden elements of power and interests in the dilemmas of teaching; for example, '[w]ho benefits from what I/we as a teacher/teachers do? In whose interests are we working? Who is actually determining the what? – and why? – questions in my/our work?' (Kelchtermans 2009, p.268). The choice had been made by the teachers or an action had been carried out by another and it was the result of the choice or action — and the unanswered 'who', 'what' and 'why' questions — that provoked the emotional response. While the incident may have been a

dilemma itself, the sharing of the story was the articulation of the struggle, and while the acting self had been limited, confronting the underlying questions might have impacted on future agency in relation to future incidents. That is why I have referred to the teachers' stories as 'critical' incidents.

The quotes below highlight that there are limitations to what can be shared, with whom, and when. For example, the staffroom is a place of sharing, though the desire to and effectiveness of sharing in that environment depends on: 1) what is intended to be shared, 2) who is available to listen, 3) the quality of the environment in which a teacher finds themselves. The following quote has been chosen to highlight that what is intended to be shared influences the ability to share it:

[A conversation might not happen in the staffroom] particularly when it's something — sometimes we talk about the things that are actually embarrassing to talk about. You know [the teacher] was really embarrassed about that [critical incident]. There was another one ... that I talked about and I was a bit embarrassed to talk about it. I flipped out today in a way that I shouldn't have flipped out and when I went upstairs after the excursion, and talked to [a staff member] about my day, I didn't mention the fact that I had flipped out (*Ash*).

Ash states that some things are embarrassing to share and that sharing certain information may place one in a position of being judged and furthermore facing repercussions. Also, emotion can dictate what we are willing to admit to others, which is how the emotional rules take hold. Teachers do not necessarily talk seriously about their typical experiences of worry and frustration because those feelings need to be kept hidden (McDonough 2011; Ramvi 2010). Teachers generally limit their interaction to fit within 'preconceived notions of how educators *should* interact — what they *should* think and talk about' (Shapiro 2010, p.616). The emotional rules impact on one's dynamic view of 'self' and influence the acting self — whether one acts as an impulsive self or a false self, or reaches a compromise between the two. Alex's comment below shows a struggle between impulsive and false self. The impulse for Alex would be to 'just

grab' their teacher collaborators in the corridor 'and just start talking', but their false self is preventing them from doing that because previous reality testing has told them that is not appropriate behaviour. The emotional rules are at play where emotion, 'warmth' and whatever other emotion might flow from an incident, is being avoided:

I think when you pass [other teacher collaborators] in the corridor there's this nice friendly smile. I really found that from those two individuals. ... It's a feeling of warmth I think between us all. But I don't know if I could just grab them in the corridor and just start [talking about a critical incident] myself ...but I feel supported by them, for sure (*Alex*).

Jordan's quote below describes being initially 'hesitant' to share, even in the collaborative inquiry sessions where the emotional rules were in question. Jordan, Ash and Alex clearly outline that sharing some thoughts and feelings can be dangerous, so effectively sharing depends on *what is intended to be shared* and whether it is deemed appropriate. The institutionalised emotional rules are stifling their ability to reality test and if reality testing determines the value of an idea (Brenner 2002; Freud 2005; Frosh 2012a; Rycroft 1995), then they are being limited in looking critically at their world and asking the 'who', 'what' and 'why' questions.

It's been really good. At first I was sort of a bit hesitant I suppose, when you're sharing with others, but then when they shared and then you sort of listened to them, it's been really good. And it's been good for my own reflection in teaching (*Jordan*).

Teachers need a safe environment to reality test in an emotionally charged workplace. Others that work within collaborative partnerships such as Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) and Wong et al. (2014) concur that a safe space is needed to challenge complex assumptions and perhaps even the system within which one works. In relation to the sharing of 'embarrassing' information, who the teachers are willing to share with depends on who can be

trusted with that information and those *trusted people need to be available to listen*. Chris highlights a situation when trusted people are available:

I think this ability to — the opportunity to sit down and talk to people, and people I wouldn't normally associate with, has been good. ... [W]e've wandered over to each other and kind of had some informal chats and that's been really good. Some of the things that we've used in the discussions, I've actually used in a couple of other situations with individuals (*Chris*).

Chris's quote also flags that without the collaborative inquiry sessions their 'trusted people' might not have become 'trusted people' or have been available to 'wander over to' and have informal chats. It is because Chris had the opportunity to build relationships with 'people [Chris] wouldn't normally associate with' that has led the 'trusted people' to be available in this way. Though 'wandering over' and 'informal chats' might not allow the collaborative inquiry process to unfold formally, at least as Alex stated the teachers might 'feel supported by them'. The following quote from Terry also highlights the importance of developing a relationship with teaching peers to be able to share:

From my point of view, it's been therapy and it's also been developing relationships with [other teacher collaborators]. ... I think this way of putting some time aside to work on emotions but with a structure — like, you debrief in the staffroom a lot in an unstructured way, and you should, but I did like having a bit of structure and being a bit more conscious of turn taking and maybe going to someone else for a conversation. [Also], to limit participants because in a staff room everyone might pile into a conversation — but I just want to talk with "blah" (*Terry*).

Who is available to listen might be an issue, but Terry is highlighting that even when there are people available, there are other factors that might limit the fruitful sharing of stories. Too many people coming together might make turn taking a struggle. Also, Terry and Chris both mention the 'time' or the 'opportunity to sit' together and focus on sharing as useful, which might not happen as easily or be uninterrupted in corridors or staff rooms. Effective

sharing also depends on *the quality of the environment* in which a teacher might find themselves. Ash, Alex, Chris, Terry, quoted above, and Drew, quoted below, all highlight that informal chats by teacher collaborators seeking each other out and applying strategies used in the collaborative inquiry sessions might unpack an incident, but facilitation of some kind is required to enact a formal collaborative inquiry process:

I'd still go and vent to my colleagues in the staffroom or after work drinks on a Friday but it was all negative and just wingeing and saying 'Oh, oh, oh', you know, it was not productive at all. It wasn't cathartic getting it out. It still doesn't really settle your anxiety — not anxiety but, your doubts I guess, and didn't really learn anything from it. ...Yes, [the collaborative inquiry process] is really kind of proactive (*Drew*).

Drew is highlighting the impact of dysfunctional emotion that stifles action and instead compels the self to look for blame (Winograd 2003), which stems from the emotion needing to be repressed in the first place (Turner 2009). Sharing the critical incident was 'cathartic' for the teachers. Ramvi's (2010, p.336) study indicated a similar experience where, '[i]t was as if the pain would evaporate if [the teachers] could only tell each other about the difficult event'. Drew describes the collaborative inquiry process as 'venting' and Terry as 'therapy'. Chris and Jordan associate a feeling of contentment with the process; it is 'really good' and left Alex with a 'warm' feeling.

The collaborative inquiry process helped teachers foster supportive relationships within their work environment and this proved useful to them. However, the nature of the collaborative inquiry process could not be replicated in informal settings due to three conditions not necessarily being met; 1) feeling secure in what is intended to be shared, 2) having trusted people available to listen, and 3) the quality of the environment being conducive to sharing. The teachers' sharing their emotional stories 'is important for the reduction of emotional suffering' (Zembylas 2005). The sharing space in the collaborative inquiry sessions helped prevent the 'secret stories' being replaced by 'cover stories' (Clandinin and Connelly cited in Steeves 2006). The emotional rules

lessened their grip and the honest sharing of emotion increased trust and solidarity among teaching peers (Shapiro 2010).

## 10.2 Identifying strengths

In ARC1 the teachers were quick to recognise and acknowledge their limitations of agency — the things they could not or did not do. Shapiro (2010, p.617) declares that: '[w]e share collective memories of educational triumphs, classroom tensions, and — perhaps most significantly — a secret dread of what we're not doing "right"'. Two narratives from the first action research cycle demonstrate the 'secret dread' — *The glob* and *The textbook*. In *The glob*, the teacher aimed to gain authority and take control of a messy situation, but that aim was not met and the principal was called to take control of the situation. In *The textbook*, the teacher lacked the confidence to teach their subject content with the current textbook and another textbook was required to instill this missing confidence. Limitations of agency were also highlighted in the other narratives, but these two particular narratives were shared in the first action research cycle where it was noticed that the limitations of agency were often a significant part of the recount of the incidents. The ways in which the teachers were agentic were not often recognised by themselves, so building into the collaborative inquiry process an opportunity for the teachers to recognise and acknowledge their agency within the critical incident became important. The quotes below express how the perceived 'negative' elements of what one does come to mind first and foremost before the perceived 'right' elements:

I think [identifying strengths in ourselves] is sometimes the hardest thing for us to do. Often, I go to the negative, because that's the one that is driving me crazy and sometimes we automatically forget to actually acknowledge what we do — what's happening right ... (T1a).

It's really difficult to pat myself on the back and I really break myself down a lot more than I do pat myself on the back, so I need people to tell me that I'm doing a good job (T2a).

Due to the critical incidents often being laden with unpleasurable emotions the limitations of agency were also highlighted, whereas if the incident shared was laden with pleasurable feelings the teacher was able to recognise and acknowledge their agency in the situation. Similarly, Winograd (2003) noted that even when feelings such as joy and satisfaction were experienced in his teaching practice, he tended to write about 'darker emotions' in his practice journal that alerted him to 'teaching problems'. In my research, while there was still much discussion on pleasurable emotion, despite the incidents that the teachers described typically provoking unpleasurable emotion, they would mostly acknowledge and name the unpleasurable emotion. However, below is an example of a teacher sharing a story laden with pleasurable emotion; they shared this story before the collaborative inquiry process started:

I did a really awesome thing today. Can we talk about something else for a second? So, I'm playing this game called Jeopardy ... about the test that is tomorrow ... And there's this kid in my class, [Greg], who is a smart kid, but he's not the brains that people go, "Oh this person's an ace in class", but he ... was out for the first half of the class. By the time he had come in we'd almost finished and then I said, "you know what [Greg] it's going to be you versus the rest of the class, you get one shot at every question", and he smashed it! Out of 25 questions he got 22 of them right and the whole class is looking at him going, "we thought [another kid] was the brains". ... This kid's just had a total reworking in everybody's head. ... [I wasn't surprised] because he's come up to me and said, "I really like [this subject], I really want to get an A, what else can I be doing?" So he's shown me that side of him, which is why I felt comfortable saying [Greg] versus everybody else. ... Yeah I'm chuffed for [Greg] at the moment (T3a).

The above quote links pleasurable feelings of happiness and surprise to the agency of the teacher in that they 'did a really awesome thing' — their actions led to an incident that had a positive outcome. Considering that the teacher shared this story as though it was outside of the scope of the collaborative inquiry process — it was 'something else' — might suggest that the collaborative inquiry process itself was a catalyst for unpleasurable emotion. I



do not believe this to be the case. As highlighted in *Chapter Seven* and Table 7.3, in ARC1 pleasurable emotion such as happiness was discussed more frequently. Unpleasurable emotion became front and centre due to the process in ARC2 inquiring into underlying assumptions that implicated limitations and expectations through the question; ‘why would one reason/feel that way?’ It is not to say that the pleasurable emotions faded or unpleasurable emotion became stronger, but that the teachers needed to talk about the tension of limitations and expectation. So, it must be recognised that unpleasurable emotion is weighted in some way in ARC2 and ARC3 but I don’t believe that the collaborative inquiry process provoked an unpleasurable ‘emotional contagion’ because contentment was the second most emotion referenced of the eight notable emotions throughout all the action research cycles. Unpleasure and pleasure cannot be so easily distinguished.

In the last section, it was noted that it was easy for the teachers to talk about the more pleasurable moments among peers and therefore the teachers chose to use the collaborative inquiry process to confront the typically more difficult moments. The purpose of this process was not to ‘dig’ into the teacher’s woes but to identify what puzzled them, whether the puzzlement was filled with pleasure or unpleasure — typically it was a combination of both. While searching for unpleasure was not the specific aim of this probing, it found unpleasure. I do not see this result as a ‘problem’, but rather as further evidence of the emotional rules to which teachers are bound where both ‘unpleasure’ and ‘love’ are almost considered ‘naughty’ words and neutrality is the aim.

The teachers were initially more conscious of the unpleasurable, their limits, and how they did not meet perceived expectations. In other words, they were conscious of a tension between limitations and expectations that made them feel uncomfortable. For example, the teacher recounting *The glob* described a similar situation in a group collaborative inquiry where they again yelled at students in the hallway. *The glob* was recounted in ARC1 where the teacher worked one-to-one with me. The similar, yet different, recount of the ‘yelling in

the hallway incident' took place in ARC2 where the teacher recounted the incident to the collaborative inquiry group. By this stage, because of the teacher's strong perception of their own limits and failure to meet expectations, identifying their strengths within the incident was being trialled after a story was shared. In both recounts the teacher hardly recognised their own agency, instead emphasising their limitations. The quote below relates to the second 'yelling in the hallway' incident where the teacher described themselves as being overwhelmed with emotion. T4a shows that while there were limitations to what the teacher could do due to being overwhelmed, there was also action that they could and did take, to remedy 'yelling at the students':

What stood out for me [in the collaborative inquiry sessions] was the anecdote I told about yelling at students in the hallway and when [the other teacher collaborators] were both very encouraging about [it], because [one of the teacher collaborators] actually witnessed it a bit — me apologising to students. It was kind of a relief to be told you're doing it right. And that I think symbolised for me a lot of good moments in that session where you start to value — we start to realise why it is important to reassure people that as black as you're feeling about maybe something you've done or something that's made you the way you feel, that you're not evil or you're not outside the range as being human, that it is understandable (T4a).

In T4a the teacher emphasises that they actually apologised to the students that they yelled at in the hallway, which was an omission from the original recount. It was not until the witnessing teacher pointed out the strength of the apology that the recounting teacher remembered that they actually had apologised. T4a also describes the connection that Winograd (2003) highlights between dysfunctional emotion and inhibited agency; when a teacher is feeling 'black' they might feel like they are not 'doing it right'. It took reassurance from someone else to remind the teacher they had done something positive. The following quotes reiterate the sentiment of the positive impact of identifying the strengths in the acting self:

[My peers highlighting the strength of the way I acted in the incident] just made me feel reassured as well, that you can't be everything, you can't do everything perfectly ... Yeah it was really good to be able to put out the mistakes that you've made or the problems that you're encountering, knowing that even if you're [a different subject teacher] or doing something completely different, there's always commonality amongst it and we're all in the same boat ... And just having someone external, kind of, evaluating you, but it's non-threatening at all, and it really just helped to reassure you when they say you've actually done this and this and this well. It really settles it in my mind on some of those problems that otherwise I would have just 'ah, ah, ah' been at the back of my head forever (*T5a*).

... working with our strengths [was good] so that you don't feel like you're being pulled down all the time, you have to actually get risen up a little bit by the challenges (*T2b*).

*T5a* states 'we're all in the same boat'. The emotional rules and the unspoken expectations of teachers intensify their sense of responsibility, which influences their sense of achievement, and without strengths-based teacher peer feedback there is no counter balance (Gallant 2013). Teachers are in 'the same boat' because they are experiencing similar struggles, but they mostly face them in isolation unless time is made to seek balance. Just as an experience of emotion cannot be easily divided into pleasurable and unpleasurable, agency cannot be divided into being unagentic or agentic. For example, the teacher that quoted *T4a* perceived themselves as unagentic because they yelled at the students to no avail, but was agentic in a way they could not discern. As long as a person is living they are not likely to be completely unagentic (Foucault 1979). This section demonstrates that while limited agency might be prevalent in the teacher recounts, it was important to discover and name the ways in which the teachers were agentic at that same moment. Similarly, it is important for someone who is feeling 'black' and overwhelmed with unpleasurable emotions to acknowledge that pleasurable emotion is present and possible and can grow in intensity.

In a way, the teachers focusing on their limited agency — the catalyst for unpleasurable feelings of which they were not necessarily conscious — was a way to project those feelings. By focusing on, and retelling, uncomfortable aspects of a story one might be projecting the painful feelings on to the listener and for the listener to help process, or metabolise, the pain they need to acknowledge and accept the pain of the experience (Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p.46). So, teachers turning to each other at the end of sharing a story and saying ‘you should have done this’, or even ‘next time you could do this’, which is really the same as ‘you should have done this’ — is the same as throwing the pain back at them. That response does not acknowledge or accept the pain. Instead it minimises it and confirms their limits that provoked the pain in the first place. In contrast, highlighting the strengths in their action acknowledges the unpleasure and the limitations of agency but also brings to the surface pleasure and agency. Then pleasure and unpleasure and limited agency and agency can be realised as a whole, showing the potential for growth. The teachers can then truly be ‘in the same boat’.

Each teacher could not readily identify agency or pleasure in the critical incidents. Implementing a way of discovering what was not easily visible became necessary, and identifying the strengths in the action was only a start. Productive collaboration needs to ‘move beyond the celebratory’ (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler cited in Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.141). Both ‘successes and failures are seen as part of a teacher’s journey of continued growth and development’ (McDonough 2011, p.195). T2b articulates the inherent ‘challenge’ of teaching and how meeting these challenges in some small way can ‘pick one up’. Teachers are unavoidably vulnerable to failures and sharing their stories can help validate each other’s experiences (Winograd 2003). Specifically identifying the teachers’ strengths in their action reminded them of their worth, but to make visible what motivated their action, further steps were required.

### 10.3 Perspective

Going into ARC2 it was clear that the critical incidents were not problems that needed solving; rather than seeking advice the teachers were seeking the narrative of a similar experience — another perspective. Sharing perspectives was a stage of the collaborative inquiry process where the teachers listening to the story of the critical incident could share their own story. This stage was not about making judgment of whether or not the teacher acted in a way that was deemed, in the opinion of another, right or wrong, or was it about finding a solution to a problem. Sharing a perspective in this case meant that each teacher listened to the recount and thought of a similar situation in which they had found themselves and faced a similar set of limitations, expectations and emotion. The teachers identified more easily with limitations and expectations because, as outlined in the previous section, particularly limitations of agency were easier to recognise and acknowledge.

As discussed in *Chapter Eight*, expectations and limitations are linked because expectations drive the teachers forward while limitations are the inverse push backward. Both limitations and expectations were more easily identifiable than underlying assumptions, though all are interconnected. Framing the critical incident could be done by asking the recounting teacher: 1) How did you feel? 2) What was expected of you? and 3) in what ways did you feel limited? These specific questions emerged as important in ARC3. For example, in ARC2 I was asking: how did you feel? How did your emotional response impact on your action? In ARC3 I understood the importance of expectations, limitations and assumptions. After answering those questions, the other teachers could then contemplate a situation that was not the same, but would elicit similar answers. For example, after the teacher recounted *The bite* story I shared a story I experienced where a secondary student started threatening another while knocking around furniture.

It was often commented by the teachers that finding a similar story was the hardest task of the process. The result was that each teacher would then share a story that provided another way of seeing the initial critical incident — how

they perceived the initial recount in a recount of their own. In ARC2 and ARC3 we worked in groups of three to four teachers including me, so there were always multiple perspectives to consider. The following response from a teacher participant demonstrates the impact of connecting with peers on the ability to reflect and stemmed from the question: has it been helpful to connect with other teachers and actually find out about them and their world?

Absolutely yes. Well they're both really interesting people. With really interesting stories and those connections made me reflect on my story too and that's just good for you I think, that kind of connection (*Terry*).

What Terry is highlighting here is that new meaning emerged from the shared stories. A person's history impacts on how experiences are interpreted (Clandinin 2013; Frosh 2012a). So, Terry's ability to interpret current experience was influenced by past experience, but teachers sharing their stories expand the ability to interpret — others' experiences become part of the self. The intersubjective relationship between Terry and the other teachers was being clarified. Many of the responses strongly suggest that others' perspectives assist reflection. The following quote was a response to the question: 'do you think that hearing others' perspectives increased reflection and has impacted your ability to think or act or reason?'

Yeah. I think so. Because you're always having conversations with the other staff in these discussions, you learn what they've done in certain situations so then I think it's easier because you're in that same sort of situation and you know what to do; or it's a good method in dealing with that situation (*Jordan*).

The teachers were being exposed to a conceptual metaphor of their own predicament. While metaphors often link unfamiliar concepts to familiar concepts to gain a better grasp of the unfamiliar concept (Carpenter 2008; Daley 2001; Lakoff & Johnson 1980), the conceptual metaphor can also reacquaint a person with the once familiar like a reflexive lens. For example, Terry states: 'those connections made me reflect on my story too' while, Jordan comments: 'you're in that same sort of situation'. Both teachers are signalling

that they are reflexively being reacquainted with their own story, as evident in the following remarks:

I think a couple of the analogies really helped because I generally do that. When people have problems, I find an analogy, even if it's not very relevant, and it helps to kind of make you think about your situation very differently and I think that was nice, hearing the analogies from all the different teachers, that it does all happen to us (*Alex*).

I've always been reflective but I sometimes think; why is this happening? Why are you feeling a bit angry or with angst? But that's part of it. So, I think the one thing that the process has done is the fact that you can reflect with other staff members [and seeing] maybe different ways of handling things (*Chris*).

The other element in these quotes is that hearing others' perspectives can inform future action. By listening to other's perspectives the teachers learned 'different ways of handling things', or 'a good method in dealing with [a] situation'. The conceptual metaphors informed how they might act in similar situations in the future. Jordan stated: 'you learn what [the others have] done in certain situations', which might influence future action. There is a difference between learning what others have acted and being told how to act, which is necessary to emphasise because sharing stories from other's perspectives was not about advice giving. Jordan's statement also highlights the willingness and importance of the teachers to choose their future action. It is necessary for teachers to carve out their own role in the collective script (Hilferty 2008). The following quote also touches on this issue:

'But even sessions where it wasn't necessarily my issue that we were talking about, but it was somebody else's issue, they were pretty useful in themselves in that a lot of our job is reflecting, and it really helped you to reflect on your own [situation], which felt good most of the time' (*Ash*).

Ash described the others' stories as 'pretty useful', suggesting they led to practical use and highlighted that it was not necessary to be the recounting

teacher of the critical incident to gain some 'use' from the collaborative inquiry process. Early on in ARC3, when Group 2 first formed, hearing more than one recount in one session was trialled but it proved too difficult to get through the process thoroughly for either incident. Ash's quote indicates that it was not necessary to try.

The stage of gaining others' perspectives led me to wonder if all of the collaborators need to be teachers. The question was sparked because many of the stories shared were not necessarily within a school context, some were from previous work places before becoming a teacher. Some of my stories were from a university setting which is teaching, but there is a point of difference. My response to the question is perhaps not all need to be teachers. However Jordan, Alex and Ash all indicate that the conversations were enriched by the commonality of position, because it was teachers talking to teachers having an understanding about what teachers do. Their observations are consistent with Groundwater-Smith et al.'s (2012) suggestion that professional learning is supported by:

... mutual understanding of good teaching; teacher responsibility for direction of the research [in this case self research] and regular meetings between teachers and teacher educators [in this case the facilitator] that help to support trust and good relationships.

(Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.93)

The connections made stimulated inquiry into Kelchtermans' (2009) important 'who', 'what' and 'why' questions. The sharing of other's stories helped the teachers contemplate their history and their role in their script of the past, and compare this with other scripts. In the previous section one of the teachers made reference to the teachers being 'in the same boat'; similarly the sharing of stories placed the teachers on the same stage. The recounting teacher was able to find their role in another's script and the listening teachers were able to find themselves in the recounting teacher's script; a shared script began to emerge.



## 10.4 Inquiry

After the process of sharing, identifying strengths, and listening to others' perspectives, inquiry began and professional learning flowed. It is difficult to capture the process of inquiry and the shift for each teacher because: 1) the collaborative inquiry sessions were a space of free flowing thought where the teachers were not often prompted to answer specific questions but to report on experiences; and 2) often the discoveries shared were from a collaborative voice. Each teacher's individual discoveries were part of a whole that was often not in relation to one specific incident but to the broader themes that emerged.

Reflexivity is a transformative process (Ryan & Bourke 2013). While the previous stages were somewhat reflexive, the inquiry phase allowed the teachers to interrogate themselves in a way where the dilemmas of the incident if not interrogated may have been perpetuated in future incidents. The process was not just about what happened in the past; the teachers also connected the past to new understandings of the future, as outlined in *Chapter Nine*. The stage of sharing other's perspectives started the reflexive process with a focus on the scripts of the past. The inquiry stage allowed the scripts of the future to appear. For example, the following dialogue of T1, the recounting teacher, highlights inquiry into a critical incident, where they were put into a position of responsibility and had to make an important decision, but were hesitant to do so without extensive consultation with concerned others.

T2: It's normal [to canvass options], but [your decision has to be] within your parameter of comfort and knowledge.

T1: Hmm.

T2: And yes, you'll push yourself a little bit but you don't want to do too much because you don't want to go around the bend, you've got to ...

T1: ... yeah and that's the thing. It's got to be manageable.

T2: It's learning. It's all development and next year will be easier and you'll be experienced at it.

T3: ... when you're thinking about it in terms of 'Is this the right call? Is there one right call? You are not carrying out a command response and you're

thinking that you're doing something wrong. What I'm trying to say to you is, in fact, you're doing a lot right.

T1: The word that you used about [choosing a] “preferable” [option] struck me most about that.

T3: Preferable.

T1: Yes.

T2 and T3 had shared similar incidents and from them flowed inquiry into: 1) how much effort is expected to go into consultation; 2) whose expectations are they; 3) what limits one in making a decision; and 4) what assumptions are being made? T1 was under the assumption that extensive consultation had to take place and questions 1) and 2) explored that. T2 confronts the assumption by stating ‘you’ll push yourself a little bit but you don’t want to do too much’, which helped T1 discover that actually those expectations are not necessarily coming from teaching peers. Also, T1 had been placed in a position of responsibility to make a decision so the expectation of consultation was not coming from administration. Where was the expectation coming from?

This leads to question 3) where the answer lies in T3’s question, ‘Is there one right call?’ T1 was making an assumption that there was a right answer and searching for it was inhibiting the ability to act. When T1 states: ‘the word that you used about [choosing a] “preferable” [option] struck me most’, they are referring to a story recounted where T3 talked about making a difficult decision with many possibilities and choose the most preferable path. It was not an ideal response but it was a response. T1 being ‘struck’ by the word “preferable” was a moment of consciousness that illuminated a shared aspect of the teachers’ worlds.

Would T1 have come to explore these questions if they reflexively pondered independently? Reflexivity does not necessarily offer distance, particularly without others’ perspectives (Blasco 2012). T1 needed T2 and T3 to help interrogate the incident to gain distance and understand the incident in new

ways. So, not only was the process transformative via reflexivity, it became what Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) refer to as a transformative partnership.

The inquiry process did not stop at the end of the collaborative inquiry session. The teachers continued to reflexively ponder what was discussed in the sessions, which often led to action, suggesting that scripts had shifted. For example, in the next collaborative inquiry session after T1, T2 and T3's discussion above, T1 shared the following reflexivity:

[Since the collaborative inquiry session things have been] a lot better. I think that having spoken to everybody, I had a bit more confidence in myself to make decisions. I kind of realised that just because I've made a decision that doesn't necessarily agree with somebody else, doesn't mean I haven't listened to them. It doesn't mean that I haven't done my due diligence I've got all of these options and I can have this opinion and I can confidently make a decision, which is what I've done (*T1b*).

Agency is influenced by social, cultural and political forces and requires a casting back to change future scripts (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). T1b states that 'having spoken to everybody' the shift was enacted. Thinking of the processes of agency and reflexivity only in a linear fashion however, from past, to present, to future, does not represent the process well. Thought and emotion were revisited cyclically to uncover deeper thinking, which also made the shift difficult to capture and represent in the linear fashion of a thesis. The following quote of T2a is an example of one teacher describing cyclic reflexivity:

When I'm driving home, after those sessions, I'd be thinking about what was said and what was done. I think ... [having a bit more of a regular session] ... means that you're still thinking about it. So, you think about the conversation driving home and I'd probably still think about different things connected with that for a couple days ... but then there could be something that comes up where you could actually then put some of these things into place. So sometimes it might be at the back of your mind and only comes forward when

it's necessary ... I've found it really interesting because I've actually had to reflect a lot more than I've had to in the past. A lot more (*T2b*).

Throughout the process the teachers often had ongoing themes that they were working through and the same teacher discussed similar incidents. For example, in Table 10.2 it can be seen that not only were there common themes for each teacher, there were common themes for each group, perhaps indicating the teacher's career stage. For example, Group 2 were all early career teachers and often grappling with managing student behaviour, whereas Group 1 were more mixed in terms of professional experience. The ongoing themes for each teacher were also evident and the critical incidents were sometimes repetitive in specific detail. For example, the teacher that recounted two similar incidents where they yelled at students in the hallway or another teacher recounted two similar incidents where a student threatened violence. '[A]gency is always informed by past experience, including personal and professional biographies' (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). Whether or not the initial incident uncovered thinking that led to attunement to other similar incidents or was a result of each teacher's state of mind and position is unknown. The different patterns emerging between each group could reflect both the individual's state of mind and position and the continual revisiting of the thinking around the incidents collectively.

	Group 1			Group 2		
Sessions	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
1	Control/ gender	Family violence/ gender	Pedagogy/ collegial tension	Teacher-student relationships/ teacher responsibility	Teacher-student relationships/ teacher responsibility	Teacher student relationships/ teacher responsibility
2	Control/ teacher-student relationships	Violence/ gender	Collegial tension/Control	Teacher-student relationships/ teacher responsibility		Teacher-student relationships/ teacher responsibility
3	Pedagogy/ collegial tension	Collegial tension/ time management	Control/ teacher-student relationships			
4	Control/ teacher-student relationships	Teacher responsibility / time management/ collegial tension	Teacher responsibility/ collegial tension			
5	Pedagogy/ teacher responsibility	Teacher-student relationships/ collegial tension/ control	Control/ collegial tension			
6			Teacher responsibility/ collegial tension			

**Table 10.2** Critical incident themes

The teachers' attitude towards how emotion is experienced in teaching did not really change significantly because they came into the project with a realisation that emotion played an important role in teaching. What did change is their understanding of how emotion impacted on their work and that there were unconscious forces at play. Bringing the emotional responses into consciousness helped them make decisions about their action. So, while the inquiry stage was shedding light on the limitations, expectations and assumptions, emotion was also being explored. The following quote highlights such an exploration:

You know that teaching is emotional but the nature of it, the further investigation into it, yes that has definitely changed for me. Again, not through a miraculous change but as you explore, and you take that step — [in an anecdote], I was describing embarrassment and you clarified it as fear, which is what embarrassment is, fear of social rejection more-or-less. You get moments like that, those little moments of education (*T3b*).

As Ramvi (2010, p. 340) suggests: 'to think with feeling makes it possible for one to take responsibility for one's own actions and put them into words'. Insight does not stop the feeling, or change the fact that in certain situations emotional pressure may build and feel overwhelming, 'but thinking about these dynamics does increase the possibility of metabolising the experience' (ibid). The inquiry led to 'education' as mentioned in *T3b*. The formal collaborative inquiry process that evolved can be seen in Table 10.3. As the collaborative inquiry guide evolved over time there were several versions. The earlier versions contained more specific inquiry into the emotional experience and the last version also includes inquiry into limitations, expectations and assumption. It was a transformative process of professional learning that required specific stages.

	person recounting	group
share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel?</li> <li>• What was expected of you?</li> <li>• In what ways did you feel limited?</li> </ul>	
Identifying strengths		What were the strengths in the story?
perspective		<p>Think of a similar incident, where the answers to the questions below come close to the answers of the original story, and share.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel?</li> <li>• What was expected of you?</li> <li>• In what ways did you feel limited?</li> </ul>
inquiry	What assumptions drove the stories?	
reflect	What have we learned?	

**Table 10.3** Final collaborative inquiry process

## 10.5 Collaborative Inquiry Process

The collaborative inquiry process acquired a certain form that was shaped over time by the responses from the teachers involved in the process. The final collaborative inquiry process contained important stages that have been outlined throughout this chapter which are: 1) sharing of the critical incident; 2) identifying strengths of teacher action in the incident; 3) sharing others' perspective; and 4) inquiring into the underlying assumptions, limitations, expectations and emotion. While there is a starting and ending point these are not necessarily sequential steps. The facilitator needed to keep the group focused to move through the stages, but elements of each stage may occur out of sequence; for example, a teacher may discover another strength in the final stage. Having a formalised process helped set expectations and created a common reflexive practice to sustain professional learning (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012). The 'common reflexive practice' has already been mentioned by the teacher collaborators as useful in informal situations. Drew's quote below flags the importance of a formalised collaborative inquiry process:

The whole process of having someone else be able to identify the strengths ... You know, moving on to really good professional conversations about the broader aspects of teaching that we never really get a chance [to have] ... those conversations that really help put things into perspective (*Drew*).

Drew's comment also highlights another issue that is peppered throughout the teachers' narratives in this thesis, which is time. Drew states: 'we never really get a chance' to have those important professional conversations that can facilitate professional learning. Time can be elusive in teacher's work (Jensen et al. 2014). While it is important for the collaborative inquiry process to take on a certain shape there were other elements to the process that were of concern to teachers: 1) how often the collaborative inquiry sessions took place; 2) how many people form a collaborative inquiry group; 3) who comprises a collaborative inquiry group; and 4) how collaborative inquiry sessions are facilitated.



These concerns have been discussed in previous sections and further detail is provided in Table 10.4 where specific responses to the concerns are provided. In summary, the teacher participants generally felt that: 1) the collaborative inquiry sessions should occur fortnightly to monthly; 2) that three to five people would be the optimal number of people in a collaborative inquiry group; 3) that diversity in experience, age, gender, subject area are important in the people that form the collaborative inquiry group, as well as being open-minded and having some personal distance between the participants; and 4) that the collaborative inquiry sessions require a facilitator, who may be external to the school or internal but is trained as a facilitator of the process.

	How often should the collaborative inquiry sessions take place?	How many people should form a collaborative inquiry group? (including facilitator)	Who should a collaborative inquiry group comprise of?	How should the collaborative inquiry sessions be facilitated?	Would you attend collaborative inquiry sessions if they were offered on-going at the school?
<b>Alex</b>	One hour once a month. Having the sessions after school is useful because the buzz of the next lesson and everything has been removed. Sometimes it might be useful more often	Four or five people	A range of experience, age, gender and teaching areas was useful. The participants being open-minded is important and without the intention of fixing a problem	A trained facilitator is necessary. Teaching staff could be trained but they would have to be someone that has experience working with emotions. It would be important to keep the environment safe	Yes, but would be anxious about losing time and would prefer it if the sessions were included in allocated meeting time
<b>Ash</b>	One hour fortnightly	Three or four people	A range of experience, gender and teacher areas was useful. The group should be formed of people that do not work closely together on a regular basis. Some distance is required	An external facilitator would be useful. Staff could be trained as facilitators but then it might become a less formal version	Yes, but would prefer if the sessions were timetabled in consistently
<b>Chris</b>	One hour monthly with the option to shift to fortnightly when desirable	Three or four people	People that have little prior connection	Facilitated formal sessions are important but informal sessions are also useful	Yes, but time is a concern. Also, being forced to work with someone I don't get on with
<b>Drew</b>	One hour once a month	Four or five people	A range of experience and teaching areas	Facilitated formal sessions were useful	Yes, but would be anxious about losing time and would prefer it if the sessions were included in allocated meeting time
<b>Jordan</b>	One hour fortnightly	Four people	A range of experience, age and teacher areas would be useful	Facilitation would be required but the staff could be trained up as facilitators, perhaps leading teachers	Yes, but the formation of the groups would impact willingness and time might be a concern
<b>Terry</b>	One hour fortnightly	Four people	A mixture of people would be good but I also think it's no problem if culturally similar people that are comfortable with each other stick together	Trained facilitators would be required that were able to nudge the process gently. External facilitation would be necessary initially	Yes, but the structure of the program would need to be negotiated with staff. Also, if the sessions do not come out of existing meeting time I would have to say no

**Table 10.4** Teacher responses to collaborative inquiry

Wong et al. (2014), who formed a collaborative educational researcher group, shared some of the same concerns, particularly 3) and 4) and came to similar conclusions. In addition, they asserted that collaboration takes time and requires careful consideration, and a flat hierarchy is important to support a safe collaborative environment. As highlighted in the *Sharing* section, trust is a vital issue and confidentiality is an additional concern in relation to who comprises a collaborative inquiry group, where there is an issue of needing to feel safe, as Jordan indicates:

I know there's a few staff that I probably wouldn't be comfortable talking in front of and I'm sure there's probably others that wouldn't be overly comfortable ... to share in front of me (*Jordan*).

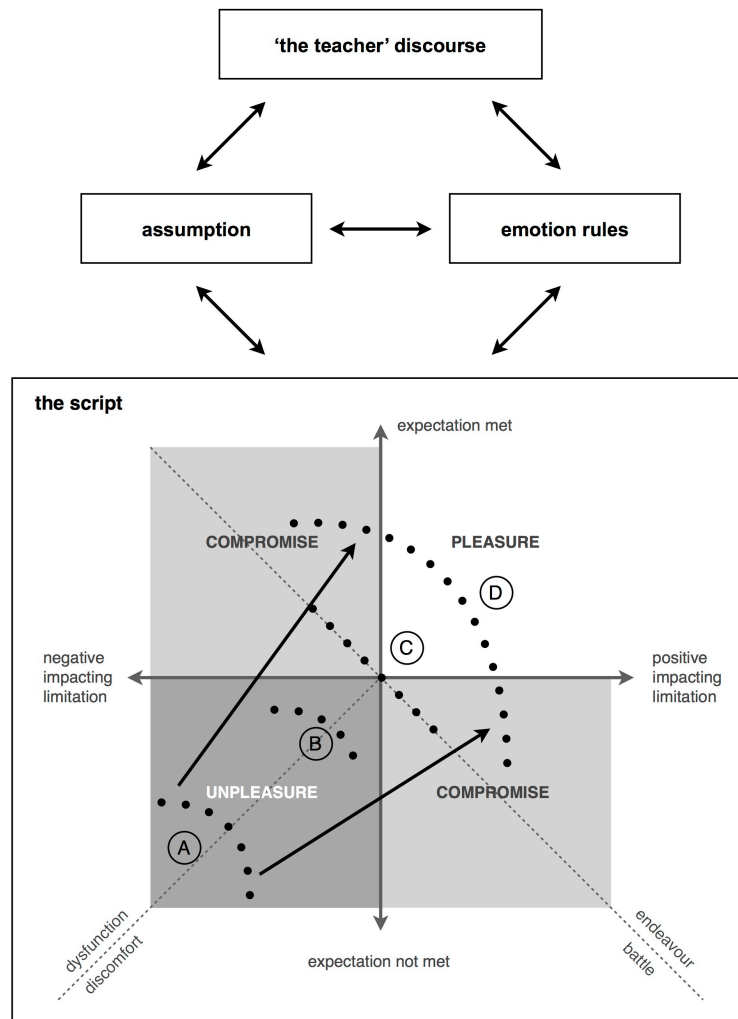
The facilitation of the group also influences whether or not the collaborators feel safe; therefore facilitation plays an important role in the success of the process. When the teachers were asked whether or not they would attend collaborative inquiry sessions if they were offered them on-going at the school, there was a general feeling that they would need to be consulted in developing the collaborative inquiry process framework. Five out of the six teachers said yes but they would be concerned about time, articulated further below by Alex who highlights that 'there is no space to really reflect' in action:

There's so many things that happen in my mind when a situation arises, that it is difficult — I don't think there's time for me to reflect. I think there's time to reflect afterwards — where I shouldn't have thrown them out of class, I shouldn't have said that, blah, blah, blah, or I should have, or I did this right, or whatever. And that is useful. But in terms of when it's actually happening, there's no space to really reflect (*Alex*).

Alex articulates, like Eraut (1995) suggests, Schon's (1991) idea of 'reflecting in action' as sometimes being impossible because everything happens so quickly, in the moment. Nonetheless, there is an expectation that teachers will reflect on their practice (see Jensen et al. 2014); but if 'there is no space' for this to occur

then it must happen outside of teaching contact time. The collaborative inquiry process was beneficial to the teachers involved, but if this was an additional requirement the benefits would diminish and threaten already time-poor work life, which Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015) recognise as a key issue in the burnout of teachers. In Table 10.3 Terry commented: 'if the sessions did not come out of existing meeting time I would have to say no'. A similar struggle is articulated by Wong et al. (2014, p.254) who asserted: 'lack of time [to collaborate] was, and continues to be, our nemesis'. It is an example of 'the system' overpowering agency (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p.86).

*Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine* showed that reflexivity and agency are intimately connected but while acting as a member of a collective there are layers of emotion, assumption, limitation and expectation that influence one's ability to be agentic and reflexive. The reflexive process that I have outlined has the potential to shift unconscious thinking and feeling about underlying emotion, assumptions, limitations and expectations which motivate the self and collective into the realm of the conscious. An example of such a shift and the complex interaction of the ideas I have discussed in this thesis can be seen in Figure 10.1. It is an expanded version of Figure 4.4. 'A' might represent one of the teachers when they first recounted their story. The limitations and expectations were in tension, engendering dysfunction and discomfort. A shift from 'A' to 'D' might represent a shift from battle to endeavour, where there were some compromises but there is also a significant element of expectations being met and limitations having a positive impact resulting in a pleasurable outcome (Turner 2009). For example, the teacher that recounted *The uniform* was initially limited to enforce the uniform policy. After the collaborative inquiry process they may have still been limited, but without having the same negative impact because the teacher recognised that they were one part of a collective effort; there was no expectation that one teacher should be responsible for enforcing the uniform policy. This is a positive impacting limitation, and so expectations were also being met.



**Figure 10.1** 'The teacher' discourse-script interplay expanded

This is not to say that all the shifts resulted in the teachers feeling pleasurable feelings, or that unpleasure is the realm of unconsciousness and pleasure is the realm of consciousness. A shift to 'B' could result where the tension became less significant through consciousness and there was an ease of unpleasure but it still dominated. 'C' might represent a shift where compromise was formed and the teacher was left feeling neither overwhelming unpleasure or pleasure. The shift can occur in many different ways. I would say that much experience would rest largely in the space of compromise. It is through reflexivity that one can gain an understanding of how 'the teacher' discourse assumption and emotional rules interact and influence the script. The script of one's life is in constant evolution, and the collaborative inquiry process makes conscious the

ways in which the script can be influenced, giving the actors' greater mastery over the performance.

## Chapter 11

### Discussion and Conclusion

#### 11.1 The story

This thesis tells the story of a particular research project that started many years ago with a little boy named Steven. Steven and I share an important story that changed our lives. I cannot speak of the specific change in Steven's life but can only assume that there was change because of the collective agency we share. For me, being able to reflexively ponder a very difficult time of my life and understand why I was limited to meet the expectations that I faced had a trickling down effect through the rest of my life. I recognised that for personal reasons I was trying to detach from my humanity. It was required to some extent by my professional self and so repression was an easy response. It was only by recognising the wounds of the past and my vulnerability that I could allow them to heal in a way. I write 'heal in a way' because I do not think such pain can ever heal but it can become an accepted part of a person's script. The unpleasure came out of the shadow and, because I knew and felt it, was less likely to compel me in unknown ways. I became more agentic. Steven forced me to know myself better as a teacher — a teacher who is also a person. Right now, I cry. It is the culmination of unpleasure and pleasure, the sadness and guilt of failing Steven but also of love and gratitude. I can finally love Steven and what he has given me.

How can we, as a society, expect teachers to live in such darkness? I am not an exceptional case. Terry states, 'it is a very personal profession I think'. Drew says, 'sometimes you are more like a parent'. Ash articulates the merger of pleasure and unpleasure that is also the reason I cry: 'the caring can be the best part of the job but it can also be the worst'. 'The teacher' discourse writes a conflicting script for a teacher, a script where they must act professionally by being detached and competent by quantifying and measuring education (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Hargreaves 2001; Shapiro 2010) while at the same time being human, warm and caring (Hargreaves 2001; McDonough 2011; Shapiro 2010). While there is no clear boundary between teacher and person (Victorian Institute of

Teaching 2015b), there is an expectation of a boundary, and therein lies the tension. I have explored the tension throughout this project.

Six teachers and I came together to share and inquire into our stories about being a teacher. Two methodologies merged — action research and narrative inquiry — to do two things: 1) to evolve the self through story but to also locate the self in the story of the collective (Bruner 2004); and 2) enact change in the teachers' understanding of practice itself, thereby also changing the conditions of practice (Kemmis 2009). To achieve these goals three cycles of action took place that resulted in the evolution of a collaborative inquiry process.

The project was underpinned by the premise that people are influenced by a protective unconscious system that defends against certain thoughts and feelings by repressing them. I argued that the professional norms and public expectations feeding into 'the teacher' discourse covet teacher agency but teacher agency is also actively discouraged. Agency has to be limited '[i]n the face of system and policy constraints within a climate bordering on regimentation and control' (Edwards-Groves et al. 2010, p.53).

I also argued that 'the teacher' discourse fuels emotional rules that harbour a conflict because teachers should love their work and remain enthusiastic about what Kemmis (2009) and Groundwater-Smith et al. (2012) refer to as the 'doings' of their work but at the same time remain emotionally neutral about the 'relatings' (Stebbins 2010). This is contrary to what the teacher collaborators signalled as the source of love and enthusiasm for their work. These emotional rules require teachers to employ faking and hiding strategies to stay on script (Hochschild 2012; Stebbins 2010; Taxer & Frenzel 2015; Winograd 2003).

Another issue emerging from the literature was that teacher emotions are often considered the responsibility of individual teachers through frames of emotional intelligence, emotional competence and emotion regulation (Ecclestone & Hayes 2009). The teacher is being viewed in deficit as though emotions must be 'controlled' and if not then teachers are failing. Through these frames perceptions



of emotion often exclude the complex nuances (Keller et al. 2014; Lazarus 1991). It would have been limiting to start this project with a predetermined set of emotions within such narrow frames. Emotions and constellations of emotions are culturally named (Thoits 1989). To understand the emotional nuances within the culture of the school, the emotion and the experience had to be explored together through story.

A central argument emerged where teachers having to fake and hide certain emotions in response to emotional rules mean that some emotion needs to be repressed — the mind will defend against certain emotion. By the emotion being repressed, the thought with which it is enmeshed is often also repressed, meaning that one's underlying motivations and assumptions are also repressed. An understanding of underlying motivations and assumptions increases agency (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015). Teachers being expected to abide by emotional rules inhibits agency. So being emotionally conscious of the ways that emotion impacts on agency is important (Zembylas 2003, p.227).

## **11.2 Interpretations of the research**

Reflexive strategies were employed to inquire into myself, the analysis, the teacher collaborators, and our collective spaces as well as this thesis. So, the interpretation of the teachers' and my own experience was a retrospective learning experience.

Through thematic analysis the experience of emotion was explored. Eight notable emotions surfaced: defeat, frustration, worry, anger, sadness, contentment, happiness and love. These emotions could be named but were not defined as general 'teacher emotions' because constellations of emotion and how they are experienced cannot be easily divided (Zembylas 2007b). These eight emotions belong to the teachers, including me, and the stories we shared. The naming of emotion was nonetheless useful to the teacher collaborators, allowing them to talk about their emotional experiences.

The thematic analysis also highlighted that teachers responded to 'the teacher' discourse, which suggests the primary concern of 'the teacher' is the student, resulting in the teachers assuming that most of their emotional responses were sparked by relationships with students. Actually, almost half of the stories featured relationships with teachers, as Ash, for example, commented:

I think that the incidents were not about things that happened in the classroom. It was quite often about the work environment, other staff members (Ash).

Overall, relationships seemed to be the catalyst for heightened emotional responses rather than workload or the practicalities of teaching.

Defeat was a powerful emotion that permeated the other seven emotions and was directly related to a struggle, where the teacher would either feel like they were endeavouring through the struggle, feeling a mild threat of defeat, or battling through the struggle, feeling a significant threat of defeat. Or the teachers might have felt completely defeated. While endeavouring, as an example, teachers might have felt a constellation of contentment, happiness and worry. While battling, a teacher might have felt a constellation of sadness, frustration and anger. The emotional constellations are unique to each person that experiences them and so there cannot be a definitive list of what they felt.

The teachers had an awareness of a sense of defeat but not necessarily the feeling of defeat. Yet defeat was pervasive, particularly in circumstances where a teacher felt undervalued or unworthy, which led to a cycle of unpleasurable feeling such as shame (Turner 2009).

A sense of the emotional rules that bound the teachers emerged:

1. Frustration, worry, sadness and anger is evoked by student interactions;
2. Teachers should not feel or display fear;
3. Teachers should not display anger;
4. Teachers should not feel or display sadness;
5. Contentment is evoked by the act of teaching, students and other teachers;

6. Happiness is evoked by the act of teaching and students;
7. Love is evoked by the act of teaching;
8. Teachers should not feel or display love for their students or other teachers;  
and
9. Defeat is inherent in teaching but must not be shown.

When institutional emotional rules expect emotion to be avoided and shoved aside, beyond what would naturally be repressed, then emotion itself is devalued (Turner 2009). How can anyone truly avoid emotion? It is unattainable, and as much as the teachers try they only repress their emotions, which turns into anxiety and more unpleasure — ignoring their vulnerability and further devaluing them. Everyone lives with anxiety but anxiety can become overwhelming and then the threat of defeat is intense. In a way dealing with anxiety is the struggle and defeat is the feeling.

However, anxiety and defeat may not be the same; anxiety is an unknown feeling associated with an unknown something, while defeat is not necessarily unknown or unconscious. The teachers did talk about defeat consciously but there was usually a disconnect between the feeling of defeat and the something about which the teacher felt defeated. For example, Alex said 'I feel defeated' but could not identify what the feeling was in response to. On the other hand, Jordan said: 'it's definitely challenging', which recognises what 'it' is that threatens defeat but not the associated feeling

Moreover, anxiety is an unpleasurable experience but a mild threat of defeat can evoke pleasure as Drew described: 'the thrill of the chase'. The teachers regarded meeting the challenge of teaching as their reward. The natural tension between unpleasure and pleasure was not of concern. Even when endeavouring, the threat of defeat is present. It is like a little intimation lurking at the back of your mind of the possibility that endeavour may fail, like when you have had a bad day but at the back of your mind there is a hint of happiness to remind you that you were once happy and you can be happy again. It keeps you going. Defeat prepares you for the possible battle. It arms you in readiness. The tension between what the

teachers actually felt and what they were expected to feel or display by 'the teacher' discourse and professional norms was of real concern.

The thematic analysis could uncover a sense of emotions that were consciously being hidden but could not gain a sense of which emotions were faked. Nor could it gain a sense of emotion that had been repressed and was unconscious, love in particular. '[I]n their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or parent/carer' (Victorian Institute of Teaching 2015b, p.2). Yet in the introductions Jordan wanted to be seen as a friend to the students and Drew sometimes felt like a parent. To align with professional norms love has to be repressed. The limitations of the thematic analysis inquiring into the teachers' stories led to a narrative layer of interpretation, what Bruner (2004) would call a thicker layer of interpretation.

Seven stories were used to inquire into the emotional experiences of the teachers, one for each teacher including me. What the stories highlighted, consistent with Turner's (2009) research, is that negative impacting limitations and failing to meet expectations evoke displeasure where, on the other hand, positive impacting limitations and meeting expectations evokes pleasure. A tension between limitations and expectations was evident, which impacted the script of the story the teachers were living. Underlying assumptions and emotion that were underpinned by the teacher discourse also featured in the scripts. The teachers were not necessarily conscious of the interplay between limitations, expectations, assumptions and emotion. The teachers' emotion was what Winograd (2003) calls dysfunctional. This emotion inhibited their action in some way and, because they were not aware of their underlying assumptions and motivations, they could not be particularly agentic (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson 2015).

Zembylas (2005) recognises that the tension of goals, in other words the tension between limitations and expectations, is also the tension between what is consciously thought and felt. What the stories illuminated on a conscious level was tensions and emotional rules at play that cast a divide between thought and emotion. At first glance a small number of emotional rules were at play such as:

*contentment is evoked by the act of teaching and students, or teachers should not display anger.*

Further interrogation led to other emotional rules and emotion being uncovered. By identifying the unconscious, emotion the unconscious thought was also recognised. Defeat was often only partially conscious to the teachers because the rule that *defeat is inherent in teaching but must not be shown* meant that they had to defend against it. By acknowledging the experience of defeat or threatening defeat, yet minimising the feeling, the emotion might be tolerated. Hochschild's (2012) deep and surface acting was evidenced by comparing the emotions that were originally made conscious and the emotions that were less conscious. For example, in *The bite* story the teacher consciously described a feeling of trust in the student, but a more unconscious feeling was fear over what he might do. This contradiction suggests that the teacher, through deep acting processes, conjured the trust initially. Surface acting was also evidenced by the teacher hiding fear. People naturally employ acting strategies to negotiate reality but when professional institutions intervene a natural compromise might not be met and the repression can be self-destructive (Brenner 2002). In the case of *The bite*, the teacher's emotional wellbeing was being threatened as well as their physical wellbeing placed at risk.

Through inquiry into the stories the teachers were able to rewrite the script for future stories. A major difference between the rewritten script for future stories compared to the script of the lived story was that teachers recognised, as Foucault (1979) highlights, that no one can have complete control but everyone has some control. Everyone in the collective spaces had a part to play in the script. The stories highlighted that reflexivity and agency were two sides of the same coin; by becoming more conscious of underlying assumptions and motivations, through reflexivity, a teacher could become more agentic. Reflexively unlocking emotional consciousness was the key for the teachers in understanding themselves, becoming more agentic and learning something about their professional context, each other and their collective teacher practice.

The most important outcome of this project, I believe, is the structure of the collaborative inquiry process. So far, my interpretations support the sentiment that teachers' emotional work is complex and further made difficult by professional norms and 'the teacher' discourse, similar to Winograd's (2003), Zembylas's (2005) and Stebbins's (2010) findings. I have extended on this work, drawing on the work of for example Biesta Priestley and Robinson (2015), to suggest that it is through the exploration of conscious and unconscious emotion that one can excavate the underlying motivations and assumptions, including beliefs and values, which compel a person to act. The collaborative inquiry process shows 'how' emotional consciousness might be accomplished.

The resulting collaborative inquiry process encapsulates four stages: sharing, identifying strengths, perspective and inquiry that evolved over the three cycles of action. The teachers' willingness to share stories that featured a critical incident depended on three things: 1) what is intended to be shared, 2) who is available to listen, and 3) the quality of the environment in which a teacher finds themselves. The stories were not easy to share and by sharing them the teacher's ease-of-mind was threatened and vulnerability exposed, reflected in Ash's comments:

[E]verything we've discussed [focussed on a] negative emotional impact, we haven't really discussed anything that makes us feel that we've done right. Quite often it's been things that we've felt, not insecure is the right word, but things that we felt that we aren't doing as well as other people or aren't doing correctly. We're failing somehow or we've failed in a situation. I think that was the big theme, you know, us coming and going "I failed at this, I did something and it was wrong" or "I am not doing something properly" (Ash).

It was the feeling of defeat and the attempt to make sense of it which compelled the teachers to share. While defeat became a strong theme in the latter action research cycles, partly due to the prompting of the collaborative inquiry stages, it was still the most prominent feeling in action research cycle one and the background interviews, where teachers were asked to share any story they chose or talked about emotion generally. Ash stated: 'I failed at this, I did something and

it was wrong' or 'I am not doing something properly', which was the conscious thought at the point of sharing. The identifying of strengths stage helped the teachers recognise that they were not necessarily failing and that while they felt their agency had been limited they had been agentic in some ways. Through this sharing and recognition the teachers created a safe space of solidarity that gave them the courage to inquire into their stories (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Shapiro 2010; Wong et al. 2014).

The stage of perspective allowed the teachers to be reintroduce in part, to their multiple selves. By listening to others' similar stories they were able to recognise their told self by identifying with the told self of the other teachers. They could recognise their acting self by identifying with the acting self of the other teachers. Through this identification they recognised the collective and that a self only exists in relation to others. It was through this stage that the teachers were then primed to collectively inquire into Kelchtermans (2009) vitally important questions about the what, who and why of the teacher collective. In the collaborative inquiry process the specific questions asked were: How did you feel? What was expected of you? In what ways did you feel limited? What assumptions drove the stories? What have we learned? The questions start as a reflexive focus on the individual but then shift out to a reflexive focus on the collective.

The collaborative inquiry process facilitated a process of reflexivity that enabled emotional consciousness. By identifying the emotional entanglement between the elements of the typical struggles in teaching practice, specifically limitations, expectations and assumptions, teacher agency and wellbeing is positively impacted, as Edwards-Groves et al. (2010) observe:

Building agency and solidarity as resources for a cohesive educational enterprise which is currently clouded with coercive, demanding and regimented policy will bring hope to educational futures.

(Edwards-Groves et al. 2010, p. 53)

In the introduction, I stated that teacher wellbeing and burnout is implicated in teacher agency. The collaborative inquiry process has supported this. By participating in the collaborative inquiry process teachers' agency and wellbeing was positively impacted, as demonstrated in the following comment:

[I feel] calmer. Definitely. Because I've had a couple of weeks where I've had a cold or feeling absolutely lousy and a bit tired and by the end of a collaborative inquiry session], I think I've said to you, I'm feeling a lot more relaxed. I think it goes back to talking about airing. You know, someone who's sitting there and [listening] (*Chris*).

Chris outlines a struggle and how personal wellbeing is implicated. There are the opposing forces of limitations and expectations; a limitation on how much time can be dedicated to work but an expectation to work in excess of the working hours allocated. The statement articulates that the collaborative inquiry process allows space to negotiate reality. Not that the collaborative inquiry process was a 'solution' to a 'problem'. The struggles discussed in the collaborative inquiry process did not necessarily have a solution because the struggles typically involved others' expectations of the teacher/s being beyond the limitations of the teacher's control, or even the collective control. There were elements that could be influenced, which were the assumptions around the critical incident that could positively impact on the limitations of agency or perceptions of expectations of self. Influencing these elements was not a solution but a support that appeared to impact positively on teaching practice by increasing agency and teacher wellbeing.

### 11.3 Contribution and originality

I do not believe that the stories the teachers and I have shared are exceptional; they are similar to other teachers' stories across Australia and perhaps other parts of the world. Many similar stories are reaching mainstream media. For example, in recent times Manning (2017), Martin (2017) and Richards (2017) have featured stories from Australia and Haismen-Smith (2017) from the United Kingdom. I wrote an article for *The Conversation* suggesting teachers need to be supported to



manage the emotional work of teaching (Hopman 2015). Twenty-seven people commented on this article; twelve identified themselves as teachers and four as non-teachers and all agreed that teaching is a struggle.

The respondents to the article articulated various reasons for the struggle; many were system issues or stemmed from 'the teacher' discourse which my thesis has limited power to influence directly. What this thesis can address is the 'relatings' on a micro level which can potentially influence the 'doings', which consequently might influence the macro 'thinking' and 'sayings' (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012; Kemmis 2009). In other words, this thesis can potentially influence 'the teacher' discourse indirectly. In that process, there is real power. The education system can transform from within.

Furthermore, the article in *The Conversation* led to others commenting on the emotional work of teaching. Beattie (2016), Quarry (2014), Wells (2015) and the *6PR Drive* (2015) radio program have all reported specifically on this research, which has now drawn attention to the complex emotional work of teaching and influenced 'the teacher' discourse directly.

The issues I have addressed in this thesis are important to the teaching profession in a context where:

[T]eachers' work has become increasingly "adverse" as a result of neoliberal policies that have both demanded "more for less" from teachers and created conditions where teachers are increasingly casualised, deskilled and alienated from the labour process.

(Price, Mansfield & McConney 2012, p.91)

While the emotional labour process is important for teachers to remain genuine and facilitate positive teacher-student relationships, feelings that are considered incompatible with teacher professionalism are repressed (Hagenauer & Volet 2014).

The dehumanisation of the teacher can be counteracted by emotional consciousness (Shapiro 2010), but this is hampered by the stringent emotional rules that suggest teachers should remain emotionally neutral, evoking hiding, faking and repression. As Winograd (2003) maintains, teachers are expected to live a lie. However,

[I]t is crucial that teachers do, indeed, feel free to tell the truth, and that their stories accurately depict dimensions of their work that are pleasurable as well as unpleasant.

(Winograd 2003, p1671)

While I agree with Winograd, my argument is: how can teachers tell the 'truth' if they have no way of understanding what 'truth' might be? This project makes an important contribution to current academic debate on teacher agency, emotion and reflexivity because it details how to become more familiar with the unconscious thoughts and feelings that compel one to action given, as Stîngu (2012) suggests, examples of reflexive practice in academic literature are limited.

I recognise that my claim to 'catch' unconscious thought will no doubt have its sceptics because, as Frosh (2012a) highlights, if something becomes conscious, how can one be sure how it got there? Terry articulates the same conundrum:

I think the process helps the connections, definitely. It's hard to know, once you've had the thought you think you've had it yourself (*Terry*).

It is hard to know. Terry is wondering whether the now conscious thoughts were 'put' there or were there all along. Perhaps it is both, and is an example of the complex ways knowledge can be created (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg 2011). Perhaps Terry had a sense that the thought was always there because it was, but remained hidden as a collective construction — for example, 'the teacher' discourse.

I stated in *Chapter Two* that I am a bricoleur and my intention was to adapt what exists and utilise it in a new way (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Indeed, what I have presented in this thesis is new through bricolage. For example, the collaborative inquiry cycle replicates Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model of experience, reflect, reconceptualise and experiment, where 'reflect' could equate to the *sharing* stage and 'reconceptualise' could equate to the *perspective* stage. Is it a coincidence that the FWS had highlighted Kolb's experiential learning model at the start of the fieldwork and similar stages appeared in the collaborative inquiry process? I do not think so. It is further evidence of the complex unconscious ways we co-construct and re-construct knowledge.

This thesis has woven together existing knowledge, detailed in the earlier chapters, with a reconfiguration of the knowledge in the later chapters to create a framework for teachers to better understand the emotional rules by which they are bound. Firstly though, the socially constructed emotional rules need to be understood through a framework that dynamically considers a teacher's internal as well as external world, which Figure 4.1 offers. Figure 8.1 then provides a framework for understanding the important layers that interweave between a teacher and agency/reflexivity, where emotion is the combining thread. The emotional rules and these figures are an original contribution of this research that offer a foundation for future research.

Teacher wellbeing is key to maintaining supportive emotional cultures in school communities (Bergh, Hagquist & Starrin 2011; Intrator 2006; Isenbarger & Zembylas 2006; Roffey 2012; Winograd 2003). Teachers, particularly beginning teachers, need to be encouraged and provided with support to reflect on emotional experiences with the aim of improving teacher relationships and overall wellbeing (Spilt & Koomen 2009; Spilt, Koomen & Thijs 2011; Tait 2008). I am not suggesting the collaborative inquiry process is the only way to support teachers in their endeavours, but it is one way. It does invest in collective teacher agency and in teacher relationships, thereby also investing in teacher wellbeing. If society has well teachers then it is also more likely to have well students, as Intrator (2006)

and Roffey (2012) suggest. The collaborative inquiry process is another original and significant contribution of this research, as well as a potential investment in education.

#### 11.4 Future work

I recently presented a summary of the interpretations in this thesis at a seminar. I was discussing the emotional rule that teachers should not feel or display fear by sharing *The bite* story. An audience member asked, 'but if we encourage our students to acknowledge their fear and be in touch with their emotions shouldn't it be ok for teachers to do the same?' My answer to this question is: do we? Do we, as a collective society, really encourage students to be in touch with their fear as well as acknowledge it and express it? Or, does it depend on who is experiencing the fear, or sadness for that matter? For example, *The fragile kid*, where the student the student was female, was expected to be fragile and express her fragility through emotion. *The big guy*, being male, was not expected to show fragility, and his fragility was surprising. Why was that? Does it have to do with an unexplored gender discourse or another discourse? These stories have been analysed with 'the teacher' discourse in mind but there are many others discourses, for example gender, race, ability, privilege, that influence assumption and impact on the relational space in which a teacher works.

I have also been limited in investigating teacher and school resilience. I am not sure why the six teachers chose to be part of the project. Resilience may have played a factor. The fact that five of the six teachers were within their first five years of teaching during the fieldwork may have played a hand in whether or not they participated. Those two concerns may be connected, given the body of literature that suggests early career teachers are at greater risk of emotional exhaustion (see Buchanan et al. 2013; Johnson & Down 2013; Mansfield et al. 2012; Schaefer 2013; Schuck et al. 2017). Due to this limitation, I am unable to say how or if the collaborative inquiry process impacted on individual teacher resilience or school collective resilience, or what other supports might be useful in supporting teachers' emotional work.

What I would be interested in exploring further are the boundaries around love. Because the teachers were so guarded in talking about love and I restrained from prompting them to talk about particular emotions, allowing them to discuss what flowed naturally, I could not grasp the depth of love. I do believe, consistent with Stebbins (2010) and Winograd (2003), that love plays a significant role in teaching yet the teachers were so restricted in discussing it. Further investigation into this particular area might unlock some of the unresolved mysteries of teacher emotional work.

One aim is to have the opportunity to implement the collaborative inquiry process school-wide, while investigating further the implications of love in reference to teaching. There is also potential to look at ways that the collaborative inquiry process could be facilitated through social media to reach a broader, perhaps international, audience.

In *Chapter Six* I discussed the function of the fieldwork supervisor. I was limited in discussing the implications of the fieldwork supervisor in detail and noted two research dilemmas that they supported me to navigate. I intend to submit a journal article that expands on the role of the fieldwork supervisor to contribute to the body of literature focused on researcher reflexivity.

### **11.5 Closing remarks**

I can relate to Ash's earlier words: 'I failed at this, I did something and it was wrong'. I am embarrassed to admit that I could not like an eight-year old boy or that I was angry at one of my students for being vulnerable. In each of those incidents I failed in some way and I was left feeling defeated and shameful. In the struggle to be a supportive teacher in some way I failed. Perhaps reading my shame may be discomforting and the preference might be for me to not mention it. If so, it is perhaps indicative of an argument of this thesis — a threat to a person's ease-of-mind is confrontational and the natural urge might be to turn away from it. But to turn away would require me to deny my humanity because vulnerability and imperfection is a condition of living (Shapiro 2010).

Being alerted to these imperfections and vulnerabilities can be confronting but can also offer growth (Steeves 2006). Recognising each of these 'failures' was the difference between them remaining 'failures' or becoming what I regard as learning experiences. I no longer feel as ashamed as I once did and now also feel proud of the growth I have achieved.

Our worlds are emotional and the defeat and constellation of emotions that sit with it alert us to a new way of being in our world. I used defeat to confront the struggle and to understand its origins. Emotion, I believe, is the sixth sense. We actually use the word 'feel' like a sense of touch. Imagine going through the world without a sense of touch. You would hit things without realising and develop bruise after bruise until your body was broken. In *The textbook* the teacher actually stated: 'I felt battered'. Emotion is like the mediatory of thought and physical sensation (Brenner 1974a; Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson 2009). By being alert to emotion a person can sense their way forward in their world and in the brave new worlds of which they might become conscious.

Having codes of conduct that distinguish 'professionalism' from 'humanity', privileging professionalism, does not change the fact that complex heart felt relationships are inherent in teaching and denying them only buries the reality. If a teacher cannot sense with emotion then they might not have the tools to navigate and explore outside of their world. They might become closed — living a script for one.

In the story of Steven, I noted that he was demanding I play a role that I did not wish to play. I have made reference to teaching as 'performance' throughout the thesis and in the teacher introductions in *Chapter One* Chris states: 'I sometimes think teaching is like being an actor'. The idea that teaching is a type of performance is not new (see Dawe 1984; De Marzio 2007; Whatman 1997). There are textbooks aimed at supporting teachers, as actors, to develop acting strategies (see Tauber & Mester 2007). Teachers as actors engage with the audience — students, teachers, parents and others — out of a desire to meet the

audience's expectations. The interaction between the teacher actor and the audience can result in an uplifting and exhilarating performance or 'stage fright' (Simmonds & Southcott 2012). A teacher's struggle is to avoid 'stage fright', which is a considerable endeavour when their stage might be the classroom, the school, at the local farmers' market on the weekend when a teacher might coincidentally cross paths with a student, or many different other places. All of these places form the stage where the teacher performs — which is also the world of the teacher, — as Shakespeare describes:

'All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts...'

(William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII, Jaques to Duke Senior)

I hope this project has supported the teachers that participated in understanding their worlds, and the worlds of the actors with whom they share their stage, through reflexively seeking out emotional consciousness — they supported me to do so and I feel richer for it.

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## Appendices

# INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH - Principal

### You are invited to participate

---

Permission to undertake a research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice' is being sought.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Jean Hopman as part of a PhD at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Pat Drake and Dr Gwen Gilmore from the College of Education.

### Project explanation

---

The research aims to explore teacher emotional work within the school context and whether reflexive practices assist in managing emotional work and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The intention is to give voice to teacher participants in regards to teacher emotional work. Furthermore, to give opportunity for participants to contribute to the development of a possible emotional work support structure to enrich the working lives of teachers.

### What will teacher participants be asked to do?

---

Within one year they will be asked to:

- Participate in two interviews
- Participate in three collaborative inquiry sessions one-to-one with researcher (Jean Hopman), as a means to trial and plan a support structure for teachers in exploring teacher emotional work.
- Participate in five collaborative inquiry sessions with researcher and a maximum of five other participants to further trial the designed support structure.
- All interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions will be no longer than one hour in duration.

### What will the teacher participants/school gain from participating?

---

The time participants dedicate to this research project may be allocated to their required professional development hours to maintain registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers that may be addressed are as follows:

Professional Practice

4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Professional Engagement

6. Engage in professional learning
7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community (excluding parents/carers in this specific case).

### How will the information teacher participants give be used?

---

The anonymity and confidentiality of the teacher participants and the school will be protected to the fullest extent possible, within the limits of the law. Participant's contact details will be housed in a locked filing cabinet and kept separate from the de-identified collected data. The interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions intend to be audio recorded with participant consent. All identifiable dialogue will be removed from the recording before transcription. The collected data will remain in secure storage at Victoria University for five years, after which it will be destroyed. In the final participants and the school will be referred to by a pseudonym and information that might allow someone to guess identities will be removed. Also, as the research involves a group collaboration all participants will need to agree to maintain the confidentiality of all other participants.

After the completion of the data analysis that arises from this research a brief summary of the findings will be available to you if you wish to see it. Please be aware that results may be presented at academic conferences and in research publications.

### **What are the potential risks of participating in this project?**

---

- Due to the small number of people involved in the project it is possible that someone may guess a participant's identity.
- While this research does not intend to seek deficits, deficits may be discovered.
- As the nature of this research is intended to enrich the professional lives of the teacher participants it is important that efforts to counter the possibility of distress are made. If, at any stage, a participant's involvement in the research project causes them to be unsettled they will be encouraged to contact an available psychologist, Associate Professor [name withheld] on [number withheld].

### **How will this project be conducted?**

---

This project is an action research project, where an action is implemented, in this case the one-to-one collaborative inquiry cycles that may form the basis of a professional development program. Reflection on the action will help fine-tune the action and prepare for a second action cycle, which will be the group collaborative inquiry cycles that may better form the basis of a professional development program. The data collected through the process will be analysed for recurring themes to find out whether the process has been useful to the teacher participants in relation to the above aims.

### **Who is conducting the study?**

---

**Professor Pat Drake** ([pat.drake@vu.edu.au](mailto:pat.drake@vu.edu.au)),

**Dr Gwen Gilmore** ([gwen.gilmore@vu.edu.au](mailto:gwen.gilmore@vu.edu.au))

**Mrs Jean Hopman** ([jean.hopman@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:jean.hopman@live.vu.edu.au))

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email [researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:researchethics@vu.edu.au) or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

## Appendix B

# CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH- Principal

### INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite your school to participate in a research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice'. The research aims to explore teacher emotional work within the school context and whether reflexive practices assist in managing emotional work and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The intention is to give voice to teacher participants in regards to teacher emotional work. Furthermore, to give opportunity for participants to contribute to the development of a possible emotional work support structure to enrich the working lives of teachers. This project is an action research project, entailing interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions. Involvement in the research could contribute to participants' legislated professional development requirements. However, there are risks for participants involved in the research including; someone guessing their identity due to small participation numbers; deficits may be discovered though not the intention; they may become emotionally unsettled by the nature of the research.

### CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
name address

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent for the staff of [school] to be involved in the research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice' being conducted at Victoria University by: Professor Pat Drake.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Jean Hopman

and that I freely consent to staff participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Participation is voluntary and teacher participants are free to withdraw at any time.
- The intention and possible effects of the research have been explained to me to my satisfaction.
- The project is for the purpose of research.
- The confidentiality of the information provided will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.
- I consent to staff being audio recorded during interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions, so long as they also give consent.
- The school involved and the individual participants of the research will be referred to by a pseudonym or blanked out in recorded data and publications.
- Individual participants have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality for all participants.
- Due to the small sample of participants it may be possible for someone to guess participant identities but identifiable information will be kept secure with only the research team having access.
- A brief summary of the research findings will be made available to me before publication, if I would like them to be.

- Once signed and returned, this consent form along with the data collected in this study will be kept securely at Victoria University for five years, before being destroyed.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw my consent from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher  
Professor Pat Drake  
03 9919 2609

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email [Researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:Researchethics@vu.edu.au) or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

## Appendix C

# INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH - Teacher

### You are invited to participate

---

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Jean Hopman as part of a PhD at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Pat Drake and Dr Gwen Gilmore from the College of Education.

### Project explanation

---

The research aims to explore teacher emotional work within the school context and whether reflexive practices assist in managing emotional work and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The intention is to give voice to teacher participants in regards to teacher emotional work. Furthermore, to give opportunity for participants to contribute to the development of a possible emotional work support structure to enrich the working lives of teachers.

### What will I be asked to do?

---

Within one year you will be asked to:

- Participate in two interviews
- Participate in three collaborative inquiry sessions one-to-one with researcher (Jean Hopman), as a means to trial and plan a support structure for teachers in exploring teacher emotional work.
- Participate in five collaborative inquiry sessions with researcher and a maximum of five other participants to further trial the designed support structure.
- All interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions will be no longer than one hour in duration.

### What will I gain from participating?

---

The time you dedicate to this research project may be allocated to your required professional development hours to maintain registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers that may be addressed are as follows:

Professional Practice

5. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Professional Engagement

8. Engage in professional learning
9. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community (excluding parents/carers in this specific case).

### How will the information I give be used?

---

The anonymity and confidentiality of the teacher participants and the school will be protected to the fullest extent possible, within the limits of the law. Your contact details will be housed in a locked filing cabinet and kept separate from the de-identified collected data. The interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions intend to be audio recorded with participant consent. All identifiable dialogue will be removed from the recording before transcription. The collected data will remain in secure storage at Victoria University for five years, after which it will be destroyed. In the final report you will be referred to by a pseudonym and information that might allow someone to guess your identity will be removed. Also, as the research involves a group collaboration all participants will need to agree to maintain the confidentiality of all other participants.

After the completion of the data analysis that arises from this research a brief summary of the findings will be available to you if you wish to see it. Please be aware that results may be presented at academic conferences and in research publications.

### **What are the potential risks of participating in this project?**

---

- Due to the small number of people involved in the project it is possible that someone may guess your identity.
- While this research does not intend to seek deficits, deficits may be discovered.
- As the nature of this research is intended to enrich the professional lives of the teacher participants it is important that efforts to counter the possibility of distress are made. If, at any stage, your involvement in the research project causes you to be unsettled you will be encouraged to contact an available psychologist, Associate Professor [name withheld], on [number withheld].

### **How will this project be conducted?**

---

This project is an action research project, where an action is implemented, in this case the one-to-one collaborative inquiry cycles that may form the basis of a professional development program. Reflection on the action will help fine-tune the action and prepare for a second action cycle, which will be the group collaborative inquiry cycles that may better form the basis of a professional development program. The data collected through the process will be analysed for recurring themes to find out whether the process has been useful to the teacher participants in relation to the above aims.

### **Who is conducting the study?**

---

**Professor Pat Drake** ([pat.drake@vu.edu.au](mailto:pat.drake@vu.edu.au)),

**Dr Gwen Gilmore** ([gwen.gilmore@vu.edu.au](mailto:gwen.gilmore@vu.edu.au))

**Mrs Jean Hopman** ([jean.hopman@live.vu.edu.au](mailto:jean.hopman@live.vu.edu.au))

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email [researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:researchethics@vu.edu.au) or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

## Appendix D

# CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH- Teacher

### INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice'. The research aims to explore teacher emotional work within the school context and whether reflexive practices assist in managing emotional work and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The intention is to give voice to teacher participants in regards to teacher emotional work. Furthermore, to give opportunity for participants to contribute to the development of a possible emotional work support structure to enrich the working lives of teachers. This project is an action research project, entailing interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions. Involvement in the research could contribute to legislated professional development requirements. However, there are risks for participants involved in the research including; someone guessing your identity due to small participation numbers; deficits may be discovered though not the intention; you may become emotionally unsettled by the nature of the research.

### CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
name address

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice' being conducted at Victoria University by: Professor Pat Drake.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Jean Hopman

and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- My participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time.
- The intention and possible effects of the research have been explained to me to my satisfaction.
- The project is for the purpose of research.
- The confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.
- I consent to being audio recorded during interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions.
- The school involved and the individual participants of the research will be referred to by a pseudonym or blanked out in recorded data and publications.
- Individual participants have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality for all participants.
- Due to the small sample of participants it may be possible for someone to guess my identity but identifiable information will be kept secure with only the research team having access.
- A brief summary of the research findings will be made available to me before publication, if I would like them to be.
- Once signed and returned, this consent form along with the data collected in this study will be kept securely at Victoria University for five years, before being destroyed.



I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher  
Professor Pat Drake  
03 9919 2609

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email [Researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:Researchethics@vu.edu.au) or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

## Appendix E: Agreement of psychologist's support

**From:** Jean Hopman Jean.Hopman@vu.edu.au  
**Subject:** Research support  
**Date:** 17 March 2014 at 9:18 pm  
**To:** [name withheld]

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Dear [name withheld],

I have been given your contact details from [name withheld] in relation to finding someone to name on the consent form given to participants of my research project. I am due to present for PhD Candidature this coming Friday and have started working on the ethics application in anticipation.

My project focusses on emotion, which plays an important role in teacher work as it influences thinking and also has an impact on the teacher-student relationship. ... The possible benefit to the teacher being a coherent and enriching process of emotional work.

As the research aims to explore the emotional work involved in teaching there is a risk that the process could be unsettling for the participants involved. Therefore, I am looking for an appropriately qualified professional to be named on the participant consent forms if in the event a participant felt that further emotional support were required.

I am hoping that you may agree to be that appropriately qualified professional I am seeking your permission to name you on the consent forms. If this is not the case, I understand and would like to ask for some advice as to who might be suitable for the role.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Jean Hopman  
[jean.hopman@vu.edu.au](mailto:jean.hopman@vu.edu.au)

**From:** [name withheld]  
**Subject:** RE: Research support  
**Date:** 18 March 2014 at 5:18 pm  
**To:** Jean Hopman Jean.Hopman@vu.edu.au

---

Dear Jean,

You are well on the way to becoming an academic by the length of your email! Yes I am happy to be the Psychologist [phone number withheld].

Kind regards [name withheld]

## Appendix F

### BACKGROUND INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

Interview guide for teacher participants. Semi-structured face-to-face interview. The numbered questions are open-ended and the sub-questions are probing. They may or may not be required depending on the answers provided.

#### Topic 1: Demographic information

1. What is your age range? 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+
2. How many years have you been a practicing teacher?

#### Topic 2: Current work situation

3. Can you tell me about your work generally?
  - How long have you worked at this school?
  - What is your position?
  - What is your role?
  - How would you describe your practice?

#### Topic 3: Emotional work/Agency

4. How is emotion involved in teaching practice?
  - Are there typical emotions that you feel?
  - Can these emotions be linked to typical events?
  - Do these emotions impact your ability to think, act or reason?
  - What extremes of emotion have you felt?
  - How do you manage these emotions?

#### Topic 4: Reflexivity

5. What does reflection look like in your practice?
  - How do you define reflection?
  - Have you developed your ability to be reflective?
  - What strategies do you use to be reflective?
6. What is reflexivity in relation to reflection?
  - How is reflexivity different?
  - Have you developed your ability to be reflexive?
  - What strategies do you use to be reflexive?
7. Is reflection/reflexivity important in teacher practice?
  - Do you make time to be reflective/reflexive?
  - Do you seek outsider input to facilitate reflection/reflexivity?
  - Do you use reflection/reflexivity to help manage emotional work?

#### Topic 5: Professional development

8. What does professional development do for you?
  - What type of professional development do you value?
  - What topics do you like to be addressed in professional development?
  - How often do you take/get professional development opportunities?
9. Describe professional development that you think is worthwhile?
  - What outcomes would you look for?
  - What structure would it take?

## Appendix G

# **CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH- Principal (Extension of participation)**

### **INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:**

We would like to invite your school to *continue participating* in the research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice'. The research aims to explore teacher emotional work within the school context and whether reflexive practices assist in managing emotional work and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The intention is to give voice to teacher participants in regards to teacher emotional work. Furthermore, to give opportunity for participants to contribute to the development of a possible emotional work support structure to enrich the working lives of teachers. This project is an action research project, entailing interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions. Involvement in the research could contribute to participants' legislated professional development requirements. However, there are risks for participants involved in the research including; someone guessing their identity due to small participation numbers; deficits may be discovered though not the intention; they may become emotionally unsettled by the nature of the research.

### **CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
name address

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent for the staff of [school] to be involved in the research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice' being conducted at Victoria University by: Professor Pat Drake.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Jean Hopman

and that I freely consent to staff participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- **I consent to staff participating in a maximum of an additional ten, one hour sessions, in extension of the sessions outlined in the 'Information to Participants Involved in Research – Principal' document, in relation to this research project.**
- Participation is voluntary and teacher participants are free to withdraw at any time.
- The intention and possible effects of the research have been explained to me to my satisfaction.
- The project is for the purpose of research.
- The confidentiality of the information provided will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.
- I consent to staff being audio recorded during interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions, so long as they also give consent.

- The school involved and the individual participants of the research will be referred to by a pseudonym or blanked out in recorded data and publications.
- Individual participants have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality for all participants.
- Due to the small sample of participants it may be possible for someone to guess participant identities but identifiable information will be kept secure with only the research team having access.
- A brief summary of the research findings will be made available to me before publication, if I would like them to be.
- Once signed and returned, this consent form along with the data collected in this study will be kept securely at Victoria University for five years, before being destroyed.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw my consent from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher  
Professor Pat Drake  
03 9919 2609

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email [Researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:Researchethics@vu.edu.au) or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

## Appendix H

# CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH- Teacher (Extension of participation)

### INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to *continue participating* in the research project entitled 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice'. The research aims to explore teacher emotional work within the school context and whether reflexive practices assist in managing emotional work and consequently the emotional wellbeing and agency of teachers. The intention is to give voice to teacher participants in regards to teacher emotional work. Furthermore, to give opportunity for participants to contribute to the development of a possible emotional work support structure to enrich the working lives of teachers. This project is an action research project, entailing interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions. Involvement in the research could contribute to legislated professional development requirements. However, there are risks for participants involved in the research including; someone guessing your identity due to small participation numbers; deficits may be discovered though not the intention; you may become emotionally unsettled by the nature of the research.

### CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
name address

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: 'Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice' being conducted at Victoria University by: Professor Pat Drake.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Jean Hopman

and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- **I consent to participate in a maximum of an additional ten, one hour sessions, in extension of the sessions outlined in the 'Information to Participants Involved in Research – Teacher' document in relation to this research project.**
- My participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time.
- The intention and possible effects of the research have been explained to me to my satisfaction.
- The project is for the purpose of research.
- The confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.
- I consent to being audio recorded during interviews and collaborative inquiry sessions.
- The school involved and the individual participants of the research will be referred to by a pseudonym or blanked out in recorded data and publications.

- Individual participants have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality for all participants.
- Due to the small sample of participants it may be possible for someone to guess my identity but identifiable information will be kept secure with only the research team having access.
- A brief summary of the research findings will be made available to me before publication, if I would like them to be.
- Once signed and returned, this consent form along with the data collected in this study will be kept securely at Victoria University for five years, before being destroyed.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher  
Professor Pat Drake  
03 9919 2609

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email [Researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:Researchethics@vu.edu.au) or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

## Appendix I

### TEACHER EMOTIONAL WORK: Collaborative Inquiry Guide

	person recounting	group
share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel?</li> <li>• What was expected of you?</li> <li>• In what ways did you feel limited?</li> </ul>	
Identifying strengths		What were the strengths in the story?
perspective		<p>Think of a similar incident, where the answers to the questions below come close to the answers of the original story, and share.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel?</li> <li>• What was expected of you?</li> <li>• In what ways did you feel limited?</li> </ul>
inquiry	What assumptions drove the stories?	
reflect	What have we learned?	

#### NOTE:

1. The 'incident' is selected based on how the incident has impacted the teacher. In this frame the incident is 'critical' in that it is felt to be important and imposing, rather than requiring critique.



## Appendix J

### DEBRIEF INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide for teacher participants. Semi-structured face to face interview. The numbered questions are open-ended and the sub-questions are probing. They may or may not be required depending on the answers provided.

#### Topic 1: Involvement in the research

1. How have you experienced the research?
  - Have there been standout moments?

#### Topic 2: Emotional work

2. Has your view on how is emotion is involved in teaching practice changed?
  - Are their typical emotions that you feel?
  - Can these emotions be linked to typical events?
  - What extremes of emotion have you felt?
  - How do you manage these emotions?

#### Topic 3: Reflexivity

3. What does reflection look like in your practice now? Has it changed?
  - How do you define reflection?
  - Have you developed your ability to be reflective?
  - What strategies do you use to be reflective?
4. What is reflexivity in relation to reflection?
  - How is reflexivity different?
  - Have you developed your ability to be reflexive?
  - What strategies do you use to be reflexive?
5. Is reflection/reflexivity important in teacher practice?
  - Do you make time to be reflective/reflexive?
  - Do you seek outsider input to facilitate reflection/reflexivity?
  - Do you use reflection/reflexivity to help manage emotional work?

#### Topic 4: Professional development/Agency

6. What impact has the professional development had?
  - Has it impacted your ability to think/act/reason
  - Has it impacted working relationships?
  - Do you interact differently with other research participants in the professional context?
  - How would you describe your practice?
7. Could this research process/ professional development structure be useful in the future?
  - Why would it be useful?
  - Who would it be useful for?
  - Where would it be useful?
  - Should there be changes?

## Appendix K: University ethics approval

**From:** quest.noreply@vu.edu.au

**Subject:** Quest Ethics Notification - Application Process Finalised - Application Approved

**Date:** 16 May 2014 3:08 pm

**To:** Pat.Drake@vu.edu.au

**Cc:** jean.hopman@live.vu.edu.au, Gwen.Gilmore@vu.edu.au

---

Dear PROF PAT DRAKE,

Your ethics application has been formally reviewed and finalised.

- » Application ID: HRE14-091
- » Chief Investigator: PROF PAT DRAKE
- » Other Investigators: DR GWEN GILMORE, DR SHARLENE NIPPERESS, MS Jean Hopman
- » Application Title: Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in Teacher Practice
- » Form Version: 13-07

The application has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been granted for two (2) years from the approval date; 16/05/2014.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above approval date or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be downloaded from the Office for Research website at: <http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php>.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment. It should also be noted that it is the Chief Investigators' responsibility to ensure the research project is conducted in line with the recommendations outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).'

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee Phone: 9919 4781 or 9919 4461 Email: [researchethics@vu.edu.au](mailto:researchethics@vu.edu.au)

## Appendix L:

# Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) ethics approval



## Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Strategy and Review Group

2 Treasury Place  
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002  
Telephone: +61 3 9637 2000  
DX 210083  
GPO Box 4367  
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

2014\_002387

Mrs Jean Hopman  
College of Education  
Victoria University  
PO Box 14428  
MELBOURNE VIC 8001

Dear Mrs Hopman

Thank you for your application of 19 May 2014 in which you request permission to conduct research in Victorian government schools and/or early childhood settings titled *Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice*.

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. The research is conducted in accordance with the final documentation you provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
2. Separate approval for the research needs to be sought from school principals and/or centre directors. This is to be supported by the DEECD approved documentation and, if applicable, the letter of approval from a relevant and formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee.
3. The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter and any extensions or variations to your study, including those requested by an ethics committee must be submitted to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for its consideration before you proceed.
4. As a matter of courtesy, you advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools or governing body of the early childhood settings that you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director or governing body.
5. You acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in any publications arising from the research.
6. The Research Agreement conditions, which include the reporting requirements at the conclusion of your study, are upheld. A reminder will be sent for reports not submitted by the study's indicative completion date.
7. If DEECD has commissioned you to undertake this research, the responsible Branch/Division will need to approve any material you provide for publication on the Department's Research Register.



I wish you well with your research study. Should you have further enquiries on this matter, please contact Youla Michaels, Project Support Officer, Research, Evaluation and Analytics Branch, by telephone on (03) 9637 2707 or by email at [michaels.youla.y@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:michaels.youla.y@edumail.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Joyce Cleary**  
Director  
Research, Evaluation and Analytics Branch

28/07/2014

enc

## Appendix M: Declaration for external investigators




### VICTORIA UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

#### APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS: DECLARATION FORM FOR EXTERNAL INVESTIGATORS

This document must be submitted as an attachment to the online Human Research Ethics Application Form.  
All named external project investigators are required to complete this declaration.

RESEARCH PROJECT	
Project Title:	Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice
Primary Chief Investigator:	Professor Pat Drake
OFFICE USE: Application ID	HRE _____ - _____

DECLARATIONS AND SIGNATURES
<p><b>I / we, the undersigned, declare the following:</b></p> <p>I / we accept responsibility for the conduct of the research project detailed above in accordance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the principles outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007);</li><li>b) the protocols and procedures as approved by the HREC;</li><li>c) relevant legislation and regulations.</li></ul> <p>I / we will ensure that HREC approval is sought using the Changes to the Research Project process outlined on the Human Research Ethics website, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) proposing to implement change to the research project;</li><li>b) changes to the research team are required.</li></ul> <p>I / we have read the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research prior to completing this form.</p> <p>I / we certify that all members of the research team involved the research project hold the appropriate qualifications, experience, skills and training necessary to undertake their roles.</p> <p>I / we will provide Annual / Final reports to the approving HREC within 12 months of approval or upon completion of the project if earlier than 12 months.</p> <p>I / we understand and agree that research documents and / or records and data may be subject to inspection by the VUHREC, Ethics Secretary, or an independent body for audit and monitoring purposes.</p> <p>I / we understand that information relating to this research, and about the investigators, will be held by the VU Office for Research. This information will be used for reporting purposes only and managed according to the principles established in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and relevant laws in the States and Territories of Australia.</p>

Signature of External Investigator	
Name:	DR SHARLENE NIPPERESS
Date:	15/04/2014
Signature:	

**IMPORTANT: Only applications signed by all members of the research team will be considered by the HREC.**

## Appendix N

# **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

## **Transcriptionist**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audio recordings and documentations received from Jean Hopman related to her research study titled *Teacher Emotional Work: Applying reflexivity in teacher practice*. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-recorded interviews, or in any associated documents.
2. To not make copies of any audio recordings or computerized titles of the transcribed interviews texts, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher, Jean Hopman.
3. To store all study-related audio recordings and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
4. To delete or destroy all electronic or paper files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive, any back-up devices or that reside in my possession.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix O

**Table I: Series of emotion**

Emotion	Source	References
Defeat	31	302
Contentment	29	122
Frustration	23	88
Worry	23	86
Anger	21	80
Sadness	20	59
Happiness	17	35
Love	17	33
Fear	12	22
Fairness	11	29
Fun	10	21
Safe	9	22
Gratitude	8	14
Shock	8	21
Trust	8	16
Bad	7	9
Confident	7	12
Hope	7	14
Embarrassed	6	9
Valued	6	16
Doubt	5	5
Enthusiastic	5	5
Relief	5	5
Resentment	5	18
Rejected	4	7
Alone	3	6
Bored	2	3
Confused	2	2
Desperate	2	2
Excited	2	5
Defensive	1	3
Inspired	1	2
Unaffected	1	1

## Appendix P

**Table II: Code chart**

Categories	CODE – LEVEL 1	CODE - LEVEL 2	CODE - LEVEL 3
Activity (30/1420) A	Ability (5/9)		
	Action of other (12/42)		
	Action of self (22/92)		
	Appropriate reaction (2/4)		
	Collaborative Inquiry (17/160) NA	Problem solving (6/8)	
		Strengths (9/15)	
	Confrontation (12/75)		
	Inaction (12/20)		
	Inappropriate reaction (11/27)		
	Learning (21/63)		
	Limitations (29/179)		
	Over-reaction (6/7)		
	Parent interactions (6/12)		
	Physical reaction (2/2)		
	Relational (1/2)		
	Resistance (4/11)		
	Student interactions (24/281)		
	Support (15/54) NA	Received support from other (26/115)	
		Self support (18/68)	
		Sought support (20/90)	
		Support of other (16/39)	
	Teacher interactions (28/295)		
	Violence (11/27)		
Characteristics (28/490) A	Age (13/15)		
	Diversity (2/15)		
	Flexible-open (10/17) NA	Inflexible (2/3)	
	Gender (12/31)		
	Honest (2/4) NA	Dishonest (2/5)	
	Identity (7/15)		
	Immature (2/4)		
	Macho (3/10)		
	Prepared (3/3)		
	Privileged (1/1)		
	Proud (7/10)		
	Race (7/25)		
	Religion (2/2)		
	Skills (7/14)		
	Students (20/170) NA	Exceptional students (11/25)	
	Teachers (10/48)		
	Unwellness (19/88)		
Emotion (30/1128) A	Alone (3/6)		
	Anger (21/80)		
	Bad (7/9)		
	Bored (2/3)		
	Confident (7/12)		
	Confused (2/2)		
	Content-ease-good (29/122)		
	Defeated-overwhelmed-hard (31/302)		
	Defensive (1/3)		
	Desperate (2/2)		
	Doubt (5/5)		



	Embarrassed (6/9)		
	Enthusiasm (5/5)		
	Excited (2/5)		
	Fairness (11/29)		
	Fear-unsafe-terrified (12/22)		
	Frustration (23/88)		
	Fun-enjoyment (10/21)		
	Gratitude (8/14)		
	Happiness (17/35)		
	Hope-positivity (7/14)		
	Inspired (1/2)		
	Love-care-affection (17/33)		
	Rejected (4/7)		
	Relief (5/5)		
	Resentment-bitter (5/18)		
	Sad-disappointment-miserable –sympathy (20/59)		
	Safe (9/22)		
	Shock (8/21)		
	Trust (8/16)		
	Unaffected (1/1)		
	Valued-appreciated (6/16)		
	Worry-anxious-tense-regret (23/86)		
Money (6/22)			
Pedagogy (23/309) A	Planning (9/18)		
	Professional Learning (10/86)		
	Teaching results in positive outcome (12/44)		
	Teaching results in negative outcome (13/26)		
Position (27/520) A	Impact (3/12)		
	Personal (9/31)		
	Respect (7/23)		
	Responsibility (14/57) NA	Responsibility elsewhere (10/14)	
	Role within school (13/77)		
	School culture (12/44)		
	Tension (21/156) A	Bullying-discrimination (6/15)	
		Control-power (21/117) A	Loss of control (18/47)
		Crisis (1/1)	
Reasoning (737) A		School tension (6/20)	
	Vocation (18/120)		
	Expectations (19/97)		
	'I don't know' (5/21)		
	Knowledge (2/4)		
	Metaphor (11/32)		
	Mindfulness (1/2)		
	Perception (26/288) A	Assumptions (22/123)	
		Avoidance (12/39)	
		Balance (8/18)	
		Incongruity (14/67)	
		Intuition (2/2)	
		Judgment (6/8)	
		Perceived negative attitude towards self (12/30)	
	Reflection-questioning (30/254) NA	Unreflecting (3/3)	
	Striking matters-important (11/27) NA	Self ("ah-ha") (6/7)	
		In wider society (1/2)	

Time (216) A	Future (13/22)		
	History (18/93) NA	Teaching history/experience (11/36) NA	Experience doesn't help (8/9)
			Experience helps (18/80)
	Present (11/117)		
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CODES</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>

a/b where a = number of sources and b = number of references

A = aggregate of sub codes (used when that code was empty itself)

NA = not an aggregate of sub codes (used when the code had independent entries of sub codes)

Note: The emotion category originally had 50 codes but these were condensed. For example, 'Content-ease-good' shows three separate codes merged into one titled 'content'