

Cartographies of Practices in Research with Children.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of

Birmingham City University

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Mum - *Josephine Mary Theresa Hanney, née O'Connell*, (1927 – 2008). Mum taught me to read, and gifted me a love of books and curiosity about the social world. I have no doubt at all that Mum, from afar, continues to keep an eye on all my endeavours, not least this one. Thanks Mum x.

Cartographies of Practices in Research with Children.

Abstract

This thesis unpicks the complexities, and rhizomatic nature, of the underpinning concepts of the trend towards *Children-as-Researcher* projects. The approach adopts a post-qualitative position, which evolved and emerged from the initial research design and pilot studies, and is presented in the thesis demonstrating the autoethnographic nature of the research experience. Adopting the style of a travelogue, the writing of the thesis is in itself a methodological tool that enabled/enables an exploration of the spaces between children, teachers and research to be encountered. Being in dialogue with Deleuze and Guatarri (1980) '*lines of flight*', Barad (2007) '*entanglement*', along with St Pierre (2014) '*becoming*' and Lather (2006) '*to produce knowledge differently*' provides not so much an analytical framework to give structure, rigidity, and a systematic interpretation of data, but rather permission and confidence to explore uncharted territories, to peek behind the curtain and reveal the spaces there. In doing so I consider the '*present absence*' within '*empty data-sets*', the significance of '*silence*' in voice, and take a risk in adopting a playful approach through which to do so. My playful approach, whilst not quite the same as Watson (2015), who advocated the use of humour as an integral part of research in the social sciences, both as a tool for analysis and presentation, is simply put – fun. As such it is a different way to think about research, not to be too serious but to be enjoyed by both the researcher and the reader. This different way of thinking about research is evident throughout the thesis and can be seen visually through changes in font and print as well as through language and images, notably in the cartographic representation of my research experience. In

many ways the changes in direction, reflecting the journey metaphor, can be seen in this abstract which does not completely follow the conventional summary of the research to include findings and outcomes. There are no spoilers here, except to say that the takeaways, the new knowledge, can best be summarised as presenting new spaces to be considered as a result of a blurring of methodologies in a non-conventional manner, in order to provoke and stimulate the educational research community that remains curious about *Children-as-Researchers*.

Acknowledgments

Firstly I'd like to acknowledge the support, encouragement and unwavering interest from my supervisors, Mandy French and Martin Fautley, who never made me feel I was barking up the wrong tree and gave me the confidence to try something a little different. Their patience and nurturing approaches made all the difference on those long days of self-doubt.

And then to David Foster, who gave me so much time and who, with humour and creativity, was able to interpret my doctoral storytelling to playfully capture my journey of discovery and re-present this in the map.

Finally, and most importantly with love and thanks, to my family who have had my back from the beginning, providing copious moral support, and tea and coffee.

Graham - for sharing the ups and downs and providing words of wisdom, and even more so for giving me the space to do this.

Nat and Ben - who have looked on from the side-lines as they continued their own academic journey, yet still found time to be interested in mine.

Dad - who knew when to ask how things were going and also knew when to avoid the subject completely - I'm sorry it took so long.

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1 The Epi-Pro-logue

In which the journey, or at least this stage, begins and the reader is teased by the initial ideas to be unpicked, and then rewoven together, as the pace quickens. A risk assessment is offered to prepare for the bumpy road ahead.



1.1 Getting Started

'This tale grew in the telling of it', the opening lines of the foreword of one of the greatest epic tales of travel, journey and discovery, JRR Tolkien's 'The Lord of the Rings' (1954), perhaps encapsulates the essence of this thesis. Through the writing, and the reading, of this thesis the research has become dependent on what came before, alongside, and will inevitably come after. The length, and indeed structure, of the story told within this thesis has grown and evolved as part of the telling of that story. In much the same way as Tolkien, and other writers of epic journeys that travel through uncharted territories, (for example Douglas Adams in his five part trilogy 'The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy'), have found, from one apparently simple starting point a range of other 'glimpses' become not only interesting to explore but ultimately essential (Tolkien 1954: Foreword). In ignoring the 'glimpses' the holistic nature of my doctoral journey cannot be communicated nor understood. Like Frodo and the rest of the Company of the Ring, the journey I have undertaken throughout this doctoral experience is a journey of discovery at many levels, not least one of self-discovery. At times my journey has been risky, with false starts, dead ends and challenges to overcome. This has included getting lost.... and then found, as will be explained in my second chapter *'The Weary Traveller'*.

I have endeavoured to approach the writing of this thesis with a degree of playfulness and creativity both to self-motivate and to engage the reader. Like Tolkien I have drawn on imagery and a map to illustrate this doctoral journey, and would ask that this

is viewed in conjunction with the thesis. Recognising that there is an overlap between beginning and end, like Frodo my starting point is also my ending point (for the time being), so whilst I draw attention to the map at this beginning point, I discuss it in more depth at the end. Again, whilst not likening my writing skills to Tolkien's, I do draw some comfort in that in the same way he took a very long period of time to complete *The Lord of the Rings* due to the demands of his academic role, in particular examining and assessment (Carpenter 2016), I too have taken a long time to complete this thesis.

Very quickly the reader will notice the use I make of metaphors throughout the thesis, adopting the idea of *Journey*. This use of metaphor not only responds to my creative and playful approaches but is underpinned by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory which suggests that the metaphor is not simply a poetic device but that cognition, and the ability to make sense of the world, relies on metaphor, which is then revealed in language. Consequently metaphors are the way in which the world is understood, not just described. In this thesis, by adopting the metaphor of the *Journey* I present the thinking and interaction between the events and experiences of my doctoral study. The messiness of the study and the interactions between the context, the researcher and the research participants, is understood in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) rhizomatic view of the world in which there are multiple beginnings, and ends (and indeed middles).

This philosophical concept developed by Deleuze and Guatarri (1980) is based on the botanical rhizome, a root-like subterranean plant stem that sends out roots below ground and shoots above ground from its nodes. Rhizomatic research is continually moving off in different directions, replacing familiar understandings with alternative transitory and temporary ones. Deleuze and Guatarri identify connectivity and heterogeneity as key to rhizomatic thinking, as in the image of the rhizome any point can be connected to anything other. For this reason rhizomatic thinking is a model that resists structures of domination and rejects linearity; multiplicity and unpredictability is central as the number of multiples develop in the rhizome, so do the number of possible combinations between different elements.

Consequently in this thesis the main points of discussion are presented and re-presented, explored and revisited by my returning to salient points. Without the use of the journey metaphor the purpose of this revisiting is challenging to communicate; at first glance perhaps being misunderstood as repetition. However within the metaphor of the journey each return visit, and encounter, can be better understood in that with each encounter different experiences are brought to that encounter, even if it has been visited before. For example, returning to the same familiar coastal walk brings a different experience on each occasion; not only has the walker changed since the last visit because of the experiences that have occurred since the previous visit, but the coastal path itself has been changed by the seasons and indeed other walkers. Each experience and encounter therefore, whilst it may be familiar, is viewed in a unique, for that moment, way. Adopting this approach provides validation

for the revisiting of salient points through this thesis. The map is offered as a visual metaphor of this revisiting of encounters throughout my journey of discovery.

1.2 Explaining the Epi-pro-logue.

Traditionally in any thesis construction the final chapter to be written is the introduction (Thomas 2017, Dunleavy 2007, Wisker 2008), the rationale being that until the thesis is nearly completed the rhetorical meta-discoursal style of writing is not possible. There is a discreet irony that whilst the introduction is completed at the end of the thesis writing process, from a conventional perspective, it becomes the first part of the thesis; setting the background and justifying the context for the research to be communicated. In that respect the writing of a conventional thesis ignores the chronological experience of the doctoral study and in doing so also ignores the significance of slowly emerging ideas that are representative of the journey and distance travelled. Instead it offers a linear sequence of events that in many ways do not reflect the thinking and development of the apprentice researcher. From the start (the end?) of my thesis I will be challenging these linear conventions, as advocated by Koro-Ljunberg (2016), by taking an approach that is more representative of my complicated, rhizomatic and nomadic journey.

This first chapter of my thesis will guide and signpost the reader, setting out the stall to clarify and justify some of the approaches taken, the challenge of course is

accepting that I am writing this chapter towards the end point of this particular leg of my research journey, I already know what comes next and how the thesis as a whole will follow. As such I want to reveal the journey of the doctoral study in a chronological manner that will provide a framework for the emerging and evolving ideas, findings and provocations to be discussed. For that reason then this introductory chapter becomes more of a prologue whereby it aims to give *some* of the back story, introduce *some* of the characters and alert the audience of what to look out for, whilst accepting it is written in full knowledge of the story to follow and is uniquely linked to the completion of the study; hence I adopt the term 'Epi-Pro-Logue'.

I turn again here to literature and acknowledge the signposting within one of the most familiar prologues, taking from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, to suggest that as I endeavour to provide that guidance, signposting and teasing the reader, whilst bearing in mind the complexities that will be revealed throughout the thesis, I also ask the audience, as Shakespeare did (line 14), to be patient with me for any errors or miscommunications within.

“Two households, both alike in dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

The fearful passage of their death-marked love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage—
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.”

1.3 Travelogue.

The metaphor of a doctoral study as a journey, described by some as a marathon rather than a sprint, is a familiar one (Deignan 2017). At the start of my doctoral process I recognised this and thought I was prepared for the journey ahead. What became apparent after a period of time was that the journey ahead would be full, not just of false starts and stoppages, but of episodes of getting lost, and found again, and I was not prepared for that. For this reason, to support, guide and prepare others who may well take a similar journey, this thesis works like a travelogue through the write-up of my journey.

The map offered and discussed in my final chapter *Trip Advisor* belongs too at this starting point; not as just an image of where I went but to also offer an awareness of the cyclical and overlapping nature of the various routes, which Deleuze and Guattari (1980) refers to as *lines of flight*, that were made available to me. In understanding the field of *Children-as-Researchers* I see myself as the nomad who as Deleuze and Guattari (1980) suggests, traverses the 'smooth space' that is my research, whilst

acknowledging that the striated space of dominance created by the 'sedentary' surrounds me. This nomadic approach acknowledges the many possibilities of the 'end' of the thesis; the chapter *Check Points: Resting en route* outlines where I arrived at that time, and is understood to in no way indicate a definitive position (Koro-Ljunberg 2016).

An important feature of my doctoral journey is the ontological shift from conventional humanist qualitative researcher to a post-qualitative researcher, this being a key thread that is interwoven throughout. However to offer a detailed meta-discourse about that shift within this epi-prologue is not pertinent here, rather I allude to this and as the Chorus requests see this as '*The which, if you with patient ears attend*' (*Romeo and Juliet 1:1:14*). This doctoral travelogue recorded in my thesis details the journey taken, and through a reflexive approach examines how the direction of travel changed, and how the experiences of the research impacted on me.

1.4 How to Use this Guide.

My journey of (self) discovery examined and explored, initially, '*How might young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?*' However in doing so, a period of re-orientation evolved and my focus relocated to consider emerging provocations such as:

What place does research play in teachers' lives and what do they believe is the relationship between research and their practice?

How do teachers understand and promote the right of the child to conduct their own research?

How does professional identity impact on teachers seeing themselves as researchers?

What prevents or encourages teachers to carry out research in their classrooms?

How do teachers value the voice of children and how are they responding to opportunities for children to become researchers?

Why is it so challenging for adult gatekeepers to consent to access and involvement with research?

Whilst along the way my individual focus has shifted from child participants to adult participants, unpicking the concept of *Children-as-Researchers* by considering how children's agency and children's voices link to ideas about research, within and beyond schools, remains at the heart. Moving to different co-ordinates from which to explore the phenomenon of *Children-as-Researchers* allows an alternative perspective to be considered. It is not simply that children became the spring board for new explorations but rather the experience of exploring *Children-as-Researchers* when blurring methodologies opened up other spaces that demanded examination. This blurring of methodologies becomes entwined with a reflexive approach as they are woven together throughout.

As each path was/is travelled I noticed connections and relationships between the domains of children, teachers and research, this then formed the enquiry as I toured the terrain. Consequently my constant orientating and re-orientating as I found myself

getting lost, and found again, has meant that there is overlapping and over/under-laying within this written representation of the thinking, noticing, finding, presenting, and re-presenting, of the research. As with all good travelogues I want the reader not only to travel with me as I present my learning and findings but to also be able to find their way through, around and within my thinking, finding their own places of interest. For ease then I include here a *How to use this Guide* which will attempt to explain how chapters relate to each other and how this may be understood to be different from perhaps a more familiar conventional approach to writing a thesis.

1.4.1 Conventional Thesis Structure.

Guidance given through the plethora of *Doctoral Guides* available via blogs, text books and help sites suggest the following linear structure, (Figure 1), as a conventional approach to the structure of the thesis.

Abstract	Summary of Thesis
Introduction – Setting the scene	Statement of topic and focus Motivation for the research Statement of research setting and data collection strategy How thesis is structured
Literature Review	Conceptual Framework Previous research on the topic Evidence of being well informed Link to establishing new area of enquiry
Research Methodology	Research design and strategy Ethics and access Research methods and tools Analytical framework
Presentations of findings	Results from research tools and data gathered
Discussion of Data	Interpretation and what has been learnt from the data
Implications	Summary of what has been learnt and what it all means
Conclusions	Summing up and recommendations Where next?

Figure 1 - Structure of conventional thesis

(Adapted from, among others, Lynch 2014)

This recommended approach provides a linear strategy where each chapter leads conveniently and with ease to the next, revealing the decisions made at the design stage of the project, the justification for the approaches taken and then the data produced by the research tools to then be discussed and analysed drawing together to offer conclusions and overall demonstrating the new learning revealed by the investigation. Such an approach even in qualitative research is heavily influenced by Science Based Research that St Pierre describes as being 'monolithic and stifling' (2014: 3).

My journey, from conventional humanist qualitative research to post-qualitative, calls for a more active structure that in itself recognises the entanglement of the concepts of children, teachers and research, and responds to that. To this extent then there will be surprises along the way that may, for some, be challenging. The journey metaphor adopted celebrates the need to visit and then re-visit aspects of *Children-as-Researchers*, to do this justice at times there is a need to dig deeper and unravel elements that were not noted on earlier visits. Adopting this approach and being prepared to follow those 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980), will at times mean not just revisiting a concept but also offering new literature that had not been considered previously, for example in a conventional literature review. I do this with confidence, not only as this travelogue is a record of developing thinking and discovery, but as will be regularly referred to throughout the thesis, I am aiming to not only do things differently but to write up differently, or as Honan and Bright (2016)

advocate I have not attempted to write 'according to what is expected', but 'to create-to bring something to life' (p733).

Additionally a conventional thesis may well include additional materials in an appendix, for example background information, raw data, and case studies as supplementary information. Within my thesis in particular it is worth noting that appendices have not been used. The rationale for this is that I attempt, as part of the travelogue approach, to take the reader with me and experience the heuristic nature of this nomadic exploration of *Children-as-Researchers*. To this effect then the reader will find within the main body of the thesis case studies as part of an auto-ethnographic approach, along with my research proposal, as each form an important element in the process of my ontological shift towards a post-qualitative methodology. This is something else for the reader to watch out for moving ahead. I have, particularly in the early chapters, made a decision to limit editing of my initial writings so that the formation of my post-qualitative approaches are revealed in the spaces that they emerged. This approach was not there at the beginning but grew out of experience, and interaction with *Children –as –Researchers* and has influenced the structure as well as the content of the thesis.

1.4.2 Travelogue Thesis Structure.

As clarified at the start of the *Epi-Pro-Logue* this doctoral journey is not just one of travel from beginning to end, but is a journey of transformation with episodes of positioning and re-positioning; at times this was turbulent, messy and distracting. The structure of the thesis responds to this, initially adopting what may be considered a conventional approach, and then in response to the turbulent encounters made on the journey takes off in different directions, which are not always predictable ones. Figure 2 provides an overview of the structure and briefly sets out the salient features.

Abstract	Summary of Thesis
Epi-pro-logue	Explores personal motivation, initial focus and subsequent shift Identifies <i>Playfulness</i> and <i>Risk taking</i> Introduces origins of ontological position, conventional and post
The Weary Traveller	Auto-ethnographic narrative The pilot study and further emerging ontology Impact of the <i>Event</i> Post qualitative critique of initial proposal
Dealing with Wanderlust	Conventional review of literature Post Qualitative review of literature Emerging ontological position Playing with text, adopting a reflexive style
Finding the Way	Reviewing initial methodological approaches, finding ontological security and voice Reflexive responses to the event and impact on research design Noticing the silence

Abstract	Summary of Thesis
Creating a Map	Offering a new way of producing data Restating focus and shift from children as research participants to adults as research participants Embracing the emerging entanglement of concepts and context Preparing to look elsewhere – new tools/approaches suggested Hearing the silence and the empty-set as data
Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track	Adopting a conventional response to the data set Noticing and interpreting the silence Re-viewing the entanglement of children, teachers and research Re-visiting old, and exploring new, terrains as a nomad
Check Points – Resting En route	Responding to provocations Interpreting the newly discovered spaces in between children-research-teachers Drawing together the threads and problematizing the core concepts of <i>Children-as-Researchers</i>
Trip Advisor	Provoking future travellers Establishing new ways of writing Acknowledging the Silence Imagery and maps

Figure 2 - Overview of Travelogue Thesis Structure

Without wishing to simply offer another contents page I want to draw attention to how each section of the thesis overlaps and where key concepts are found, and along the way revisited. This is not about repetition but rather the inter-relatedness threaded

between those key concepts and as such is indicative of the entanglement. I have avoided using the term themes and the conventional humanist qualitative concept of grounded theory, the justification for which will be fully explained in *Chapter 4: Finding the Way –Methodological Orientations* and *Chapter 5: Creating a Map*. Rather than themes I prefer the idea of *encounters* when referring to critical matters.

Figure 3 illustrates the frequency of encounters throughout the research journey and I draw attention to these now as key aspects to look out for in the reading of this thesis. I offer this holistic image of the thesis illustrating how each section overlaps and responds to the others.

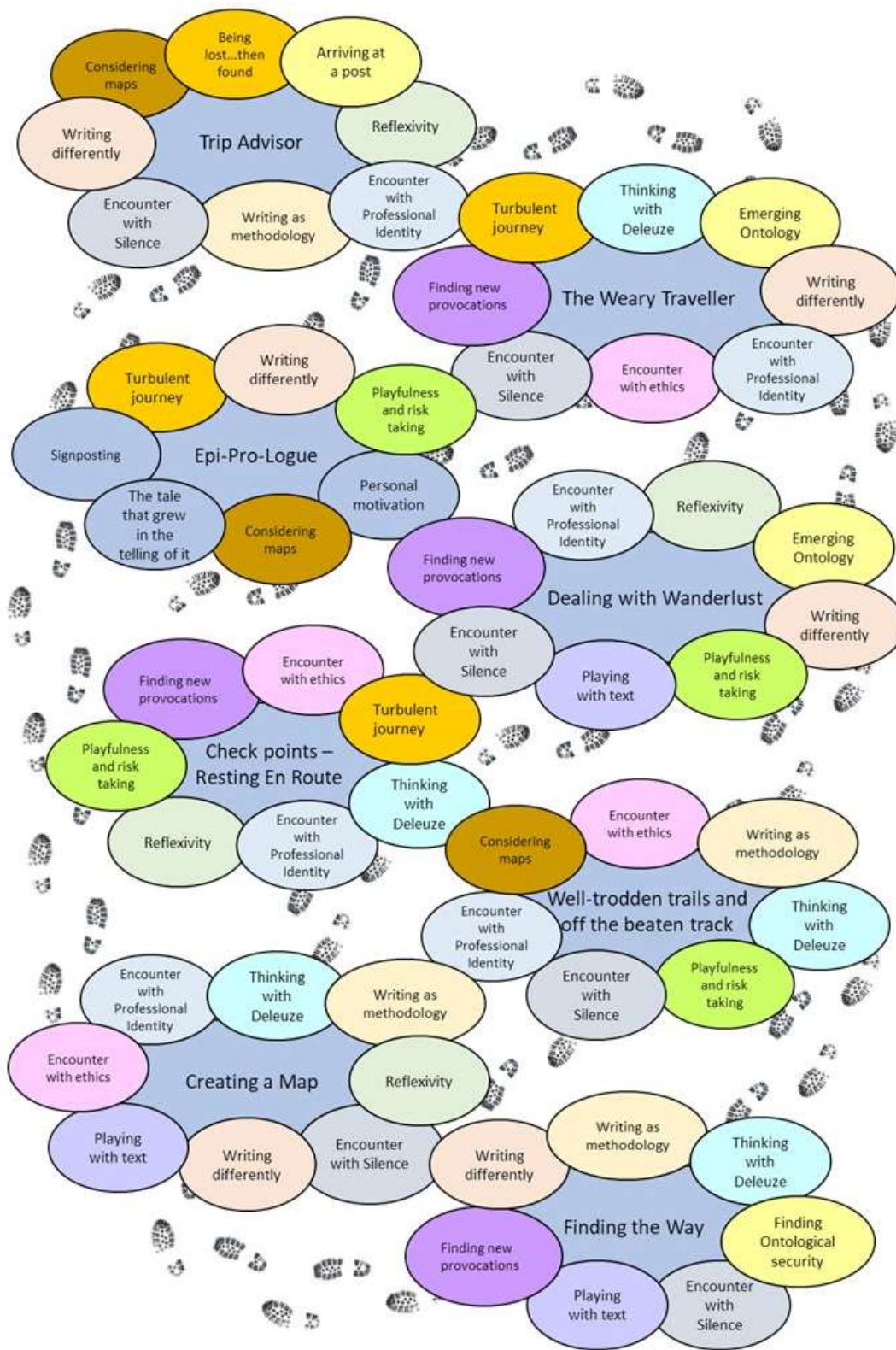


Figure 3 – Mapping Encounters visited and revisited

Finally Figure 4 demonstrates how the sections I have crafted in my thesis may well cover the expected elements of conventional thesis. I do this not to return to a Conventional Humanist Qualitative approach but rather to offer reassurance that what may appear to be random and spontaneous is the consequence of carefully crafted decisions that continue to illustrate my ontological position and my commitment to the post-qualitative paradigm.

Abstract	Abstract
Introduction – Setting the scene	Epi-Pro-Logue The Weary Traveller
Literature Review	Dealing with Wanderlust Check Points / Resting en route Trip Advisor
Research Methodology	Dealing with Wanderlust Finding the Way Creating the Map
Presentations of findings	Dealing with Wanderlust Finding the Way Creating the Map
Discussion of Data	Creating the Map Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track
Implications	Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track Check Points/Resting en route
Conclusions	Check Points/Resting en route Trip Advisor Epi-Pro-Logue

Figure 4 - Conventional thesis mapped against the Travelogue

1.5 Travelogue – KEY

At this starting point it is necessary to warn the reader that at various points in the thesis there will be a change of font – colour and style. I offer this at this point not to alarm but as an indicator of changing voices and developing identities. This experimental approach is something that could be said to be risky and playful but given my Early Years professional background is something that is indicative of ‘me’ as an educator and researcher of children’s social worlds.

The different layers of this thesis are demonstrating not just the multiplicities of the key concepts of children, research and teachers, and their inter/intra-relatedness, but go some way to demonstrate the multiplicities of my professional identity which is an encounter that will be visited and re-visited throughout the thesis. In many ways this is an unexpected encounter and is indicative of one of the unravelling threads discovered when adopting a blurred approach to methodologies that explore the terrain of *Children-as-Researchers*. It is challenging to determine an agreed definition of professional identity, due to how the term *identity* has been used over time; shifting from a position in the early 20th Century whereby individual’s identity and self-image was viewed to be formed by themselves autonomously, to a more contemporary position whereby identity is now deemed created by society (Olsen 2012). Contemporary perspectives on the formation of professional identity draw upon sociocultural theory which understands that individuals align themselves to society’s image, in terms of values and beliefs, of that professional role and as such their identity

is formed through their individual choices in response to these values and beliefs. For this reason professional identity formation is fluid and constant (Taylor 2017). As such my own professional identity continues to be questioned, formed and reformed throughout this thesis and this exploration of who I am has impacted not only on my developing ontology, but in how I have expressed myself throughout the thesis.

In my endeavours to find myself and understand how my identity and subjectivity impacts/impacted on my research I have drawn on the work of Peshkin (1988), who proposed that it is unrealistic to set *objectivity* as an ideal in qualitative research, and that rather researchers should be 'meaningfully attentive to their own subjectivity' (Peshkin 1988:17), and furthermore that researchers should systematically identify that subjectivity. Peshkin identifies six I's, versions of his subjectivity, which he noted during his reflective approach to his research. In analysing Peshkin's model, Savage (2007) suggests the foundation of these intrinsic I's are found in a range of sources that include belief and value systems, experiences of environments, people and communities; resonating with the idea of identity formation. In *Chapter 2: The Weary Traveller*, where I encounter professional identity for the first time, I try to identify the intrinsic subjective I's revealed through the pilot study in more detail.

For now though, reflecting on this travelogue I offer the following key in Figure 5 to help the reader to identify the different voices, and perhaps my differing professional identities, within this thesis. The change of font, style and colour, emphasises the

multiplicities of intrinsic subjectivities, and voices, as the travelogue reveals the journey undertaken and the shift from conventional to post evolves.

KEY	Typographic Features	Purpose
Conventional Voice	Black Ariel Occasional BOLD for emphasis Occasional <i>italics</i> for emphasis	To capture the conventional academic voice, proposing theory, discussing key concepts, offering interpretation and analysis.
<i>Reflexive Voice</i>	<i>Blue italic</i> <i>Ariel</i> <i>Occasional BOLD for emphasis</i> <i>Occasional non-italics for emphasis</i>	<i>To indicate a shift in voice, and offer reflexive responses and reflections.</i>
<i>Playful Voice</i>	<i>Green italic</i> <i>Ariel</i> <i>Occasional BOLD for emphasis</i> <i>Occasional non-italics for emphasis</i>	<i>To indicate inner dialogue, seeing things differently, playing with texts and punctuation, asides and post-encounters. Experimenting with differences and possibilities</i>

Figure 5 – Typographic Features

1.6 Preparing to travel – personal motivation.

This thesis follows on from previous research at MA level and a subsequent paper, 'Children Deconstructing Childhood' (Lowe 2012), which explored children's perspectives of childhood. In an attempt to address the question 'What is childhood?' my review of literature then identified that whilst commentaries on childhood were abundant, they depended on secondary sources, namely adults. This initial piece of research drew on the primary source, children. In that research, methodologies were developed to promote the 'voice of the child' and identified a range of discourses that children in my research held about childhood. However in this previous research I concluded that whilst including children as research participants and listening to their 'voice', my research was still essentially 'adultist' as the adult was the main researcher and analyst. Further exploration of *Children-as-Researchers* drew on the work of Kellett (2005, 2010), and Bucknall (2010, 2012), both of whom suggested the benefits and development of research not just on, or with children, but by children. Whilst Kellett, (2005, 2010), Kellett and Ward (2008), Bucknall (2012), and Elton-Chalcraft (2011) focussed on children from 8 to 12 years of age, coming from an Early Years background I wanted to explore *Children-as-Researchers* projects with younger children; with the aim being to support their developing research skills. Ultimately this would be in order for them to design and carry out subsequent projects whereby they would be lead researchers ascertaining children's views of their right to participation in education. At the start of this doctoral study I identified my aims to be:

To describe and analyse the origins of, and context to, children's right to participation in education

To explore how to actively involve children as co-researchers in investigating their participation in their educational lives

To elicit children's views of their right to participation in education

As I travelled and gathered momentum on my journey these aims changed and were restated, how this change came/comes about is discussed in *Chapter 3: Dealing with Wanderlust*. Through my blurring of methodologies I subsequently aimed to examine the spaces between children – research – teachers, and their interconnectivity. In doing so the new space between becomes the thread that is unravelled and runs through the thesis.

1.6.1 Health and Safety Checks

To start the journey from the perspective of how to actively engage young children as researchers, with a view to elicit their understanding and perspectives of their right to participation in education, and through doing so to move towards a provocative, personalised post-qualitative inquiry, is risky to say the least. The additional layer that examines the place of teachers and their understanding of research, with and without children, complicates the matter further and, as will be explained and explored within *Chapter 6: Well-trodden Trails and Off the Beaten Track*, is indicative of the post humanist ideas of entanglement and the inter/intra-relationships between, within, and beyond these concepts. However, whilst risky, I did not make this shift blindly but rather *'in dialogue'* with St Pierre, MacLure and Mazzei who like me, have adopted a post-qualitative approach to research. A significant aspect of this thesis is an

exploration of how the posts can open up new ways of thinking and new ways of understanding the hidden complexities of social world which, from a conventional perspective, initially appear to be stable. As such my approach to data, both the representation and analysis of that data, and my ability to think with theory is revealed through the travelogue.

The context for my awakening to new ways, (for me), of thinking about the world lies within an exploration of *Children-as-Researchers*. However the conclusions reached towards the end of this thesis, *Chapter 7: Check Points, Resting En route*. only go part way towards answering the original questions that I posed:

How might young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?

How is children's 'participation' within the field of education, understood by children and other stakeholders?

This is not to say that the questions stated originally were not well thought out, as an analysis of the proposal process and Form 9R shows in *4.6 Deconstructing Conventional Methodologies/Orthodoxies*, the background to these ideas was well researched and justified. The outcome of the initial stages of my research journey relate to the fact that they were the wrong questions to be asked; my evolving ontology merely opened my eyes to this. Careful consideration of my ontological shift is examined in *Chapter 4: Finding the Way*, in which I critique my initial proposal from a post-structuralist perspective and use this process to re-set more appropriate

questions. As such my reflexions and exploration in *Chapter 4: Finding the Way* demonstrate the to-ing and fro-ing of this doctoral study and as part of this health warning it is only fair to draw attention to the fact that a turbulent and transformative approach remains a constant throughout. Koro-Ljungberg (2016) adopts the idea of 'productive failures' to deflect the conventional idea of the need for conclusions and endings. I offer a health warning here that in the same way this thesis may be said to fail to conclude and provide a perfect response to the initial questions posed, and whilst I embrace the unfinished business here and the opening up of new beginnings (Koro-Ljungberg 2016) I accept that for some who hold a different ontological view of the world this may lead to feelings of uncomfortableness.

1.6.2 Travel Essentials.

As will become apparent, through the telling of this tale, the ontological shift examined through my thesis became/becomes/is becoming apparent after setting off. The 'event' outlined in *Chapter 2: The Weary Traveller* examines this and demonstrates the re-orientation of my perspective having carried out the pilot study. From this point on my developing confidence grew/grows and provides a foundation to explore more playfully, expressing myself through metaphors, as well as alliteration and patterns of text, and offers a more creative travelogue, through a new (for me) way of writing. In doing so this enables me to confirm, affirm and reaffirm my emerging ontological position as well as initial conclusions and/or provocations. This emerging process is seen most clearly in *Chapter 3: Dealing with Wanderlust* and *Chapter 6: Well-trodden Trails and Off the Beaten Track*.

My playful approach adopted throughout could be said to be triggered by my professional roots and identity which are considered/re-considered in both *Chapter 6: Well-trodden Trails and Off the Beaten Track*, and again in *Chapter 7: Check Points, Resting En Route*; both chapters examine the place of professional identity and its relationship to teachers, children and research, and how each is inter/intra-related. My initial interest in children stems from my early career as an Early Years Teacher, or perhaps it is the other way round, my interest in being an Early Years Teacher stems from my interest in young children? Being able to state what comes first, or rather which I was/am aware of first, reinforces the complexities of professional identities and the entanglement within, and that this is not visible by smoothing out (Mazzei 2010). What is visible though, is the influence of play on many aspects of my professional identity. As an Early Years Teacher I promoted the development of play as a tool for young children to learn and experience the world, and as an academic I draw on playful approaches to my teaching as indicated through my social constructivist approach to learning in Higher Education. There is no definitive response to the question 'What is Play?', most Early Years academics and practitioners would draw upon familiar responses that are linked to both *child-led* and *adult-led* versions of the same, engaging, hands-on, practical experiences that are open ended; spontaneous in the form of child-initiated play, or curriculum driven, in terms of adult-initiated play. Play is a choice, it involves sustained thinking and activity, often involving being fully immersed in activity which, as any Early Years Practitioner or academic would recall is described classically by Bruce (2011) as 'wallowing in learning'. Defining play is both challenging and debatable; whilst there is not just one, but many definitions of play, my preference is to see play as 'a subset of life ... an arrangement in which one

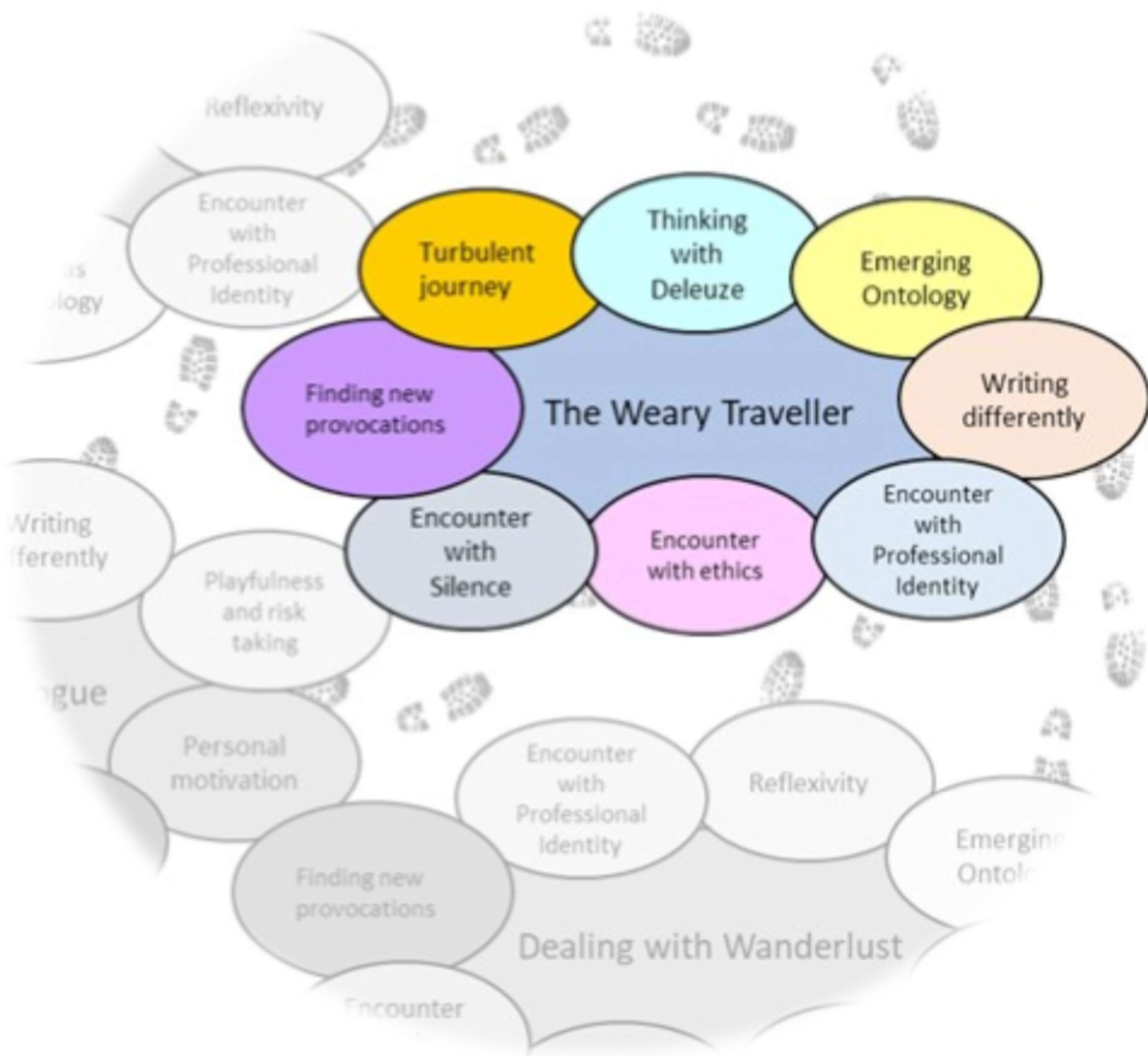
can practise behaviour without dreading its consequences' (Csikszentmihalyi 1981:14).

Within this thesis then, by adopting a playful approach I find myself wallowing in learning and being confident to take risks without dreading their consequences. The link between play and my playfulness, and being able to take risks, is key to understanding my approach to my doctoral study. I acknowledge the risks I take within the format and style of my research and in the playful presentation of both text and images. Indeed this playful approach is something I take away from the research experience and will be considered more fully in *Chapter 8: Trip Advisor*.

Having set the context, justified the approaches adopted throughout the thesis, and prepared the reader for the bumpy and busy journey ahead, the next chapter takes the first 'lines of flight' to be followed.

2 The Weary Traveller

In which the significance of the 'event' is considered and the first 'lines of flight' take the reader to new spaces, teased by nascent deliberations of professional identity in relation to Children-as-Researcher projects and emerging paradigm shifts.



2.1 Auto-ethnographic approaches

Adopting an auto-ethnographic, reflexive approach within this chapter enables me to explore the moments in my research when I was faced with empirical blind alleys and silences. In doing so I demonstrate and acknowledge from the outset my own influence on the research in a positive way, accepting that my subjectivity and other emotional influences are not only apparent in the research but enabled/enables the research to live and breathe as an organic process rather than being a predefined linear, or objective, means to an end (Flick 2014, Brand 2015).

Whilst acknowledging that the auto-ethnographic approach in this chapter allows for a revelation of emotions (Ellis and Bochner 2010), I am conscious of the criticisms of Freeman (2015) and will seek to avoid solipsism by remaining realistic and representative of self-knowing. This chapter reflects a moment in my research journey that demonstrates who, how, and what, has influenced my shifting epistemological and methodological decisions taken as the unfolding and revelation of research questions/provocations became apparent. Through designing, trialling and reviewing a methodology, previously proposed with confidence, an acceptance not just of a change in direction but of the multiplicities of potential directions became apparent. Consequently an evolution in thought and the beginning of a blurring of methodologies can be presented as a series of research decisions at various crossroads as my ideas interlinked and cross-fertilised, with backward and forward glances whilst I considered/reflected upon the research path I had travelled.

Adopting a rhizomatic approach to an ongoing analysis of, and reflections on, the research experience, enabled what Deleuze and Guattari (1980) referred to as *lines of flight* to emerge. These *lines of flight* acknowledge the multiplicities of the social world and the interrelatedness of concepts as they continue to change in nature and in doing so, connect and reconnect with other multiplicities, establishing the idea that the social world and concepts within it are not fixed and stable. Noticing and following the *lines of flight* ultimately encouraged, and nurtured, the percolation of provocations rather than linear research questions that through the pilot study took me to a number of empirical blind alleys. Although frustrating at the time, they were nonetheless useful as a means of identifying where I did want to go and importantly why. Additionally by adopting a more reflexive stance I identified the barriers, and mixed messages, that I now term '*data-fog*'. These had to be untangled to reveal, not empirical questions, but rather provocations, musings and notions, illustrating a multiplicity of layers, levels, and depth of my research field.

However, it is not my intention here to invoke an "epistemology of emotion, moving the reader to feel the feelings of the other" (Denzin 1997:228), but rather to illustrate the new space from which the emerging ideas that ultimately became the re-focus of the research can be mapped. In terms of establishing the aims and questions of this thesis this chapter is the story of how I 'begin-again', (Said 1978 cited in Pryke et al 2003).

2.2 Contexts.

The false starts and dead ends experienced as part of my journey, were initially misunderstood. The challenges of trying to adopt a conventional research approach to something that was developing rhizomatically was essentially the cause of friction, unsettledness and weariness. Now I understand this to be indicative of what O'Donnell (2014) cited in Koro-Ljunberg (2016: 102) refers to as 'productive failure' that opens up spaces for more generative work. It was only as I explored and understood the rhizomatic nature of my research that I could begin to move towards the not –yet-seen, or as St Pierre suggests to a place where I could “produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (St.Pierre, 1997, p.175).

This realisation then influenced my thinking in terms of questioning how I could research emerging ideas that were/are not stable, whilst accepting and valuing the emergent blurring of methodology, and my own shifting and repositioning ontological and epistemological beliefs.

Barad's (2007) use of the term onto-epistemology to demonstrate the entanglement of ontology and epistemology ratifies my repositioning. As such this enables/enabled me to recognise and value the act that the 'silent data' and many false starts were in fact rich data and were revealing previously unconsidered aspects of children's participation in research, and how young children can be actively researching their own educational lives. Trying to seek reassurance in this was challenging but has been influenced by St Pierre (2013), and Lather (2013), both advocates of post-

qualitative methodology. The challenges that St Pierre lays down in relation to the PhD proposal being a mere suggestion of future thinking and therefore unpredictable and perhaps unreliable, due to the formulation of a compartmentalised approach to qualitative research, has provided me with a secure stance in which to place myself, as it is from that position that I recognise I was/am beginning to reveal myself as post-qualitative researcher.

By adopting a more post-qualitative reflexive approach, analysing and considering the interactions between the researcher and the research has enabled me to recognise, and make sense of, key learning points on my journey from qualitative to post-qualitative researcher. This journey has taken me from a naïve position misunderstanding the values and energy within the *silence*, and sometimes empty data sets, to a position of being able to interact, problematise and validate the challenges in ascertaining how children can be active participants in researching their own educational lives, and how the complexities of *Children-as-Researcher* projects are understood by teachers.

2.3 Towards the Post-Qualitative.

What follows next is the narrative that reveals the weariest, but ultimately productive, leg of the journey, from the initial proposal through a number of pilot-studies, to the viewing platform that was/is my *Children-as-Researchers* project. The narrative and reflexive exploration of my experience aims to elucidate the emerging methodological

stance discussed in subsequent chapters. According to Fraser (2004: 180) 'personal storytelling is now seen as a valid means of knowledge production' due potentially to the legitimisation of a drive to both explore and accept post-qualitative approaches. The narrative offered here is done so in recognition that narratives can be used as a basis for the 'processes of personal and social transformation, and as motivations for these processes, as well', (Suarez-Ortega 2012:189) and in doing so demonstrates reflexivity.

2.3.1 Proposal and Participants.

My initial ideas for this doctoral study proposed to carry out a pilot-study at one school where I would develop materials to teach aspects of research methods to a group of children aged 8 –9. Once these materials had been developed, tried and evaluated I would then be in a position to repeat this with other schools in order that children, once trained, would then be able to research the lives of younger children. My thoughts were that for children to understand the research process as a researcher they first needed to experience the research process as a participant. This cycle of experience would enable a better understanding of research methods and would mirror my own pedagogical position based on a constructivist approach to young children's learning.

Having submitted my original proposal for *Researching Children: Researching Children* I set about making contact with schools that would be able to accommodate

me in terms of developing and delivering an innovative opportunity for young children to become active participants in researching their educational lives. The relationships I had with a number of schools in the West Midlands were good. I had, in a previous life, been a successful primary school teacher and then an advisor for a local authority so recognised and understood the organisation and culture of current education practice and policy. Added to this I was actively involved in the assessment and support of Initial Teacher Trainees, and at regular periods through the academic year made visits to schools to assess students' performance and support their development as they worked towards gaining Qualified Teacher Status. I felt confident that I would be able to share my enthusiasm for my project with a range of forward thinking and determined Head Teachers and Class Teachers alike.

The process of actively seeking schools as partners began with earnest enthusiasm, and above all confidence that the gatekeepers would be intrigued by my proposal and would be keen to facilitate the project, however these assumptions were not borne out by my experience of the pilot study. From my viewpoint the project was exciting, offered enhanced opportunities to deliver a creative curriculum, would be engaging for young children and would above all enable schools to be actively promoting Article 12 of UNCRC, *The Right to Participation* and in doing so fulfil their commitment to Article 42, *The Right to have Knowledge of Rights*. Further, schools participating in the project would be able to demonstrate a commitment to not only teaching about children's right to participation but would be able to demonstrate how they actively listened to children

and created a community of learners based on mutual respect, empowerment and validation of voice.

Although I recognised that gaining access to schools was always going to be a challenging part of the research, the frequent refusals, avoidance and barriers in both trying to obtain access to discuss the proposal, and the project itself, with key decision makers and stakeholders, made me continuously question and doubt a number of elements. Firstly my ability to communicate with educational professionals, secondly my own professional identity, both as a PhD student or/and as a University lecturer, and additionally how, and if, I was understood and respected by colleagues in schools.

In total 10 schools were invited to participate. 6 schools declined having identified time constraints and being 'busy' as a reason for not participating. One school identified 'parents' being the reason not to participate and one that children would not be able to do this. One school initially expressed interest but at a meeting raised concerns about children's ability to be 'honest' about their educational lives and that the school would not be taking the lead in 'selecting' children to participate. After a period of ten weeks only one school expressed interest in the project and were eager to go ahead. This became the setting for the first pilot study and the reflexive narrative 2.4 The Story of Pilot Study 1 – Golden Time tells the account of this encounter.

The two reflexive narratives to follow are an example of narrative enquiry and demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between myself, and the research; the revelation of which was a lengthy process of 18 months. Accepting the length of the narrative is deliberate and reflects not only the complexities and the reflexive approach but also the intricacies of the nature of *Children-as-Researchers*, as such then the stories offered are not abridged versions – to do so would dilute the significance of this crucial layer of my journey. Writing the narrative proved to be a seminal moment in understanding myself as a novice-researcher. Accepting the immaturity of style and my distracted, at times, thoughts, these two stories illustrate how far I have travelled in the doctoral journey and consequently the narratives are, for the most, unchanged since they were first written.

2.4 The Story of Pilot Study 1 – Golden Time

Children-as-Researchers – Golden Time.

The planning of the activities that were age appropriate and could prompt discussions about the children's understanding of both research, and children's rights, depended on my own understanding of effective classroom practice and learning theories. As I developed a series of sessions for the children I found myself adopting a teacher approach, I clarified aims and objectives, considered pedagogical approaches and reflected on my understanding of child development and the National Curriculum. At that time I believed my professional identity to be firmly fixed in the world of Higher Education and research, being a primary school teacher was something I was in the past. The way I planned and prepared a sequence of activities to not only engage and interest, and teach, a group of 8 year olds was automatic. As such I failed to even acknowledge that I was drawing on, and was influenced by, my previous professional role and experience. This initial encounter with professional identity only emerged through this reflexive narrative process and became/becomes part of the research provocations to be ultimately examined in the main part of the PhD.

Early discussions with the Head Teacher outlined how I would like to proceed; we agreed that I would have access to a class group of 26 eight year olds, that consent letters would be distributed to parents, and children, alongside a leaflet aimed at the children explaining what the research was about – the class teacher would monitor and collect these for me. The initial idea of an afterschool club was deemed by the Head Teacher not to be possible due to the current range of clubs. It was agreed though that I would have access to as many children who wanted to participate in the activities on a series of Friday afternoons over the course of a 2 month period. I emphasised that the children needed to be invited to take part and that I wanted to use my first name when with the children, this for me was a small step in addressing aspects of the power at play in adult – child relationships, particularly within the school environment. The Head Teacher acknowledged that the idea of the initial piece of research whereby children would be exploring their educational lives and their right to participate in school decisions was of particular interest as the school had recently established a School Council, and involved children in planning their own curriculum.

Armed with a range of activities to include an introduction using Concept Cartoons, (Keogh and Naylor 1999), I arrived at the school to be greeted by an enthusiastic welcome party of six or seven children who had gathered at the playground gate. A brief conversation ensued through the fence. ‘Quick, it’s Mrs Lowe’ someone shouted and the children ran back to their classroom. A lone child remained and asked me ‘Are you Mrs Lowe?’ ‘Yes’ I replied, ‘but you can call me Rose’. The child laughed and said ‘OK, I’ll see you in the class room in a bit, you’ve got to go in there to get your badge I think’. He helpfully pointed to the main entrance with the imposing sign ‘All Visitors must upon arrival go to the Main Office’. I walked towards the Main Entrance and he ran back to his classroom shouting ‘Quick, get ready Mrs Rose is here’. At the time the use of the title ‘Mrs’ just made me smile, later I recognised this as another encounter with professional identities. I proceeded to complete the formalities of signing in, badging up and agreeing to the school’s Safeguarding Policy. On reflection I realised that I had moved easily, and with confidence and security, in to the micro-culture that is a suburban primary school.

I knew the school as I had previously worked with, and assessed, trainee teachers there on placement. I knew the Head Teacher in this capacity too, and had discussed issues of quality and performance in terms of trainee teachers. I felt confident in the school and had always been made welcome, being offered refreshments and the use of facilities – which was not always common practice at other school settings.

Upon arriving in the class room I discovered 26 children all sitting in their seats, straight and upright, arms folded with an air of excitement. The class teacher then introduced me as ‘Mrs Lowe’ to the class. She commented that the children were all prepared and very excited about the project and that she had explained everything to them and who I was. Immediately I felt apprehension and confusion as this was not how I had planned the session. I had expected to be with a group of children who had chosen to participate and to be in an environment that lent itself to discussion and elicitation of ideas, not such a formal teaching environment.

My explanations to the Head Teacher had included some ideas about using carpet space, perhaps a spare classroom or corridor space. I wondered, as I was faced with this different sort of environment whether I had failed to communicate this effectively or whether the HT had different ideas about the either the feasibility of such organisation or indeed the values and principles of an environment as that. I was unsure of how to proceed, the teacher then said to the class that she would leave me to get on and emphasised to the children that they were free to say anything they wished regarding how they felt about their rights at school. A comment made as she left the room was "The children have been so looking forward to their Golden Time reward of you coming in", and with that she left the classroom. My previous professional experience enabled me to make sense of the term 'Golden Time' to refer to an extrinsic reward for good behaviour, I also immediately recognised the speed and eagerness with which the class teacher left the room. This was also her 'Golden Time', when she was free to be able to get on with some other teaching task, perhaps planning, marking, or paperwork, relishing the opportunity of not having to take responsibility of the class. I quickly decided to proceed, more or less as planned, in order to make the best of the situation as I saw it. Initial reflections on this opportunity to trial some participatory research methods and start to elicit children's understanding of rights were positive. I began to talk with the children introducing myself, as Rose, checking on what they liked to be called and reminding them of the leaflet they had had. I tried to check their understanding of the project and to also check for assent, reminding them that taking part was up to them and that this wasn't a lesson. I tried to create a relaxed atmosphere aware of my body language and tone of voice, and use of humour to reinforce the idea that I was not their teacher but a researcher, that taking part was up to them and that they had the right to change their minds and join in or not. Feeling happier about how things were developing I moved on to introduce a series of images taken from a Reggio Emilia exhibition where children had drawn images of their rights. Gently and without too much need for prompting or probing children began to offer their ideas of what 'Rights' meant and what they thought their rights were. I was conscious that instead of having a small group of willing participants I actually had a class of 26 children, some of whom by now were losing interest. The images I had prepared to show them of how other children saw their rights proved problematic. The images drawn by very young children were greeted with 'oohs' and 'aahs,' however I had not, in my current professional identify as HE Academic and PhD student, recognised that at least one drawing could be interpreted as rude, with limbs being mistaken for genitals. At this point the large group of children erupted in to hysterical laughter, my response was to immediately go into teacher mode. Giving clear concise instructions about behaviour expectations, including noise levels, rules about speaking and waiting for others to finish speaking, and significantly rules about not speaking when I was giving instructions. Those that had been sitting on tables were asked to return to chairs, those that has been making 'rude' suggestions were reminded of appropriate behaviour, and became biddable. Those who were losing interest returned to the 'fold', suddenly eager to please. The children seem to accept this change in my person as I morphed into teacher, which on reflection is probably what they were more used to in terms of adult

behaviour. I went on to outline the different activities with the children to offer choices about what they wanted to do in order to record their understanding of rights. Some children chose to draw and write, others were attracted to a 'decision pyramid' whereby they had to identify who made decisions in school and order these people in terms of who decides the most, others were happy to complete a questionnaire and some children opted to look at and discuss a selection of books about UNCRC and Rights of Children.

The feelings of confusion as I tried to establish my identity and professional persona during this time were acutely uncomfortable. When reflecting afterwards I recognised that I was facing a dilemma. I could either maintain an environment whereby power differentials were, as far as I was concerned and given my understanding at the time, beginning to be broken down, or maintain an environment where I demonstrated effective class room practice and behaviour management. Essentially this was the root of my confusion. I made the decision that in order to gather data and elicit the children's ideas about their rights and the concept of rights I needed to maintain an effective working environment and this was what I chose to do. I noted this in my journal at the time and congratulated myself as to how I had prioritised the research, recognising that I needed to review how the next session would be organised.

With hindsight though I wonder whether the pull of my professional identity as an effective classroom practitioner and an innate need to demonstrate this within the micro-culture of the school environment was in fact too strong to ignore, subliminally or otherwise. It was a much later moment of realisation that I recognised I 'chose' to be the teacher rather than the researcher. The children were happy to participate, when I noticed those who had had enough I offered them the chance to make their own choices about what they could do next, asking them to take responsibility for something they thought their teacher would be happy with, of these some chose to play cards, read books, simply chat or draw. I remember thinking this was reminiscent of 'wet play-times' and in fact at one point used this as a term of reference to help children to decide and make choices that would not impact negatively on them when their teacher returned, again my previous professional experience and understanding of the culture of primary schools was drawn on here. With the benefit of hindsight though I ask myself if I was also concerned that the choices the children made didn't reflect negatively on me.

At the end of the first session I had data in the form of 18 completed questionnaires, 14 decision pyramids, 17 pieces of drawing and writing and 12 children who had completed a 'Who decides?' activity, where they had indicated who made decisions about aspects of their lives. Whilst this data enabled an evaluation of the research tools that that would enable children's voices to be heard, and to elicit children's perceptions of their rights within school, it became increasingly apparent that the challenges in terms of professional identity and importantly the children's understanding of my role was proving to be at first a frustration, but towards the end of this pilot, and in the second pilot study, was the pivotal point from which the beginnings of 'begin-again' grew (Said 1978, cited in Pryke et al 2003).

As the session progressed I was aware of the intensity of some discussions that I had with small groups of children but was also aware that there was a group of children who had withdrawn from the activities, as I focussed on the discussion I became increasingly aware that noise levels were rising and this shift in the environment whilst not distracting for the discussion group began to make me feel uncomfortable. Once again I transitioned into teacher mode and began to circulate around the room reminding children to stay on task and gave them a chance to consider the end of the session, beginning to tidy up, return materials and so on. The teacher at this point returned and immediately began a clapping rhythm often used to get children's attention and to indicate a change of activity. Without hesitation the class teacher issued instructions about tidying up with mock dismay as to the mess in the room and set a timer for children to compete tidying up and return to their seats. As I tried to draw to an end some discussion points with the children I noticed that the teacher was standing at the front of the class waiting for everyone, including me, to be quiet. The children just handed me their completed questionnaires and the teacher drew the session to an end by saying she hoped they had enjoyed the activities and that they all looked very interesting. She invited the children to say thank you to me, which they did dutifully and at this point it was clear that the end of the day had come; notices were given out and children were asked to collect their coats and go out to the playground to meet their parents. I hesitantly waited by the door, almost hoping that some parents might be interested in what I had been doing and who I was, however the class teacher, through body language, was evidently not going to allow me access to the parents to engage with conversation with them. At this point I was certainly the researcher again and separate to the children and class life. This shifting of roles and identity undoubtedly was a challenge for me. I needed to know that the class teacher valued and respected me both as a researcher and a teacher and the feelings of doubt that she did neither was unsettling.

Once the children had gone home the teacher and I discussed how things had gone. I felt I needed to clarify again the organisation that would be more beneficial to me and suggested that we met during the week to discuss what we could do next. I was acutely aware how difficult it had been to actually get access to children and was keen to make sure that this opportunity was not limited, or closed down. I can only liken this experience to having to say 'thank you' for a well meant gift, but then in the same breath asking for the receipt so the gift could be exchanged. Simply put it felt like I was being ungrateful by suggesting the session was not exactly as I had wanted and could it be organised differently next time. Acknowledging this I compromised and suggested that a good start had been made, (which I maintain still), but that in reality to work with so many children was a challenge. I tried to make it clear that this was a challenge in terms of the research project but immediately felt the teacher understood this to be a challenge for me in terms of teaching and managing a large group of children. Once again the varied interpretation of professional roles was alluded to in dialogue, in unspoken emotions and in the desire to establish professional identity. At this point I could not comprehend why I felt I needed to be valued as a teacher by the school, and yet I was keen to position myself as a

researcher, and not a teacher as far as the children were concerned. I started to wonder about the similarities and differences between these two roles and the links to Children as Researcher projects.

On four subsequent occasions I came into school on a Friday afternoon but I was not working directly in the classroom but in the corridor and library. I did not have the large group of children to work with but outlined the various activities available and invited children to come to participate. I was still aiming to explore a range of research tools that would enable children's voices to be heard and to elicit children's perceptions of their rights in school, and to evaluate the various strategies the school had established to involve children as decision makers.

At the start of the project the Head Teacher was interested in finding out what the children thought about the various strategies that had been implemented at the school to promote and involve children as decision makers, this became a focus of the interviews, both individual and group that I carried out. In addition to conducting group interviews I provided children with flip-cams to be able to interview and record other children's opinions about the school council, the eco council and planning boards that were adopted by the school. In the last session I interviewed children about the whole project and elicited their feelings, values and beliefs, about the research project as a whole, how they felt about being research participants, and importantly how they felt about conducting research themselves. The findings from the pilot were to be presented to the Head Teacher, Senior Managers and Governors as an evaluation of the strategies and a summary of what children understood about their rights in school. Simultaneously this would give me a good indicator of how effective the research tools were, and a platform from which to plan a project that would enable the voices of children to be heard and importantly how to actively involve children as co-researchers in investigating their participation in their educational lives.

On the second and third occasion the same group of children agreed to join in focus group interviews, all of these children were able to articulate their understanding of rights and were also able to give examples of when, and when not, they were able to exercise their rights. During these focus groups children were at ease, were confident in calling me by my first name, were happy to make personal comments about my clothes, my bag, my pens (all mostly positive) that I hadn't seen or heard during the whole class session. Having observed the children with their teacher it was clear there was a secure relationship, that children were fond of their teacher and were biddable, wanting to do the right thing and to make her happy. This was reinforced by some of the discussion points raised by the children, especially when talking about who decided what happens in terms of what they learn in class. The children discussed the opportunities they had to decide about things that impacted on them. In lesson times they agreed that this was limited as teachers 'were in charge'. Whilst they identified specific lessons or aspects of lessons when they could choose, the consensus was that teachers planned and organised what they did. They commented on how as a class sometimes they got to decide aspects of how the class was organised or what order they did things in, although this was limited, giving

examples of voting on a class book to be read and the order in which they completed set tasks throughout the day.

These hesitant examples suggested that children considered that in school they had little choice, or made few decisions, this was in contrast to the class teacher and Head Teacher who had confidently elaborated on the way classes plan their work and the curriculum. Teachers stated that children were involved in making decisions about how project work developed, and how and what children learnt. The planning board was apparent in every classroom and appeared to be used within the class room where these children were based, there were notes, lists, questions and illustrations that implied aspects of the learning were mutually agreed. However the children presented a different perspective. In an attempt to explore this further I asked the children about the board and at this point the conversation seemed to close down. Children explained that the board was from last term and hadn't been used for a long time. Similarly when discussing the newly established school council children were not sure what it did or how it worked, with one child commenting that it was always the same children who got chosen "to do those sort of things".

As I listened and transcribed their responses and discussions I knew I was already deliberating as to how I could represent these outcomes effectively and sensitively as I became acutely aware that the children's perception of how things were was very different to their teachers.

Having completed interviews with the children I interviewed both the Head Teacher and the Class teacher to explore their position in terms of how the school promoted children rights and empowered them to make decisions that impacted on them. Finding and agreeing a time to fit in with school life proved difficult, however the class teacher was able to spend some time with me a couple of weeks later. She identified that the School Council had impacted positively, that children were happy to attend and contribute, and that parents too had acknowledged how effective this was. She commented that it was interesting that the children who were voted on by their peers in her class both had parents who sat on the governing body and that this in her experience meant that they had a good understanding of how committees worked and how the decisions in communities were made. When asked for examples of how the school promoted children's right to participation she confidently outlined the rationale behind the planning board and how this helped her to develop a curriculum based on children interests and needs. Her conclusion was that promoting children's rights was not only her responsibility as a teacher but as an adult and went on to explain how she had managed this with regards to her own children in her role as a parent.

When asked about the school council she outlined some of the initiatives that had been developed, for example how the toilets had been renovated in response to the children's request, and how the council had discussed behaviour at playtime and that as a result the school had implemented a system of playground buddies. The teacher believed these initiatives showed the children how the school listened to them and how children and adults were working together to improve the school community. The interview was cut short as

the teacher needed to attend a review meeting for a child with SEN, she suggested it would be good to reflect on the report when it was done. By the end of the interview, such as it was, I was already wondering how I could present the views, attitudes and beliefs of the children which even at this stage seemed to contradict the perceptions of the adult. I wondered about the impact this would have on the professional relationship we had and how the class teacher would respond to the findings.

Having abruptly finished the interview I went to find the Head Teacher, who was in another meeting. I emailed her that night to thank her for the chance to carry out the series of sessions and briefly summarised the activities and data collected. I suggested that we schedule a date to interview her and offered to forward some interview questions so she could have time to prepare. Two weeks later I had not had a response so decided to call the school. When I was eventually able to speak to the Head Teacher she apologised that she had forgotten the project was not quite finished and that she had also forgotten the request to interview her. We scheduled a meeting to do this for the following week. It was now near the end of the term and 12 weeks since my first visit to gather data. The Head Teacher always appeared busy, corridor conversations were had each time I was at the school but it was becoming increasingly difficult to agree a time when an interview could be carried out. On the day in question the first comment made by the Head Teacher was that the interview needed "to be quite short if that was OK?", as there was an important case conference to attend. I questioned whether this was the right time to go ahead but she assured me that every day was busy and that we "probably just needed to grab time when it was available". Again I found myself feeling irritated that the importance of the interview as part of the research process was being undermined. Of course I was not questioning the significance of the case conference nor the emotional impact of preparing for such a meeting, clearly schools are not just about education for children and the commitment to parents and families, like my own, was tangible in the school. However I found myself questioning whether the Head Teacher had professional respect for me or indeed valued my research.

I started to interview the Head Teacher in terms of her beliefs about how the school promoted children's right to participation and she explained the main strategies of both school, and eco, council and how the playground buddies and the refurbishment of the toilets had happened as a direct result of the school council meetings at the children's request. She commented that at her appointment, two years previously, the school had some challenges to overcome in terms of children's behaviour and consistency of approaches used by staff. This had been a priority following previous OFSTED inspections and in addition to this as a Head of a Church of England school she felt there was a need to prioritise "developing a sense of community" and "putting systems in place to support children taking responsibility for their behaviour". When asked how staff promoted children's rights in the classroom she explained that at first some staff found it hard to work with this in mind but her senior staff were keen to promote this and had done exceptional work – this included the class teacher I had worked with. She identified the way the class teacher had involved children in planning the

curriculum and how they had been consulted about which charity to support during a fund raising initiative at Christmas. She then asked me how I had got on in exploring the children's understanding of rights and their evaluation of the schools council. Being put on the spot I was not really that well prepared to give detailed verbal responses knowing that some of my initial findings may well challenge her perception of the school's community, and furthermore that the children's perceptions contradicted her beliefs, or at least the ones she shared with me at this point.

I tried to briefly give some idea of my findings stating that the questionnaires showed children knew of and were very positive about the School Council and that when discussing this in class children were able to give examples of how the councils worked and what was involved, but that during the focus interviews they expressed different opinions. I explained that the questionnaires and focus group interviews demonstrated that the children liked, and felt supported by, their teachers. However there were some less positive comments about other adults who worked in the school, and that they felt they were not always listened to when outside or at dinner time. I went on to explain that I had not as yet completed the full analysis but that I would do so and produce this in a report as requested and that hopefully this would be of use to her and would be of interest to Governors, and inspectors be it either OFSTED or Diocesan. The Head Teacher again cut the session short, continuing to talk whilst she collected her things ready to leave for the case conference. Her parting comment was:

"I bet I could guess who you had in the focus groups, you don't need to tell me but if I said some names I bet they would be the ones who were more negative".

Leaving the school and mulling over what I now know was a significant moment in the research, a number of questions surfaced as I reflected on this interview; firstly what did the Head Teacher understand about the purpose of research? Where did the idea of research fit on her agenda of priorities? What professional identity did she give me, was I a teacher or an academic, a researcher or a partner in terms of training teachers? What was her rationale in agreeing to be host for the pilot project? Most importantly I wondered what did the 'you don't need to tell me' comment meant. Was there really a desire to know which children had made the comments that contradicted her perceptions of the school community, and was there an expectation that I would say who those children were?

2.4.1 Reflecting on Pilot Study 1 – First encounters?

The pilot study promoted a careful reconsideration of how I had planned the research. The purpose of any pilot study is to test and review research tools and approaches, (Bryman 2015, Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2017), which was at the forefront of my mind as I worked with the groups of children gathering data. At a surface level, based on my own reflections and the children's evaluations, some research tools were more successful than other. Minor tweaks to the questionnaires needed to be made, however the drawing and writing activity enabled children of all abilities to participate in the research. The *Who Decides* activity and the *Decisions Pyramid* were engaging for children to use and created prompts for some probing of their ideas, views and beliefs. Some children used the flip cams with varying degrees of success. There was a tendency for children to role play journalist and news reporter and the excitement of the tools seemed to detract from the data they captured, (Waller and Bitou 2011).

However the outcome of the pilot went beyond a trial for the research tools. Despite requesting otherwise, the experience of carrying this research out in a formal classroom environment reinforced my original position in that this was not the most effective environment. I reflected on the data gathered and how the children responded throughout the whole project. How children interacted with me, initially as a researcher and then as a teacher, and how I was perceived to be an integral part of *Golden Time* urged me to consider exploring again the opportunity of developing a *Research Club*. I acknowledged that the process of participating in research first as an experiential approach was important to support the children's understanding of

research but the limitations of time and access to children as part of a school day meant that a series of sessions to explore these skills and consider how children could plan their own research would be more effective if this was outside the of the normal school day. Above all though I felt that the children needed to be further away from their teachers and the formalities of a school environment in order to have an environment that was more open. When considering this I also felt that the existing relationship I had with the school, based on training teachers, reinforced my identity as a teacher and not as a researcher, not least as the field work was carried out during school time.

Becoming familiar with Peshkin (1988) who promotes the notion of intrinsic subjective I's enables a greater understanding of the phenomenon I experienced during this first pilot study and allows the interconnectivity of the subject and the self to be better understood. In Peshkin's model it is not only essential to acknowledge the idea of subjectivity but moreover, researchers should throughout the research process 'systematically identify their subjectivity' (Peshkin 1988:17). By adopting such a model I can recognise the following intrinsic I's that have influenced my approach to, and reflection of, this first pilot study (Savage 2007). Table i (based on Savage 2007) summarises my intrinsic I's and attempts to suggest where the foundations of those views, values and beliefs can be found, and then where in the Story of Pilot Study 1 these subjectivities can be seen. I have identified *The Teacher I*, *The Academic I*, *The Novice Researcher I*, *The Parent I* and *The Advocate I*.

Table i – My Intrinsic I’s – Pilot Study 1

Based on Savage (2007)

My I’s	Foundation	Key idea	Illustrated in Pilot Study 1.
Teacher I	Left home to be a teacher in 1983, motivation was about going to university rather than seeing myself as a teacher, preference would have been to study politics or journalism. Professional roots, teaching in inner-city schools (1987 – 1995) Involvement in aspects of ITE 2008 - 2015	Valuing creative, individualised, learning experiences – reluctant to conform to one-size-fits all learners. See learning as more than curriculum outcomes. Prioritise emotional and social wellbeing for children to learn through first hand practical play based experiences.	<i>‘I clarified aims and objectives...’ ‘Giving clear concise instructions about behaviour expectations, including noise levels...’ ‘...began to circulate around the room reminding children to stay on task’ ‘...felt the teacher understood this to be a challenge for me in terms of teaching and managing a large group of children’.</i>
Academic I	Professional working environment 1995 to present day. Own school experience of being ‘average’ still leads to imposter syndrome from time to time. First in family to go to university	Privilege of working in HE, focussed on student experiences and widening participation. Education for change and students to pick up the mantle of societal change.	<i>‘At that time I believed my professional identity to be firmly fixed in the world of Higher Education and research...’ ‘The feelings of confusion as I tried to establish my identity and professional persona during this time were acutely uncomfortable’.</i>
Novice-Researcher I	Starting PhD path, imposter syndrome here too, initial false starts and dead ends exacerbate this idea of novice. Beginning to grasp the idea of apprenticeship	Doubting my ability, needing constant reassurance of capability – determination is key to success as are hours and prioritising effort, making sacrifices along the way. Determined to find my feet and happy to challenge to do it differently.	<i>‘...not really that well prepared to give detailed verbal responses knowing that some of my initial findings, may well challenge her perception of the school’s community...’ ‘Again I found myself feeling irritated that the importance of the interview as part of the research process was being undermined...’ ‘I wondered about the impact this would have on the professional relationship we had and how the class teacher would respond to the findings’.</i>

My I's	Foundation	Key idea	Illustrated in Pilot Study 1.
			<i>'At this point I was certainly the researcher again and separate to the children and class life'.</i>
Parent I	Family background and childhood experiences of own parents as role models, being a parent to twin sons. Valuing children and family life, positive experiences and relationships.	Teachers and academics need to work with and alongside extended family to best support children and students, families make sacrifices for educational benefit – where this isn't the case there is a lack of understanding to be overcome.	<i>'...clearly schools are not just about education for children and the commitment to parents and families, like my own was tangible in the school...'</i> <i>'almost hoping that some parents might be interested in what I had been doing and who I was, however the class teacher, through body language, was evidently not going to allow me access to the parents to engage with conversation with them.'</i>
Advocate I	Influence of faith background and teenage involvement with politics and social justice groups. Keen to pursue a career in politics or journalism as a teenager, average academic ability limited choices for studying at HE. Linked to belief in value of children and their rights as individuals.	All the other I's link in here, a strong desire to nurture the underdog and build a better society for all – not a sign of naivety, in accepting the challenge a positive outlook is maintained.	<i>'...all of these children were able to articulate their understanding of rights and were also able to give examples of when, and when not, they were able to exercise their rights...'</i> <i>'...were confident in calling me by my first name, were happy to make personal comments about my clothes, my bag, my pens, (all mostly positive) that I hadn't seen or heard during the whole class session...'</i>

The tension I felt as I moved from one identity to another, and how I perceived the teachers and children saw me, are indicative of when and where myself and the subject of *Children-as-Researchers* is intertwined. Accepting these multiple subjectivities helps to understand this tension I felt throughout this first pilot study and points to how and why I took the research into another direction, returning to my

original idea of developing a Children's Research Club. The story to follow explores this second pilot study through the same style, voice, reflexive approach and narrative emersion in the moments of 'Research Club'.

2.5 The Story of Pilot Study 2 – Research Club

The Story of Pilot Study 2 – Research Club

When planning the Research Club I reviewed the responses given by gatekeepers at the initial point of contact. In reality the only school that had agreed for me to carry out the research was one where I already had a relationship, albeit a relationship based on a specific professional role. Eager to move forward and wondering about the impact of relationships I decided to contact another school where I had a positive relationship; this time both professional and personal. My own children had attended the school, although had left ten years previously, I had also been a governor there and knew the Head Teacher, a fellow parishioner. I had also, whilst a governor, done some professional development for teachers in the Early Years department and had been a Link Tutor for a small number of teacher trainees as part of my current academic role. I contacted the Head Teacher by email attaching the same Information Sheet summarising the project, my CV – demonstrating previous experience and professional skills and a letter of introduction clarifying intentions and promoting benefits of the project. I arranged to meet to discuss the project, this time round I wanted to ensure there were no misunderstandings in terms of the organisation and environment for the field work.

This time the Head Teacher replied to my email within 48 hours and suggested I ring school to speak to the secretary to arrange a convenient time to meet. I did this the following day and set up a meeting. As with the setting for pilot study 1, I was greeted warmly and offered refreshments, other staff I knew stopped in the corridor and exchanged greetings and the Head Teacher gave a brief summary as to why I was there. I explained the way I wanted to work, the Head teacher was enthusiastic, keen to support and welcomed the fact that one benefit would be an after school club that may meet the interests of those children who were not particularly interested in sports or dancing. He explained that children in Yr 3 would be best suited for this as other children were transferring to new schools and if we wanted to continue to the following term they would no longer be at the school. As I talked about my understanding of the power play between teachers and children and how I wanted to reduce this he appeared to understand my perspective and said it was not a problem in terms of what children called me, acknowledging that coaches at the school and parents who ran arts clubs were called by their first names. He asked if there were any resources school could provide and

agreed to support the project by talking about it in assembly and by giving out and collecting the leaflets and parental consent letters. The Head teacher asked me to talk more about the doctoral study, including the processes. He seemed genuinely interested and commented that he could not imagine undertaking such a piece of research with a job as well. He talked about the ethos of the school how they promoted inclusion and how as a faith-based community children were at the heart of the school. From his perspective it would be interesting to find out what the children thought about their rights at school and this would give the staff a different way of assessing the effectiveness of what they did and how they could improve and better respond to the children's needs and rights.

The Research Club was planned to coincide with a range of other after school clubs, in total 12 children expressed an interest in taking part. One child who was only 6 asked to join in, I knew the family from Church and was initially reluctant as the challenges of developing materials across this age group I thought would be problematic. The parent requested that her younger son stayed as this would support the family in organising after school care. This in itself led to consideration of consent and assent when involving young children as participants, whilst initially I felt confident children were choosing to participate or not, in reality the parents essentially were making key decisions, this theme became very important later on during one of the sessions.

Once consent from the gatekeeper was granted parents also had to give consent for their children to participate, not least as the children would be staying for a club after school and arrangements for getting home had to be confirmed. Letters were distributed to both children and parents and prepared with appropriate language, both children and parents had to indicate agreement through the use of signatures. The children were excited about practising their signatures and seemed to take the idea of giving their permission very seriously with one child commenting:

'You know this is a contract Rose, we've both agreed now'. (Noah Aged 8)

Having on previous occasions included children as participants and practised what I believed an ethical approach to this I felt confident that the children were making choices and were empowered to withdraw their consent at any point. I ensured I included opportunities to say they had changed minds during all activities and each session, I used language such 'Are you happy to....?' When explaining the activities, I sought their agreement in how the sessions were organised, I promoted opportunities for choice in the range of resources I used and games we could play. At the end of each session I made sure I thanked the children for their ideas and involvement and emphasised that it would be good to see them again next week if they were happy to come back and do some more. In short I believed I had a clear understanding as to the rights of these children to participate in the project as a whole and in each session and each activity. I had in my mind played out the scenario of one child saying they did not want to do it any more, however I had not considered the scenario of a parent who wanted the child to participate and the child himself did not. When this happened I struggled to come to terms with the outcome for some while.

One child, a very quiet reserved boy had happily joined in for four sessions, on the fifth session he came into the room crying and upset saying he didn't want to stay. I explained that this was fine and that we could sort it out, that he had a choice and it was fine to change his mind. I knew that his parent was on the premises as I had talked to her earlier and she had commented how happy he was with Research Club and that this was the first time he had ever had a club that appealed to him, I felt, to say the least, thrilled at this, which made my own disappointment all the more apparent when he arrived upset saying he didn't want to stay. Nevertheless it was important for me to recognise his right to withdraw. We found his parent and I explained how unhappy he was and that of course it was fine that he had changed his mind. I was uncomfortable as the parent then tried to dissuade her son and almost seemed cross that he didn't want to stay. I confidently explained it was fine with me and he was entitled to change his mind. She somewhat knowingly looked at her child and said 'It's because I'm here setting up for film club'. She went on to explain that the PTA had arranged a film club for that night and that she was setting up, she had already had the conversation with her son about whether he wanted to do Research Club or film club and he had confidently stated he wanted to attend Research Club. She took her child away saying they would have a chat and he would be back in few minutes. As I returned to the room the other children had arrived and I felt distracted by my concerns about this child being coerced into attending. I was unsure how to handle this situation, not wanting to overrule either the parent or the child in terms of ethics and informed consent. As we prepared the material for the session he returned with his parent, and a plate of chocolate biscuits. The parent went onto explain that usually at film club he helps her to prepare the snacks for the children and in particular to make tea for the adults. He had now done this chore and wanted to return to Research Club. When reflecting on this later I recalled the work of Lewis (2010) who explored 'Silence' in the Voice of the Child, and how for very young children, and those with disabilities, there is the need for a key person who knows the child best of all to give consent, and that the intensity and honesty of a trusting relationship can ensure that the child is able to participate when it is in his best interest. I reflected that the parent knew the child better than I did and although initially it seemed he was withdrawing consent his parent recognised that this was not in his best interest, understanding his need to complete another favourite routine which would then put him in the right state of mind to join in Research Club. Whilst the significance and emphasis on children giving consent has dominated research with, and indeed on, children over the last decade, this incident challenged me enough to ponder on whether or not applying adult ethical protocols to young children is indeed in their interest and whether we need to revisit this aspect of research with children.

The children attended a total of 9 sessions, each lasting 75 mins. In each case we explored aspects of research and research methods in practical, and I hoped, interesting ways. For example considering ethics by discussion and responding to scenarios, 'what would you do if?'; the initial stimulus being the sharing and eating 'Fairtrade' chocolate to consider the children's existing understanding of ethics and eventually moving on to privacy and confidentiality. Scenarios about what to do if you knew your friend was being hurt by someone helped to explore the complexities of disclosure. The idea of changing your mind and that being OK was an

important factor for this young group of researchers. I had wondered how they would respond to an exploration of ethics and fairness initially thinking this would be challenging, although the experience was the opposite. Later I considered whether as the children were part of a faith-community, that frequently and openly discussed relationships and attitudes to others, if this was not such a hard concept for them after all. The children's community spirit and perhaps ability to see justice and fairness as an integral part of their social and spiritual lives meant they had a clear approach to involving others in their research. A sensitivity towards the teachers who they respected and genuinely liked was very apparent as the children discussed what they would do in sharing any negative data gathered through their interviews and questionnaires, importantly though as this dialogue illustrates the children were able to demonstrate an ethical approach to the research process.

'But if it's what they say you have to tell everyone, otherwise your research is not true, you can't lie about it, but you could make sure you don't say it in a nasty way', (Luc aged 8).

Using a range of ways to record responses to questionnaires and interviews, for example flip-cams as well as 'special' stationery chosen deliberately to inspire and interest the young researchers proved to be successful. Whilst others (Gallacher and Gallagher 2008) have warned against the over use of technology in gathering data from young children in this case the overwhelming desire from the children wasn't necessarily to use the technology itself but rather the importance to be seen to be doing 'grown-up' things. Clip boards, note pads, box-files and a variety of pens and markers were all important. Developing the skills to be able to complete a piece of research was my objective, I drew on the work of Kellett (2005) and Bucknall (2012); more importantly though, we played games with playing cards trying to work out what cards were missing and how patterns suddenly became apparent to illustrate and practice analytical skills, we were detectives looking closely at scenes of crime to be able to look for clues and make connections between events. We developed interview techniques by role-playing journalists asking probing open ended questions to find out what people thought. Later as researchers we planned and organised how we could find out about key areas of the children's lives. All the way through children remained on first name terms with me, correcting themselves when they called me 'Mrs Rose'. Soon I became Rosie, which was not how I introduced myself, and in itself this created a different professional identity that of the researcher. One child in particular wanted to explore my professional role, often asking questions about my job, what happened at university and repeatedly trying to work out what was the difference between being a teacher in school and being a teacher at university. One key moment in our relationship was when she suggested that: 'University teachers do more asking than school teachers who do more telling'.

Initially the children found it hard to understand the concept of social research. As part of their everyday curriculum activities research meant looking things up in books or using the internet to find out more. As we explored this further and moved away from research being about pirates or inventions one child, Noah (aged 7) exclaimed:

'I get it, research is like this, it's re – do it again, and search - looking for something, so research is looking again at something you hadn't really noticed in the first place'

This moment of understanding was a turning point for the whole club and process. By this time children had created a group identity, a club to belong to, they had designed a logo which I had had made into badges. They had agreed some rules following the first session when arguments occurred over using resources. I naively thought that I would not have to go into teacher mode at all. In a similar way to the first pilot study I soon realised that this was inevitable, although this time round there was less tension as I moved from researcher to teacher mode. I emphasised it was about me helping them to have a good time and that in the same way as there are rules when you play a game with your friends perhaps we needed some rules to make sure everyone had a go at the activity, and everyone enjoyed it, so they would come back next time. In Research Club establishing rules in terms of behaviour and expectations was not because I felt under professional scrutiny, but because I needed to support each researcher in completing their tasks so as to have a sense of satisfaction and successful outcome. Although later I realised it was more about wanting to help everyone get on and to enjoy being together sharing a common goal. As a researcher researching the children's journey of discovery I enjoyed both working with them, and their company, and recognised that I was making a conscious decision that I didn't want to have to become the teacher, which I felt would change our working relationship. The emotive engagement and attachment with the children was in itself motivation to try and resolve any falling out; essentially it felt better to work together without any unfriendliness. Relationships were key to the success of the research club, as the children got to know me they became relaxed, asked if they could organise the equipment, tidied up without being cajoled, I felt confident in allowing them to retrieve stationery from my bag, they supported me when having an issue with setting up a lap top. The ethos of the working group was such that I didn't feel like their teacher, although I was teaching them; it felt we were learning things together in a mutually respectful environment. My own confidence in working with them in this way was in complete contrast to the first pilot study.

As the end of term approached it became clear that as a group of researchers we were not going to be able to meet the deadline to be able to complete and present findings, as with my own research the time required and the complexity of establishing interviews, collecting data and analysing was proving to be difficult. Whilst the Head Teacher was fully supportive, as were some staff, the external pressures of School Improvement Plans and, for this school recruitment of a new Head Teacher, as well as the inevitable Sports Days, trips and residential meant that the children as researchers were experiencing the emotions, stresses and frustrations many researchers in academia do in only being able to snatch time and moments to make progress.

In order to give the children something more tangible to aim for I negotiated and was able to invite them to attend my Faculty research conference, in order to present their findings to date and to give an overview of the research process. As a PhD student presenting at such conference was expected and encouraged, I presented

my own findings in terms of Children-as-Researchers and in order to give these young researchers the chance to present as researchers in their own right ensured they were included in the programme. The children discussed how they wanted to do this and very quickly and naturally established that they wanted to prepare a short presentation about their experience, I suggested too that they might like to invite and respond to questions from the people who attended. Initially the children were less keen on the idea of answering questions and were concerned that there would be 'important university people' there, when I reassured them and said that this was just my friends who were also doing research like them and were going to tell everyone about their research, they became more confident.

'It's other research clubs like ours then, but just grown-up researchers' (Will, aged 6).

The Head Teacher was very enthusiastic about this and arranged for members of staff and a parent to attend and to transport the children. We arranged some additional Research Club sessions, during lunch break and on one afternoon when the children were able to come out of lessons to prepare their presentation. I wondered how they would feel about the process, in their minds it was like doing an assembly, they were used to speaking with adults and giving reviews of progress, and two of the group had very recently prepared and given a presentation to the School Governors about school uniform changes. Their approach was simple; to create a PowerPoint presentation that recorded their journey so far. I knew that colleagues would be supportive as most had worked previously with young children as teachers in schools, but I was less sure about the attitudes and approaches of other academics who were not familiar with the work of the School of Education. At the heart of this next experience was the idea to validate, and celebrate the children's research, their emotions and learning. The presentation was for the children the highlight of their experience, in evaluating the research club and the conference experience children commented that:

'Everything about research is new, new words and new things you find out' (Mikey, aged 8)

'They all clapped at the end, and you could see people smiling, I think they liked it, I wasn't nervous in the end, they all are doing research too like us' (Hannah Aged 8)

2.5.1 Reflecting on Pilot Study 2 – More Encounters.

Adopting a reflexive approach to Pilot Study 2 enabled emerging ideas to come to the foreground and I started to make connections with my own research experience. The quality of the relationships as a group of researchers at Research Club resonated with

the intensity of relationships when working as adults on a project. Repeatedly my thoughts went back to the place of relationships in terms of gatekeepers and in establishing consent from stakeholders, not just the participant themselves. In this second pilot study an existing relationship proved the key to unlock that gate, personal and professional trust seem to be the triggers here. At no time during the second study did I feel I had to revert to my 'teacher' identity. Here my role was as a researcher, (Rosie), and although undoubtedly I had clear objectives, I assessed and planned specific learning opportunities and experiences to support the young researches in developing their skills, I remained firmly grounded as a researcher and not a 'teacher'. The effectiveness of the whole experience was clearly dependent on my professional understanding and a skills-set developed over a period of time as a Primary and Early Years teacher, however the role I took did not adopt the language, the positional authority nor the tensions within a teacher and pupil relationship. Trying to identify my intrinsic I's during this second pilot study, and understanding the foundation of those subjectivities enables a more critical understanding of my behaviour and decision making process – all of which gradually shifted from conventional to post as I became more immersed in understanding my ontological view of the world. These are summarised in *Table ii - My Intrinsic I's – Pilot Study 2*.

Table ii - My Intrinsic I's – Pilot Study 2

My I's	Illustrated in Pilot Study 2.
Teacher I	<i>'I also drew on my professional knowledge of child development, pedagogy and curriculum content to be able to plan age appropriate and stimulating practical play-based experiences, making connections with the children's lived experience...'</i>
Academic I	<i>'...done some professional development for teachers in the Early Years department and had been a Link Tutor for a small number of teacher trainees as part of my current academic role...'</i>
Novice-Researcher I	<i>'I was unsure how to handle this situation, not wanting to overrule either the parent or the child in terms of ethics and informed consent.'</i>
Advocate I	<i>'Having on previous occasions included children as participants and practiced what I believed an ethical approach to this I felt confident that the children were making choices and were empowered to withdraw their consent at any point.'</i> <i>'I presented my own findings in terms of Children-as-Researchers and in order to give these young researchers the chance to present as researchers in their own right ensured they were included in the programme'.</i>
Parent I	<i>'My own children had attended the school, although had left ten years previously, I had also been a governor there and knew the Head Teacher.'</i> <i>'He asked if there were any resources school could provide and agreed to support the project by talking about it in assembly and by giving out and collecting the leaflets and parental consent letters'.</i> <i>'The parent requested that her younger son stayed as this would support the family in organising after school care. This in itself led to consideration of consent and assent when involving young children as participants, whilst initially I felt confident children were choosing to participate or not, parents essentially were making key decisions'.</i>

The place of professional identity and how researchers are viewed by the non-academic world was/is a question that I recognised I would return to as a thread running throughout the thesis. The Research Club enabled me to focus on the research tools and approaches and I was now in a position to be able to use these experiences to share with other gatekeepers in order to repeat the Research Club and take this to the next stage whereby children would be leading the research with their peers as research participants, as outlined in my original proposal. The niggling

thought at the back of my mind kept drawing me back to the very different experiences in the two pilot studies. How and why did teachers have such different views of research, and indeed *Children-as-Researchers*? Reflecting on the two experiences I recognised that to be successful in my endeavours I would need to work with schools and senior staff who viewed children as I did, and who would welcome the idea of research being undertaken in their schools.

2.6 Branching out – searching for participants.

Re-energised by the second pilot study I arranged to meet with the newly appointed Head Teacher of the school that hosted pilot study 2. At the same time, I made contact with schools I had personal and professional relationships with, confident that somewhere there would be a partner school who would be willing and able to participate. I was still motivated with the idea of children generating and carrying out social research with their peers as participants, confident that by sharing the outcomes of the second pilot study I would be able to carry out the research as planned in my proposal which would enable me to answer my initial question:

How might young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?

Now with the evidence of a successful Research Club to share and promote discussion, whilst being prepared for the challenge of gaining access and organising the club, I found myself (initially) overwhelmed by the lack of interest and engagement

from the schools I contacted. The lowest point came when the newly appointed Head Teacher of the school that hosted the second pilot study contacted me to say the school would not be continuing with the Research Club. I pondered on the place of relationships again, and tried to make sense of school and teachers' perspectives, all the time becoming more curious about the barriers to carrying out *Children-as-Researcher* projects and noticing the increasing silence, the nothingness in terms of responses, involvement, curiosity and interest from my colleagues in schools. I referred to this as an 'empty data –set'.

2.7 Repositioning – 'Begin-Again'.

Having taken 18 months to complete the pilots outlined here and feeling at a sense of loss and sheer confusion, the title here of *The Weary Traveller* neatly captures my thoughts, feelings and emotional position at this time. In my naiveté I assumed that whilst acknowledging the inevitable hard work, long nights and challenges of undertaking my doctoral study I had completely underestimated the messiness of research, and the emotional impact. I found myself at a crossroad trying to identify if there was an alternative pathway that I could continue to travel on or if indeed I had come to a dead-end. To continue the metaphor of journeys and travelling I was refuelled by being introduced to the ideas of Said (1978), and found not only a reaffirming of my understanding of the messiness of research but permission to understand that what I had experienced was in fact indicative of what Derrida (1994) referred to as 'events'. For me though not a one off event but a 'series of fortunate

events'. The impact of these jolts enabled a deconstruction of the initial questions proposed and a recognition of the importance not only of the beginning of the research journey, but to 'begin again' (Said 1978 in Pryke et al 2003). Rather than adopting the linear approach first considered, the clarity of which I had taken for granted, I found myself in a position of not only needing to deconstruct my initial research questions but being able to respond to the events that have prompted a rethinking and repositioning, and restoration of confidence, as well as a redirecting of where to go next.

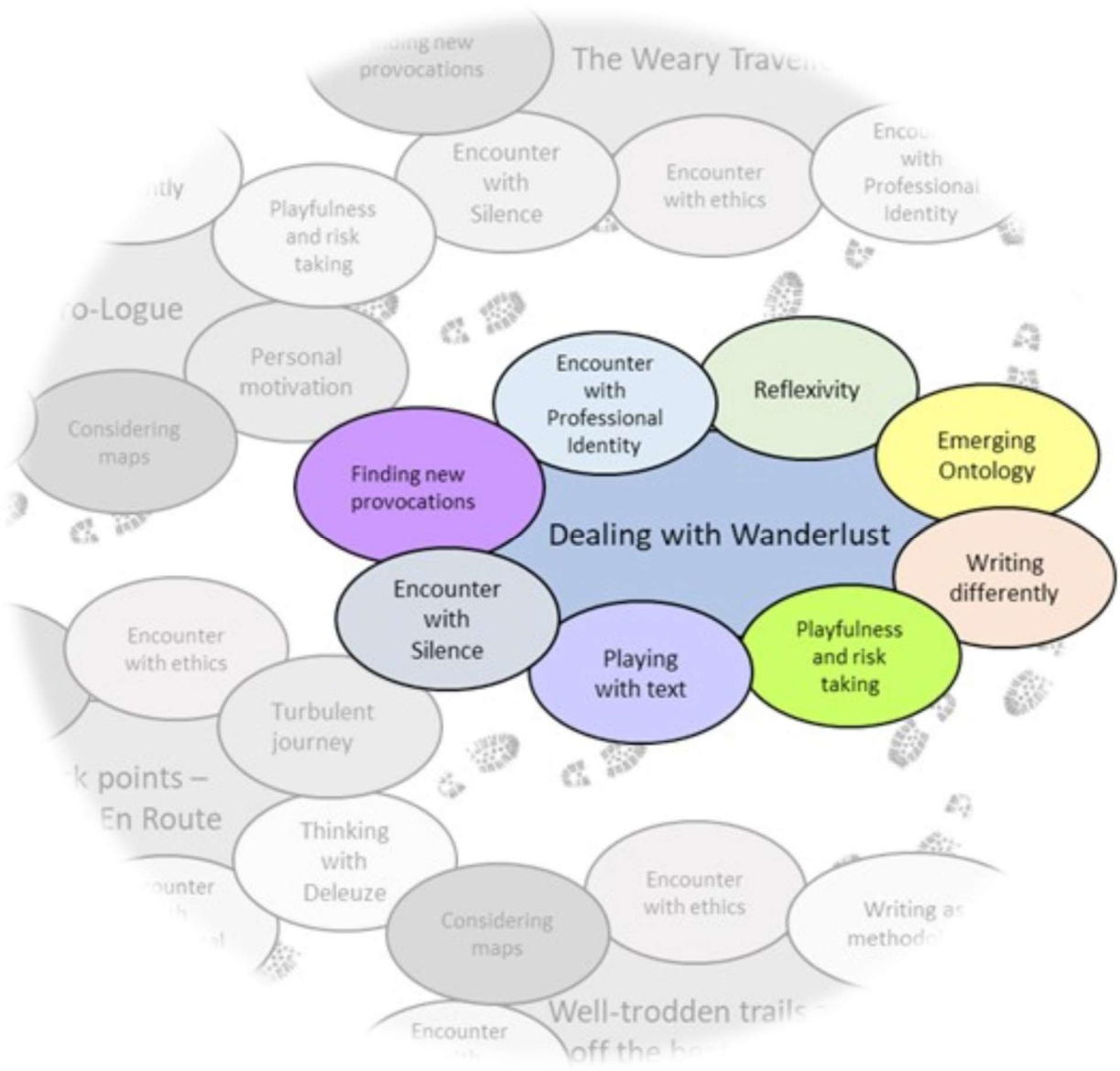
In the same way that reviewing what is already known and understood about children's voice, and *Children-as-Researchers* is my 'intellectual responsibility' (Allen 2003:15), it is also my intellectual responsibility to recognise the need to 'begin again' and to see this process of reflexivity as one that opens up new directions and considerations. To ignore the prompts and nudges outlined in this chapter would only result in a closing down, a dampening of thought and an awareness and uncomfortableness that the initial questions posed were/are no longer '*ask-able*', as the new questions formed result in a completely new way of thinking about things.

This chapter explores how I took the first tentative steps towards a post- qualitative position and a deconstruction of my research proposal. The ability at this point to confidently state, if indeed this is ever possible, the resulting provocations and my

ontological stance remained/remains nascent. The nomadic nature of my doctoral study continues with the next chapter '*Dealing with Wanderlust*'.

3 Dealing with Wanderlust

In which the reader 'sees' for the first time changes in 'voice', and the urge to explore teacher identities and perceptions of research in order to make sense of Children-as-Researchers becomes apparent.



3.1 Introduction.

This review of the literature offers a discussion of some of the important issues when considering firstly how children might be active participants in researching their own educational lives and secondly, how children's participation within educational research is understood by stakeholders.

The shifting sands of this exploration has impacted on my own position with regard to, and understanding of, my initial research aims and subsequent re-presenting of provocations which called for an exploratory approach. With this in mind the review(s) of literature presented here include pre and post perspectives through which I aim to not only provide an overview of existing literature but to also provide and clarify the springboard from which the final investigation came, and in doing so validate the provocations, methodological stance and approaches taken throughout the study.

3.2 Purpose and Intent.

A literature review is, according to Creswell (2009), "a written summary of journal articles, books, and other documents that describe the past and current state of information; organizes the literature into topics; and documents a need for a proposed study." (p. 89). Others define the purpose of the literature review to be demonstrating a gap in the existing field of knowledge, justifying questions posed by the research and demonstrating a wide and deep understanding of contemporary perspectives. Indeed in the professional context of a supervisor of undergraduate researchers this

would be the position I would adopt with students (Roberts-Holmes 2018, Bell 2014, and Creswell 2009). This approach and intention was clear as I embarked on the project. However, having reviewed my own progress on this journey of discovery, I found the cyclical nature of reading, summarising and critiquing literature, with a conventional systematic approach, created a growing awareness not just of emerging themes but of the interconnectivity between thoughts and realisations which challenged me, both in completing the review and presenting the review. In itself indicative of my ontological turn, requiring a different approach.

I acknowledge the influences of Walker (2015) who promotes a more interpretivist approach rather than a conventional systematic approach to this literature review. By adopting this position I am able to contextualise my post-qualitative stance and to acknowledge the rhizomatic features of thinking that have evolved as part of my journey outlined in the previous chapter. Barges (2006) cited by Walker (2015: 1) explains 'that everything impacts on everything else'. With this in mind and by adopting a creative thinking approach promoting dialogue and interaction between what is already known, I present my review of literature as a series of conversations and interactions. This systemic approach is one that enables me to demonstrate the changes in my methodological stance. In taking this approach, I recognise that in itself a review of literature is part of the blurring of methodologies adopted in my research.

Montuori (2005) promotes a creative inquiry approach to reviewing literature and considers that the primary aim of the review itself is to position the researcher, illuminating biographical aspects, and in doing so should aim to not only demonstrate

where the reviewer is situated within the community of writers, but to also enable the reviewer to express *who* she is with regard to her disciplinary field and focus of research. Montuori likens the literature review to a map which traces the terrain 'but is not the terrain itself' (2005:3). Drawing upon this analogy I offer this review to not only inhabit the terrain but to demonstrate how the journey of critical systemic thinking forced me to take a different route through/across it and how in doing so I discovered new unfamiliar, unexplored places before finding my way home safely.

3.3 Presenting, Representing and Re-Presenting the Literature.

In order to reiterate the paradigm shift this review of literature will form two sections pre and post pilot study. The previous chapter, *The Weary Traveller*, discussed the significance of the pilot study and how it was/is interpreted as an *event* (Derrida 1994, Zizek 2014). The jolting effect of the pilot study not only necessitated a repositioning of the research questions, but also influenced my approach to the presenting, representing and re-presenting of this literature review. In the first, pre-pilot study section, a thematic approach was taken to initially examine contemporary understandings of children's participation, its origins and place in society. The following sections then examine the concept of children's voice and how this is considered in contemporary practice, subsequently the issue of empowerment and relationships in research are analysed. Finally children as active participants in research is considered.

In recognition of the pilot study *event* (Derrida 1994, Zizek 2014), a further layer of literature will be presented. This demonstrates the opening up of thought; this is not simply a reflection but demonstrates the transformation of my position, and the subsequent realisation of the newness of understanding this transformation encounters. In this post *event* review I move on to examine and reconsider literature that concerns professional identity, silence in voice, relationships and adult roles in children rights, and lastly children's methodologies.

The move towards children becoming researchers in their own right sets into motion the need to explore and examine a related complex set of concepts, issues and influences. These will now be examined from the perspective of looking towards the pilot study and then from the perspective of having completed the pilot study. The review of literature will conclude by demonstrating not only how the themes discussed are interlinked but also the 'relatedness of everything' and in doing so is 'both systemic, as in the relational sense of connectivity, and dialogical as in the conversational sense' (Walker 2015: 3).

3.4 Children's Participation.

The quantity of research which focuses on children's participation is acknowledged to be plentiful (Lundy 2007, Ruck and Horn 2008, Reynaert et al 2009, Payne 2009). As the development of the sociology of childhood continues to gather momentum and be recognised as a discipline worthy of research in its own right, the impact of children's right to participation has been explored across many disciplines thus demonstrating

the scope of the research to date. Whilst some authors explore the concept of children's right to participation within the judicial system, focussing on child protection (Woolfson et al 2010), family law and residency (Lyon 2007, Harris-Short 2010) and youth justice (Broeking and Peterson-Badali 2010), other disciplines for example medicine and nursing are also exploring children's participation in decision making processes whilst in hospital (Lowden 2002, Runeson et al 2002). These explorations are mirrored within home settings (Ruck et al 2002,) both with disabled children (Radermacher et al 2010), and able-bodied children (Peterson-Badali and Ruck 2008). Children's right to participation in decisions about service development within the wider community have also contributed to the complexity of available research in Childhood Studies, (Alparone and Rissotto 2001, Tonucci and Rissotto 2001, Cavet and Sloper 2004). However since the focus of this review is children's right to participation in education they will not be reviewed in any detail and only referred to when appropriate.

The definition of 'participation' is an essential task to undertake before progressing further. Most researchers and commentators identify Article 12 (UNCRC 1989), as epitomising the child's 'Right to Participation' (Morrow 1999, Smith 2007, Reynaert et al 2009, Bae 2010). However Article 12 does not in itself use the word participation, rather it states that;

State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child...for this purpose, the child shall in particular, be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative procedures affecting the child (Article 12).

This omission of a key term from the actual wording of the UNCRC has, according to a number of commentators, led to a misunderstanding of the concept and subsequently a need to more fully explore the interpretation of 'participation' rather than continuing to evaluate the implementation of the UNCRC (Peterson-Badali and Ruck 2008, Ruck and Horn 2008, Payne 2009). However Krappmann (2010) emphasises that although Article 12 is often referred to as a child's right to participation, this right is in itself an over-arching theme of the convention and that this is acknowledged in Article 43. Others claim that Article 12 cannot be explored in isolation at all. For example, when considering children's right to participation in Early Years settings in Norway, Bae (2010) argues that for our youngest children the right to play, Article 31, together with the right to freedom of expression, Article 13, need to be acknowledged when implementing children's right to participation, thereby emphasising a holistic approach. The holistic approach adopted by Bae (2010) could be argued to be strongly influenced by her background in Early Years. Effective Early Years pedagogy also recognises the importance of play as a tool for learning (Bruce et al 2017), and this may also account for Bae's position.

A clear understanding of what children's right to participation looks like, whether in relation to research, which will be discussed later, or in their wider lives, is hard to find, although there is agreement that there are two aspects of participation. Firstly the idea of 'taking part in' and secondly 'knowing that one's actions are taken note of and may be acted upon' (Boyden and Ennew 1997 in Morrow 1999:149). Thomas (2007:199) seeks to clarify this further by defining participation as 'taking part in decision –making', and attempts to offer a theoretical framework for understanding the concept. Whereas

Thomas (2007), in exploring what this process looks like, concludes it is about collective decision making, Bae (2010: 209) notes that practitioners in her research tended to interpret participation in terms of 'self-determination and individual-choice'. Bae's research attempts to clarify a definition of participation by consulting practitioners' perspectives and this is achieved through analysis of empirical data gathered using a wide range of qualitative approaches, including ethnographic investigations and interviews. Thomas (2007) attempts to offer a theoretical framework by critiquing other typologies of participation and considers the political and social contexts, concluding that it would be 'premature' to proffer a theory of participation, rather he identifies key 'components of such a theory' (Thomas 2007: 215). Both these studies offer different starting and finishing points, however, both emphasise the need to revisit definitions in order to gain deeper understanding and perspectives, and whilst neither are able to offer a definitive position, their respective arguments fuel the debate.

Research that goes beyond interpretation and understanding of children's right to participation, be it in relation to research or in their wider lives, is limited. Those studies that do, consider perceptions of children's rights, the complexity of the issues involved, and the debate between children's rights and adult's nurturance. There is a dominance in the literature of adults' perceptions of children rights, and the majority of this research is fixed within the quantitative research paradigm. This is a concern raised specifically by Peterson-Baldali & Ruck (2008), and Ruck & Horn (2008) who argue that rather than knowing how adults define children rights and how many young people understood their rights in relation to youth justice protocols further research is

essential to understand how children's rights can be implemented in all aspects of their lives. Meanwhile, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which regularly reviews responses of member states to UNCRC identified that in the UK there was a lack of 'Children's Voice' within the field of education (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 1995). Later the 49th Sessional report on CRC (UNCRC 2008) identified that in terms of education the UK stills needs to:

- strengthen children's participation in all matters that affect them; and
- provide a right of appeal for children who are able to express their views.

The more recent 72nd Session Report (UNCRC 2016) focussed on child pornography and sexual exploitation and legislation relating to children rights, in particular the proposed, at the time, replacement of Human Rights Act with a Bill of Rights. The UN identified improvements had been made since 2007 when UK was ranked 21st out of twenty –one countries in relation to child wellbeing, to 16th in 2013, out of 29 countries. In relation to children's perspectives of their rights, data reported in the 72nd Session Report (UNCRC 2016) identified that whilst 93.5% of children in care, or living away from home, agreed they had access to the education and health services they needed (92.6%), this dropped when asked about their right to participation. Notably:

the right to say what you really think, as long as this isn't harmful to other people (76.9 %);

the right to give your views on anything that affects you, if you are old enough to understand the issue (76.3%);

the right to have your views taken into account by people making decisions about you, if you are old enough to understand the issue (70.6%).

(UNCRC 2016:5).

This would indicate that, in the UK, whilst children's basic rights to health and education are met, the concept of participation and the child's right to participation, is either not as well understood by children, or is not considered as important a right as those concerning health and education.

Though there is no single universally accepted definition of 'participation' which can provide an overarching conceptual framework, a useful definition is offered by Hart (1992:5) who defined participation as:

the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured.

This definition draws attention to a fundamental element of participation, namely decision making and to the democratic right of individuals to influence those decisions that have an impact on their lives and is the definition accepted for the purposes of this proposal.

There are a number of other different ways of conceptualising participation which include Hart's (1992) 'Ladder of Participation', Huskins' (1996) 'Degrees of Participation', Shier's (2001) 'Pathways to Communication', and Treseder's (1997) 'Categories of Involvement'. Each model attempts to express what participation is and how it can be implemented in practice. Hart (1992) in his work offers a hierarchical perspective which takes the form of a ladder demonstrating the various levels of participation, moving from the first three rungs, (manipulation, decoration and tokenism) whereby children are not really participating, to higher levels which show

children really involved until, when at the very top of the ladder, children are the ones who initiate a project. In contrast to this, Treseder (1997) challenges the hierarchical conceptualisation by offering a circular model whereby no level of participation is assumed to be better, or to work better than another. He acknowledges that the different levels of participation may be appropriate for different groups of children at different stages in the development of a project and just offers the latter five rungs of Hart's ladder. The descriptive nature of Hart's model, developed as an explanatory device, is also challenged by Shier (2001) who offers a pathway which can be used to assess appropriate levels of participation for a specific task by asking those involved what they are prepared to share. Shier's alternative typology, whilst building on Hart's ladder model, develops the theme of communication and offers a route through the five levels of participation. At each stage there are three levels of commitment from adults; openings, opportunities and obligations. A further conceptual framework is offered by Huskins (1996). Hart's ladder serves as a 'beginning typology' which is elaborated on by Huskins (1996). Whereas Hart has early steps on his 'Ladder' as being non-participatory, Huskins' first step starts with young people and can be seen as a progressive participatory process which supports their developing autonomy. What is important in this model is that young people are involved from the start right through to the end of a project in order to develop a sense of ownership. An appreciation of these conceptual frameworks of participation has undoubtedly influenced my initial methodological decisions which are explored in Chapter 4: *Finding the Way*. Whilst not adopting one model over any other, the progressive participatory process offered by Huskins reflects the underpinning values of

emancipatory approaches that I reflected on when examining the pilot study outlined in the previous chapter *The Weary Traveller*.

Decision making, whether individual or collective, is clearly a central aspect of participation; furthermore the element that distinguishes participation from consultation is the second aspect of Article 12, the right to be heard. This aspect is often referred to as 'voice' and it has been given increasing attention notably because, for some researchers e.g. Lundy (2007), Krappmann 2010), whilst there is a growing involvement in children as research participants there is little evidence of implementation of outcomes from such research (Bradbury-Jones and Taylor 2015). This could be because the emphasis remains on participatory methods rather than an examination of ontological questions. Despite this there is a growing number of research projects that actively involved children as research participants, and that have methodologies designed to enabled children's voice to be heard, notably Clark and Moss's Mosaic Approach (2001, 2005).

The idea of 'voice' and participation are interlinked and defining participation in terms of 'voice' is equally as complex. Indeed, Rinaldi (2006) refers to the act of participation as the *pedagogy of listening* which allows space for children's views to be heard and has the potential to generate understanding and awareness in educational settings and in the wider public arena.

3.5 Children's Voice.

To define the concept of 'children's voice' is problematic, however for the purposes of this research it is understood that 'children's voice' relates to the opinions, perceptions, values and beliefs held by children, which may or may not be communicated through the spoken word. For example, when considering the youngest of children who are pre-verbal it is necessary for the adult who is 'listening' to the child to tune into body language, including facial expressions, as well as their sounds and murmurings. However, conclusions drawn from my earlier research, which included children as research participants and prioritised listening to their 'voice', were that the research was still essentially 'adultist' as the adult was the main researcher and analyst. The positioning of the child in my research, (Lowe 2012), adopted James and Prout's (1990) model of the 'social-child'. This concept assumes that children are social actors in their own world, consequently research tools that reflected children's everyday experiences such as drawing, playing and telling stories were used to collect data. In short, my initial research recognised the voice of the child and through carefully selected research tools attempted to 'hear' that voice. However, the conclusions drawn recognised that whilst acknowledging that children are experts in their own lives, the power dynamics of the relationship between adults and child in this approach hinders their voices being really heard (Kellett 2010). The outcomes of my previous research nonetheless stimulated my interest to explore how research 'with' and 'by' children, (Kellett 2010), can be adopted to more effectively enable the voice of the child to be heard with clarity.

In terms of the impact of a child's right to participation there is also an argument that challenges how Article 12 (UNCRC 1989) has been implemented by suggesting that whilst children are listened to, in reality they are not heard. Krappmann (2010) suggests that adults place little value on the opinions of children and that the dominant view in society is that children's views are seen as deserving less respect than adults, and furthermore that they are developmentally incapable of forming their own views. This dominant position is challenged by Krappmann (2010) who posits the idea that it is up to adults to 'develop sensitivity to children's ways of communication' (pg 507).

In my previous research (Lowe 2012), specific methodologies, influenced by Clark and Moss (2001, 2005), were developed to overcome the challenges of listening to young children with developing communication skills. The use of puppets, vignettes and photographs to stimulate group interviews enabled the children to present their perceptions of childhood. However, whilst the perceptions offered were the children's, the interpretation and analysis were from an adult perspective. I concluded that to better understand children's perspectives on the world involving children in analysis would go some way as an attempt to reduce any *adultist* perspective.

Further exploration of this concept of voice is offered by Lundy (2007: 927) who argues that 'voice is not enough'. She critiques the concept of children's voice and identifies barriers to the implementation of this right in the field of education commenting, as Krappman (2010) does, that one of the key barriers to children's voice is the adults who are not listening. Whilst Lundy (2007) offers a reflective critique as to how children's voice is heard, if indeed it is, Komulainen (2007) and Lewis (2010) offer an

alternative perspective, that of the 'ambiguity of voice' (Komulainen 2007: 11), and 'silence in the context of child voice' (Lewis 2010:14). Both of which conclude that whilst adults are professionally and personally keen to promote the voice of the child there are ethical implications such as consent, assent, and children's ability to give or withdraw permission. The concern to promote children's voice has perhaps resulted in ignoring silence which may be just as important (Lewis 2010), when working with very young or some disabled children. In either case it can be argued that adults have often sought affirmation or decision making in research involving children where indeed there is none (Komulainen 2007).

Morrow's (1999) seminal research aimed to identify children's perspectives of their rights in England; her summaries of findings identified children felt they lacked autonomy and inclusion in decision making and that they were denied a range of rights that adults take for granted, both with families, school and society in general. However in the light of Komulainen (2007) and Lewis (2010) the methods used by Morrow (1999) to gather data and the subsequent interpretation of responses could be challenged, particularly in relation to the adult role. For example, the adult researcher in Morrow's work, when interviewing children took the dominant role probing children for clarification, when perhaps the children interviewed were in themselves ambiguous and unsure of their own meaning and interpretation of questions asked. The group interviews and individual interviews carried out by Morrow (1999) places control and authority directly with the adult and whilst children were comfortable to comment that they felt undervalued, the probing nature of the interviewer may have influenced the child's comments. More controversial though is the methodology adopted by Morrow

(1999) in the first project whereby children aged 11 – 16 were asked to write essays during an English lesson about their perspectives of rights and what they understood by this term. The research identifies that consent was gained by the Headteacher and School Governors to use one lesson for the children to do this. There is no mention of consent from the children themselves or indeed parents, they were not given the option to not participate and consequently silence was not a choice offered. As such, given my 'developing' ontological position I notice my uncomfortable feelings and suggest that the research is in fact compromised by both the environment and the lack of consent from the children participants. MacLure et al (2010) offers the idea that for qualitative researchers the idea of silence is troublesome, in that it resists analysis. As a post-qualitative researcher (like MacLure) I am prompted to speak more of the silence and will do so later. I see this as the remnants of 'Other' (Derrida 1967) that MacLure et al (2010) describes as 'something intractable, unspeakable, unreasonable, unanalyzable' (p495), but nevertheless unignorable.

3.6 Relationships and Power.

It can be argued that power relationships between adult and child lie at the centre of 'listening' to children and children's 'voice'. Popular perspectives about this issue focus on 'enabling' children's voice to be heard, and 'empowering' children through listening to them (Clarke and Moss 2001, 2005, Greene and Hill 2005, Layard and Dunn 2009). In this context 'listening' is an active verb necessitating an active response from the person in relation to the sounds, words, ideas being communicated, as a opposed to

hearing which could be deemed to be passive and unresponsive in an emotional or cognitive manner to auditory stimuli of those same sounds, words and ideas. The subtleties in the choice of vocabulary reflect a belief that through the process of 'listening' to children they become empowered and by becoming so they gain validity, reputation, and to a degree, purpose in research. For some time now in the study of childhood the idea that children are social actors in their own right has been accepted (James and Prout 1990). Adult researchers increasingly appear to emphasise their recognition and acceptance of children to be themselves and not 'less than' or 'incomplete' adults, 'beings' not 'becomings' (Qvortup 1994). However, this empowering could also be interpreted as those adults being benevolent in 'giving' children power and 'bequeathing' their right to be listened to which is paradoxically disempowering.

3.6.1 Relationship and Power – Children in Society.

Childhood is socially constructed and it is the adults that construct society and thereby define what it is to be a child. It is adults who have ordered society and established the division of two separate groups in generational terms, adults and children (Leonard 2016). In some aspects of social life children are at the heart, and positively included, for example in family life, accepting that whilst this may be the norm it is not always the case. However in the wider community, wider society, children are for the most excluded, for example politics and social decisions. The ongoing debate regarding the

lowering of the voting age in England and the heated responses to this is just one illustration of how any shift in the established social generational order is greeted with resistance (Tilley 2019). Both generational groups have a different set of rights, different roles to play, different responsibilities and expectations and indeed different freedoms. However, the asymmetrical nature of power within this social order is a key feature influencing research (Mayall 2000). The acknowledgment of these power differentials at work, particularly in the context of a school classroom can be said to be central to understanding the complexities of children as research participants.

3.6.2 Relationship and Power – Children in School.

The recognition of authority and power in any hierarchical system, for example a school or educational setting, can be interpreted differently and others, including Gallagher (2008), offer an interpretation of Foucault's position to view power, and the perceived lack of it, from a positive rather than negative position. Viewing the 'lack of power' to be *powerful* may well provide a more robust framework through which to understand the relationships between adults and children in a working environment. For Gallagher it is not simply about power-sharing or handing over of power but rather a process through which equal relationships are created. Taking Foucault's position, Gallagher (2008) explains that for power to be exercised there has to be complicity and institutional structures that are embedded. With regards to Foucault's (2004) notion of governmentality, Gallagher (2008) would argue that schools replicate governmentality proposing that the objective of the institution can only be fulfilled

providing there is compliance from those who are subject to it . One argument is that in schools the hierarchical systems in place can only happen as adults appear to be more powerful than children and the children are compliant in allowing this to occur. However this generalisation does not exclude the many potential instances of resistance and confrontation through which children are able to exercise power over adults, for example in removing co-operation, or presenting with low level disruptive behaviour as seen during pilot-study 1 and explored in Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller*.

My previous research, (Lowe 2012), identified the discourse 'The *Unauthorised Child*' which could be argued demonstrates this compliance; in that the young children in my research appeared to recognise the dominant discourse of childhood that was evident in their early years setting and was constructed by the adults. Despite this apparent acceptance of the dominant discourse they still appeared to yearn for independence of thought and deed.

Children showed frustration and dissatisfaction when they demonstrated an ability to solve problems, complete tasks or knew what to do next, and this was quashed by the social rules of the situation. Children appeared to accept unwillingly that rules are different for them because they are children, and consequently, they are not given permission by the adults and, in some circumstances, by their peers to see things through. (Lowe 2012:276)

Foucault understands power as a force that can be either positive or negative, repressive or productive. Moreover, he argues that where there is power, there is inevitably resistance (Ball 2013). The possibility of resistance can be seen above in

the children's frustration when forced to abide by the social rules. Initially there is perhaps the impossibility of resistance given that the adult dominates, however the possibility of resistance, and its destabilising impact is only too evident, and as explored in Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller* was something that teachers invited to participate in the pilot studies raised concerns about. The teachers' concerns were/are one element that provokes my curiosity about children, their rights, their voice, and in this thesis, their place as researchers.

3.7 Children as Researchers.

Kellett (2005), and again with Ward (2008), argues that there is a need to rethink the way in which we research children and childhood and maintains that this is due both to the evolving nature of childhood itself, and a recognition that childhood is itself socially constructed (James et al 1998). This position reflects a paradigm shift and movement from research 'on' children towards research 'by' children. Adopting this position challenges the pre-existing power-dynamics. Critics of the concept of *Children-as-Researchers* approach inevitably voice concerns regarding children's age and the competency of children which are often presented as barriers to their participation in research (Christiansen and Prout (2005), Hogan (2005), and Morrow 2005). However, in support of this paradigm shift, Christensen and Prout (2005) propose that in the Western disciplinary field of Early Childhood children have previously been objects of passivity, with adult researchers misconstruing, misinterpreting and mistakenly re-presenting the views values, and beliefs of children. They argue for a repositioning to enable the experts in the field, the children

themselves, to actively participate in research. Whilst there has been research claiming to have children as active research participants, Bucknall (2012) argues that in reality this equates to only partial participation, for example when children have been reported as being involved at only certain points of the project or being identified as co-researchers and not researchers in their own right. Indeed this criticism could be aimed at my previous research (Lowe 2012).

When promoting the concept of children as active research participants careful consideration has been given to the development of accessible research tools that are matched to children's developing skills, in particular their literacy skills. Consequently a wide range of child friendly, child engaging and developmentally appropriate research strategies have been developed and are used frequently to enable children to be active researcher participants. One approach that has contributed to the moving away of research *on* children to research *with* children is the Mosaic Approach as originally designed by Clark & Moss (2001). This approach has developed a range of research tools which reflect children's everyday lives and actively enables very young children to participate fully in data collection. It draws on the use of talking, drawing, photography and map-making, as tools that research participants between 3 – 5 years have used to collect data.

Similarly others, including myself, have designed innovative tools for children to gather and offer data: for example Fleet and Britt (2011) – children's photographs of favourite parts of their day, Lowe (2012) vignettes of experiences, O'Kane (2008) '*Pots and Beans*' – a voting system. Like the Mosaic Approach however these remain research

'with' children (Kellett 2010) and not research 'by' children (Kellett 2010), as the data gathering by children remains separate from the interpretation and analysis of data done by adults. However these research tools can contribute to a more enabling research process for the youngest of researchers and their usefulness and purpose can be considered at the design stage.

Whilst these developments are welcomed within the Early Childhood sector, Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) argue that too much emphasis has been given to specific tools and that moreover there is little evaluation of such tools, rather a subtle acceptance of the usefulness of them. Conversely they suggest the need for far more evaluation and consideration of the limits to such an approach, alongside the need to more effectively consider how young researchers can be actively involved in planning and designing, and ultimately carrying out research. Kellett (2010) and Elton-Chalcraft (2011) have attempted to address this criticism, although it is important to note that in their research the young researchers were all aged 8 or over, and have been identified as having sophisticated levels of literacy, which in itself enables them to enter freely into the adult world of research that is dependent on both oracy and literacy. A question here becomes how can those committed to children as active researchers enable younger children from 5 to 8 to also access the learning and develop the skills to enable them to benefit from not only participating in research, but to actively make informed decisions about the design, data gathering, analysis and subsequently offer conclusion to their own research questions. Essentially in this study (initially) asking *'How might very young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?'* A personal commitment to the rights and place of the youngest

children in society, and a curiosity about effective ways to promote children's voice and fully participate in the research process would for me, be said to be at the forefront of any research design actually involving children as co-researchers.

3.8 Rift or shift?

At this point in my literature review, having previously adopted the conventional systematic approach above, I found myself at a juncture. As indicated in 'The Weary Traveller', (Chapter Two) the significance of the pilot study 'event' (Derrida 1994, Zizek 2014), triggered an ontological shift which created a tension and feelings of discontent that something was missing from the discussions thus far. The original purpose of the literature review was to explore what was already known, and understood, about the origins and context of children's right to participation, and to consider how others had actively engaged young children in investigating their own lives. As such the approach taken in the first part of the review was limited to reproductive inquiry (Montuori 2005), offering what is already known. However, moving towards an ontology that embraces the impact of the researcher, rather than recoils from it, I am urged on by Montuori (2005) to adopt a more creative approach, that not only acknowledges those that have gone before, the 'ancestors', but to explore 'the relationship between knowledge, self, and world' (Montuori 2005: 375). Henceforth this is the new approach to be taken.

The pilot study, 'event', provoked and questioned me leaving provocations worthy of further examination. When re-viewing the literature in this next section I move away from the child to refocus on the adult, I do not devalue children and their position and

worth but seek to understand Children-as-Researchers, and to do so, I appreciate that I now need to deconstruct the adult role as co-researcher. I shift my focus to reflect upon and examine the concept of professional teacher identity. I am going to argue that teachers can make more sense of their relationships with children, how they perceive, and meet, children's needs and, how children respond to their interactions if there is a deeper clarity of their role and professional identity (Hotho 2008, Simms 2011, Trede et al 2012 and Winstone & Moore 2017).

Secondly I will revisit the idea of 'voice', through its obverse 'silence' and how, in the absence of sound it is still possible to make meaning of that silence, providing the listener is tuned in. The echoes of previous 'voices' can be heard even when initially there appears to be nothing said. This step into the unknown, and unheard, demonstrates an ontological shift that commits to 'silence' as offering data, and that silence is viewed as 'something' rather than 'nothing'. In this study silence is interpreted as providing valuable insights to values, beliefs and perceptions about children's rights, and the role children have as active researchers when researching their educational lives, which are gathered as part of this project.

Having recognised the complexity and impact of power relationships when carrying out research with and by children, the processes and environment through which power is perceived to be granted, bequeathed or bestowed is a third theme to be examined. The play of power through adopted strategies that relate to power or powerlessness, the recognition of orthodox to heterodox attitudes and behaviours as well as how power is accepted or declined becomes my next focus. Significantly I

reflect on my own naiveté on my journey as a researcher and offer a transparent account of a personal journey as I move to a re-positioning in relation to my understanding of power, influenced by Foucault (1980).

Finally in this post 'event' review of the literature the fourth theme to be reviewed promotes more questions and identifies why the initial research design moved on, and how the methodology responded not only to questions posed by reviewing literature but inevitably the pilot study 'event'. By problematising the notion of Children-as-Researchers, through a consideration of the cultural and social position that seeks to promote and create this concept as normative research behaviour, I will justify the development of my methodology and research methods by taking the reader through my thought processes. This stream of consciousness will demonstrate how this review of literature can be understood as a significant part of my methodology in its own right.

As I become aware of my changing ontological position, from conventional qualitative researcher to post-qualitative researcher I am increasingly mindful that I need to reconsider not just the emerging ideas and reflections that are realised, but importantly the format of the literature review, including style and tone. To illustrate this process of re-presenting, the post pilot study 'event' will offer an alternative 'voice' through the text, and a visual change in presentation, illustrated through font and type. The change I describe is also a step into the unknown, for me, taken tentatively by re-viewing and re-presenting literature conceptualises a new, for me, ontology and a post –qualitative position. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter the following sections of the literature review adopt a more conversational, stream of consciousness that explores

key ideas and in doing so demonstrate the emerging concepts, and records my personal research journey of discovery. This is not to ignore the extant review in the first part of this chapter but offers the subsequent review as an integral part of the methodology which will be discussed in Chapter 4: 'Finding the Way'.

For me the pilot study is recognisable now as an 'event', (Derrida 1994, Zizek 2014), which insists upon a re-examining of the themes and exploration of knowledge discussed in the first part of this review. Through this process I am not only re-examining themes but also explaining to myself how I understand and view children and their right to be, their right to research their lives, and creatively discover, reveal, and share their knowledge about their lives. This transparency promotes the interrelationship between subjectivity and objectivity when considering my research world. Whilst this link towards methodological debates may at first seem out of place in a literature review I understand the place of this review, together with my personal reflections to be not just connected to but an inherent aspect of the blurring of methodologies. Not only does the revelation of 'self' feel important as I move on to explore professional teaching identity but the place of 'self' is also recognised through a new found conviction in using the personal pronoun 'I' in the research text. Taking ownership of the personal pronoun demonstrates confidence that 'I' am an integral feature of this re-view. However, in allowing my own voice to be heard I accept the accountability that Kirsch 1994 (cited in Walker 2015) cautions. There is a certain irony that as my focus and inspiration has always been about children's voices being heard, in adopting the use of 'I', I am not being silenced through use of the third person traditionally used in academic writing.

3.9 Professional Identities.

The deconstructing of the adult role within this research is key to unpicking Children-as-Researcher initiatives. The encounters with my professional identities, and subsequent tensions, outlined in the previous chapter as part of the pilot study promotes a shift in this direction, a new line of flight to follow. An analysis of my own professional identities, as teacher and researcher will demonstrate how and why new questions and provocations arose through the research process, as well as being an essential aspect of the ongoing nature of the ontological approach taken. Now though I need to offer consideration as to how professional identity is both defined, and formed, before considering both teacher identities and academic identities as a way of understanding myself and my professional identity, both as a teacher and researcher.

According to Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012) there are three aspects present in defining what it means to be a professional; the formalised body of knowledge, alongside practical knowledge and skills, together with the ability to reflect on that knowledge and skills. However professional identity is more than this, it refers to not only how the individual sees themselves but how society sees them in relation to the socially agreed values and beliefs about that role. My professional identity is about me as a teacher (my professional qualification) and my teaching in Higher Education, (my current occupation). Recognising that this identity is multifaceted and socially constructed from the outset demonstrates the complexity of professional identities. Sociocultural theory, that posits the idea that identities are determined not by

characteristics but rather interactions and responses to society, offers a way to make sense of this complexity (Taylor 2017). The language used to describe professions often demonstrates underlying views, values and beliefs about aspects of the professional role that is undertaken.

What am I then, a teacher, a researcher, an administrator, a manager and leader? Each of these roles is interlinked and impacts on the others, and in reality may not be distinguishable from the other. When considering the shift in teacher education in recent years Swennen, Jones and Volman (2010) identify the professional development needs of teacher educators, acknowledging that there are sub-identities in this field, that of 'schoolteacher, teacher in Higher Education, teacher of teachers (or second order teacher) and researcher' (2010:131). My difficulty in relating to these identities asks questions of myself in terms of who am I when conducting the field work for this thesis. At the outset of my research journey however this was not a question I asked or indeed expected to have to answer.

When considering the language to communicate my own professional identity I reject the term 'teacher' and prefer 'educator'. In doing so I distance myself from my primary school professional roots, and as such demonstrate some of my personal values and beliefs. My professional identity is formed by my current role as Head of Department for programmes that are not centred on teacher training, and this distances myself further from everyday practice and policy within primary schools, and my initial professional origins. This role restates my identity as 'educator' rather than 'teacher' as my professional focus remains centred on education beyond the limits of primary

school, national curriculum subjects and OFSTED, and places children and their holistic needs at the centre of my department. Alongside a commitment to education in its fullest definition runs my personal beliefs about social justice and widening participation, indeed these personal values are those that lie at the core of my research and provide the trigger for this enquiry.

Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2012) in their systematic review of literature on professional identity attempt to examine how it is understood in Higher Education. Their conclusion recommends that there is a need for a better understanding of personal values as well as the impact of workplace learning and power influences in communities of practice. My experience during the pilot study would concur with this conclusion; whilst my professional understanding of what it was to be a teacher strongly influenced my behaviour during the first pilot study, it was only after a deeper reflection on my personal values in terms of children's voice that I later acknowledged the presence of silence which grew out of that experience.

In addition to the impact of personal values and beliefs Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012) determine that professional identity is more than the development of skills, attitudes and approaches. They argue that becoming a professional is the combination of professional skills and practices, as well as a sense of self, of who you are. This ontological sense of wellbeing and engaging with, and within, the community of other professionals is what determines and generates professional identity. The formation of professional identity therefore is not linear, nor is it for many easy to define, (Clarke et al 2013, Sutherland 2012, Trede, Macklin and Bridges 2012, Simms 2011, Hotho

2008, and DeMatteo & Reeves 2013). Acquiring a professional 'superior body of knowledge' is distinguishable from the job skills, and both rely on 'authentic learning' experiences over time (Sutherland and Markauskaite 2012:748). Simms (2011) concurs, elaborating further by suggesting that professionals, including teachers, hold plural identities that are dependent on the specific culture and context of their organisation and also the wider sphere of the profession as a whole, nationally and perhaps internationally.

As a professional within the field of education, my learning to be a teacher combined undergraduate academic and skill-based study and practical experiences in classrooms. In addition I brought personal values and a philosophy formulated by my attitudes to social justice, such as a commitment to empowerment of the weak and powerless in society, (bearing in mind of course that these underpinning values were cultivated with a naive understanding of power that I held at that time). Transferring this social and cultural stance to my professional undertaking as a teacher had a profound impact on my pedagogical stance as well as my professional role and relationships with the school community. Inevitably it has influenced and become embedded in my approach to this study. Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012) pose that there are two interconnecting and relatable aspects of professional identity – interpersonal and intrapersonal. The latter aspect relating to the perceptions of 'self in context', following reflection and self-evaluation. The former relating to not only the skills and behaviour associated with practice but also the culture of the profession and tacit coded professional knowledge. This interpersonal aspect was what challenged me when undertaking the first pilot study. I was attempting to be seen as a competent

and effective teacher who understood that coded professional knowledge. However, when under scrutiny from colleagues, and pupils at the school research setting, I struggled to come to terms with my new self-identity as a researcher and the tensions that new identity created with my other identity as an effective primary school teacher. This tension and uncomfortableness was experienced when I felt was being judged on my capabilities to be a primary school teacher and resulted in me defaulting to my previous identity as a teacher, disregarding the role of the researcher in the classroom. Findlow (2012) suggests this is common in professionals who have moved into academic roles within their field. When reviewing the first pilot study I now can see how easily I reverted to a focus on children's learning as an indicator of my capabilities in the classroom. This was demonstrated in the first pilot study experience by the subtleties of the vocabulary, the tools and the systems I developed, as well as the rituals and the routines of behaviour that I automatically adopted when feeling under pressure to demonstrate my competence to the teachers in the research setting. This was most evident in my responses to the challenges of behaviour management, the ease with which I returned to the use of the 'teacher voice', the 'teacher look' and the 'teacher role' in terms of power and control when working with the children, despite my initial intentions for that experience to be otherwise.

Of Sutherland and Markauskaite's (2012) three aspects of becoming a professional, it is the third aspect, the ability to reflect on the required knowledge and skills, which resonates with Donald Schön's (1991) definition of professionalism. Schön (1991) regards reflection, both on and in action, as being core to professional practice in education. In reflecting on the required knowledge and skills there is also a recognition

of the importance of socio-emotional components, that of confidence and capability. I consider myself to be a confident and capable teacher, or educator - my preferred nomenclature, and clearly I moved into this role in the pilot study very quickly and with ease. My professional identity also includes being an early career researcher, and on reflection I perhaps lacked confidence in my own capabilities in this dimension. Could this then explain why I initially demonstrated a hesitancy in adopting this aspect of my professional identity in the first pilot study?

Clarke, Hyde and Drennan (2013) considers academic identity in relation to being a teacher and a researcher. They too offer the idea that identity in an academic role is multi-faceted and list various aspects of the role that I am very familiar with, including curriculum design, teaching, research administration as well as scholarly activity that is subject based. For Clarke et al (2012) professional identity is not so much about 'who I am now' but rather 'who I want to be', which involves 'an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation' (2012: 9). With this in mind then the struggle I have had with my professional identity during the pilot study could be said to be more about wanting to be established as a researcher and not being labelled as the teacher. Although I recognise that through both I overtly, and covertly, repositioned myself further away from schools and the teaching profession which constituted my initial professional identity in education. As such then this experience demonstrates my transitioning from teacher to researcher, or more subtly demonstrates the hybridity of that transformation.

Clarke, Hyde and Drennan (2013) draw on the work of Tierney and Rhodes (1993:29) when discussing the influence of 'transmission of culture and ritualised behaviour' as a way of developing professional identity/ies in academic roles/settings. As Swennen, Jones and Volman (2010) point out most academics who find themselves in the role of teacher educators, have made the transition from school based practice to teacher educators without any bespoke training or professional development opportunities and without the same pathway that academics in other disciplines follow. As a teaching-focussed academic I have not worked closely in graduate school watching and mirroring a professor, consequently I have not observed the customs and behaviour of a researcher confident in that 'superior body of knowledge' (Sutherland and Markauskaite 2012:748) nor have I had 'authentic practical learning experiences' (Sutherland and Markauskaite 2012:749) of research that they refer to as being significant in establishing professional identity. Whilst I have confidence in the skills, approaches and technical aspects of being a researcher, I acknowledge the lack of 'authentic learning', as described by Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012). Being very much an early career researcher I have not had many meaningful experiences to learn the codes of behaviour, the subtleties, that go along with the skills to form that professional identity (Simms 2011 in Sutherland & Markauskaite 2012).

This reflection then leaves a question to be considered, if not answered yet, and that is 'Would a more confident and experienced researcher than myself have committed to a researcher role in the pilot study, and if this was the case would they also

experience the tensions and, to an extent a dissatisfaction of their ability to be that competent teacher when faced with a group of demanding young children?

The idea of hybrid identities is explored by Findlow (2012) who studies professional identities for those in newer academic disciplines that have moved from practice in their field to being academics in their field, in his case-study the field of nursing. Findlow offers the notion that when dealing with the tension of competing identities it is the more traditional vocational role that confers identity rather than the academic role. Indeed this notion mirrors my experience of the pilot study where I was compelled to return to my original 'teacher' identity rather than my newer identity as a researcher.

The relationship then between teachers and researchers, and teaching and research itself, appears now to be a significant aspect to be explored further in this research. The origins of the discourse concerning the relationship between academic research and the teaching profession and indeed teachers as researchers can be traced to the work of Stenhouse (1981), who posed the view that practising teachers were best placed to research educational theory and practice, teaching and learning. Stenhouse (1981: 110) rejected the idea that 'teachers [are] theoretically innocent'; over thirty-five years later the idea of teachers as researchers has more acceptance, as indicated by the numbers of working teachers taking on board practice-led post graduate Masters and Doctoral research (HEA 2017). Stenhouse suggests that not only should teachers always be intimately involved in researching their own practice but that non-teaching researchers of teaching and learning must justify themselves to practitioners

and not the other way round. How then does Stenhouses's position stand-up to my experience within the pilot study 'event' (Derrida 1994)?

Teachers' perspectives of involvement in, and with, research has been more recently considered by Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014) who undertook a systematic literature review in an attempt to ascertain both experience of, and participation in, research as well as consideration of the barriers to participating in research. From the outset they acknowledge that there is little research that focuses on these aims and any conclusions offered are drawn from a wide range of literature that considers professional roles, development and school improvement. This alone echoes the question to be explored as part of this project, namely what perception of research do teachers have, both as participants and as researchers, and further how do they consider the rights of children to be part of such enquiries?

When considering teacher experience of research Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014) identify that there is an overwhelming positivity towards engagement by teachers in research, whilst acknowledging that this is largely within the field of professional development and improved performance and outcomes. For example, research as a tool for managing change and improvement appears to be the main reason why teachers state they would get involved in research. Reviewing a number of research reports Leat et al (2014) identify other benefits of engaging in research to be the socio-emotional benefits of improved self-esteem, improved self-confidence, feelings of pride, and connectivity with peers and colleagues. This links to the aspects of professional identity and self-confidence highlighted by Clarke, Hyde and Drennan

(2013). In addition engaging in research would, I believe, promote what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) refer to as 'professional capital' which they consider to be essential in improving schools and the schooling system. They suggest that in order to be most effective teachers need a combination of human capital (the skills to be an effective teacher), social capital (working with a group of likeminded colleagues) and decisional capital (the ability to make good decisions).

Whilst the teachers in research reviewed by Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014) reported on their improved professional identity as teachers, there is though no evidence to suggest the impact on their participants' self-identity as a researchers. I begin to wonder if this is because each role is so interlinked that adopting a binary understanding of these professional roles is either not possible or rather not useful...

Alternatively if considering each identity as a separate professional persona is useful, is this dependent on the context and environment, and access and opportunity?

This would seem to be yet another provocation that has grown out of the post-event literature review, to be explored, unpicked and considered.

Again maybe there is no specific answer yet the tension, or perceived tensions, between these two roles causes me to stand still and reflect on how I have been affected by adoption of both roles.

The main constraint to active participation in research according to Stenhouse in 1981 was time. In the review by Leat, Lofthouse and Reid, thirty five years later, this barrier is restated, however in addition they explore the importance of relationships, personal capabilities, and interestingly, trust; these are offered as constraints to teachers carrying out research. Relationships with Head teachers, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities are also identified as being barriers not only to conducting and engaging with research but responding to any changes that may emerge following research. Interestingly, the priorities of the research noted in Leat, Lofthouse and Reid's review is justified by school improvement plans and better outcomes. Relationships with HEIs are noted as being particularly important as stated by Newman and Mowbray (2012) in their research conducted by academics and teachers working together. The significant factors of success in their study was the approach to working in partnership and, as a result of that partnership, the community of learners and communities of practice that emerged. The importance of effective relationships was also emphasised, with mentoring roles being undertaken by academics to support teachers so that both their professional lives were enriched and extended by engaging in practice-led research. The quality of these relationships, and their impact on self-esteem and self-confidence is well documented by Randal et al (2015). How the individual believes they are perceived within a professional community is a key driver in how professional identity is secured, essentially the socio-emotional elements of identity, self confidence and self-esteem. In this respect then it appears that the quality of relationships between academics and teachers impact on whether or not teachers see themselves as researchers (Sutherland and Markauskaite 2012).

Notably Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014) go on to consider the impact of research on teachers once a project has been completed. They identify that one of the issues for some teachers is a subsequent sense of dissatisfaction, particularly with school activity or curriculum, to the extent that this results in them leaving the classroom. However it could be argued that teachers who leave schools post research projects, do so not as a direct result of the research but rather that through the research process they become more likely to be questioning and curious about practice and policy, and see that there is more capacity to research aspects of the curriculum, policy and practice, outside of the class room, rather than within it.

The idea of a positive attitude to research by classroom teachers is offered by Beycioglu, Ozer and Uguralu (2010) who identified that 68% of teachers in their study had considered conducting research since qualification, and that this research would be closely linked to 'professional learning'. They interpret this as teachers thinking of research as a form of practitioner based enquiry and potential problem solving in order to improve practice rather than any voyage of self-discovery. Research linked to self-improvement by improving practice is, according to Beycioglu et al (2010), the main reason why teachers in their study had a positive attitude towards carrying out research. However Beycioglu et al (2010) do not report how many teachers went on to carry out research linked to 'professional learning' only that teachers in the study had considered carrying out such research. Conclusions drawn by Beycioglu et al (2010) emphasise again the benefits of teachers working to develop research communities of practice to improve outcomes. In doing so teachers add to existing knowledge, without which Beycioglu et al (2010) suggest that the profession would be

dormant and 'competences or skills will be at the back of their time' (2010:1092). Whilst their work focuses on the benefits to the profession as a whole, i.e. new knowledge, there is no exploration or recognition of the personal impact of carrying out research in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence or identity, unlike my study.

Nevertheless, when considering the teacher's role in research, and attitudes towards it, much of what I have reviewed post pilot study would suggest there to be a positive response to active participation in the field work for this project, and yet this was not the experience in my case. This provokes a need to problematise the role of teachers in research further to unpick why repeatedly there was a lack of interest, a reluctance to get involved and why trusting relationships became a lever for gates that may have been closed.

3.10 Silences.

The emerging position of promoting children's voices has been well researched and considered in section 3.5 (p 84. ff). Part of my professional identity, the values, and beliefs that underpin that professional identity, are clearly influenced by the discipline of Early Years and a commitment to children and childhood and children's voices. As a teacher/educator and as an academic I began this doctoral journey with a firm belief, respect and a commitment to participatory methodologies as the previous chapter has illustrated.

The experience of the pilot study 'event' and my resulting ontological shift has made it necessary to re-examine the concept of children's voice. My focus in this section will consider the place of silence within the concept of voice, taking the position that this too can be explored and recognised as data, and to reflect on what happens when the response to questions is silence. The reflections here impacted on my developing methodology and are offered here not only as a part of a review of literature about the concept, but as a further indication of how the literature review is an integral part of my methodology, demonstrating how methodologies became evermore blurred within my post-qualitative approach.

Throughout various stages of the pilot-study when researching children, and indeed adults, I have been met with silence. Lewis (2010) when considering the rights of the most vulnerable children, for example those with additional needs and learning difficulties, recognises the child's use of silence to demonstrate the children's right to not participate. Others who have problematised capturing the voice of the child have acknowledge the use of silence by non-verbal children, for example Schnoor (2012), but have not explored how to analyse that silence, only to acknowledge its existence.

The silence I encountered however raised confusion and a tension when I considered my own values and professional identity as an advocate of children's rights. I confidently believed that I could demonstrate through both my pedagogical decisions as a teacher of children, and through curriculum design and planning as a leader in HE, that listening to children and responding to their opinions is part of my personal and professional responsibilities and identity. It is clear to me that many researchers

in the field stretch, pull and mould a variety of stimulating participatory methods to capture the voice of the child. Whilst some are brave enough to offer a discussion about the ethics of doing this, for example Harcourt et al (2011), others, (Waller and Bitou 2011), further challenge us to question whether in the eagerness to capture the voice of young children researchers have critiqued effectively these often original and engaging methods. In addition to this, by the acceptance and adoption of such methodologies, have researchers considered whether, if at all, the process of participatory research benefits young children?

Similarly Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) offer concerns about participatory approaches when researching with children, suggesting that the very rigour of the research tools, adult-chosen, adult-designed, in fact reinforce the perception of power and control being in the hands of the adult researchers and as such these approaches fail to be fully participatory. The need to question and re-examine approaches adopted when designing tools for children as research participants (Waller and Bitou 2011), supports my own questions and uncertainties. However none of these critical positions support my niggling question as to why would children not want to participate and how can adult researchers understand and listen to the data represented by the silence of non-participation or rejection of the invitation to participate?

Issues of silences and emptiness challenged me. Throughout the pilot the silence came from adults and children alike. Was this because the children as a social group, within a micro-system designed and created by adults, some of whom also gave a silent response, were repeating that silence or were they simply not represented /given

a voice by the research tool chosen ? Was this because the adults, as decision makers, generated that culture and reinforced subtly their own beliefs about the place of research? Was this again replicated at home by parents who similarly were passive in their support of participating in research? Was this because the idea of research was far from the actual lived lives and pattern that children and young people associated with the schools? Could this also be the same for the teachers that were generating and dominating the culture and environment within the schools/settings approached in the research? These are not necessarily questions to be answered in this study, rather they represent a series of provocations and probing ideas that percolated to generate a new focus for the research design going forward.

My acknowledgement of the significance of silence has been influenced by the work of Lisa Mazzei who proposes that:

qualitative researchers should not dismiss silence as an omission or absence of empirical materials , but rather engage the silence as meaning full and purpose full (2007:2).

Accepting that voice, opinion, and providing opportunities for the voice of the vulnerable and marginalised to be listened to is an underpinning aim of this doctoral study, it is clear that for me ‘voice’ also includes silence, and potentially that opinion includes ambivalence. Silence then becomes another aspect of participation that whilst not an original aim of the research is necessary to explore. I need to be able to make sense of the educational lives of young children and how participation is understood by children and other stakeholders. Clarifying and stating these previously

unconsidered questions and lines of enquiry about silence is justified and essential before any attempt to unpick the original aims of the research. As Mazzei (2007) indicates the deconstruction of perceived notions enables the silence to be listened and responded to, but only if empirical data is viewed holistically, to include positive and negative, the something and nothing, the voice and silence. Responding to, and listening to, the silence is part of our purpose to discover and understand. As Mazzei puts it the 'absent presence' is the other gift given to us as researchers (2007:28). Some research participants willingly engage with the questions and curiosity of the research, responding and sharing their ideas, their lived experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the world. However within that exchange there is another form of participation, another data set, the silence. Likening this to an unexpected gift that is put to one side, Mazzei (2007, 2010) poses that this gift is worthy of further examination as this gift could be the one element that in research, my research, helps me to discover, reveal and open up new spaces. Needless to say the silence I experienced which I placed in the 'empty data-set' has resulted in further lines of enquiry and in fact more challenging ponderings and provocations. It is these new spaces that Koro-Ljunberg (2016: 102) suggests are revealed when one 'commits to continuously reinventing, revising and reenvisioning methodologies'. By doing this the silence encountered can be understood to be a present-absence.

3.11 Power Plays.

As discussed previously in the review by Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014) the idea of relationships, personal capabilities, and interestingly, trust, are offered as constraints

to teachers carrying out research. Reflecting on the challenges and dilemmas of the pilot study the importance of relationships and trust was a main theme, an encounter, which became apparent in the post- pilot phase and study. In considering the ways forward, and in an attempt to problematise my researcher experience, questions come that relate to this focus. I was left wondering, what the link is between professional trust and professional identity. How do the socio-emotional elements of professional identity emerge to be able to impact, either positively or negatively, on the process of planning and designing research? What is it that results in the gatekeeper opening the door to allow the researcher to complete their enquiry? How much influence does the gatekeeper have on how that enquiry is carried out? I recognised initially the issue of power at play in the relationship between researcher and research participant, researcher and gate-keeper, gate keeper and research participant. This reflects a dominant discourse which is well documented, (Moss 2017), namely power is often perceived as a possession, held by those in power, which those who are powerless try to seize from their control. From this dominant perspective, when considering the adult researcher, and the child as a research participant, it is the adult who is positioned as the expert and 'has power', and who ultimately 'bestows power' through their choice of research methodology on the child. This is difficult to eradicate (Alderson and Morrow 2011, Bucknall 2012, Kellett 2005, 2010). In the pilot study, somewhat naively, I had the confidence and determination of the benefits of adopting a pedagogy of empowerment. My naiveté was not placed in the children's competences but in the acceptance that the adults who were in a position of allowing research to go ahead shared the same beliefs as me. Naïve too as, at that stage, I assumed that power was something to be given and, or, taken, and did not yet

understand Foucault's idea that 'power is everywhere and comes from everywhere' (1980, 2004).

Reflecting post pilot study, post 'event', demands that I review and reflect upon the role of the gate-keeper and reconsider my own perspectives of power and relationships, using Foucault who challenged the dominant perception of power as an object held and bestowed. When negotiating access to children for the pilot study I became increasingly aware that the role of the gatekeeper was all about the play of power in the setting. Consent and approval became important aspects of the research itself. The ability to allow me to fulfil my research interests, and go on to allow the children to become researchers in their own right, remained firmly fixed with, and was a decision to be made by, the gatekeeper. However post pilot study 'event' I seek to understand and am curious to explore further the impact of the idea, from a Foucauldian perspective, that power is everywhere and that in this research context it pervades the school community, within the actions and accepted ways of being present . Thus power diffuses and reflects the rhizomatic nature of the inter-relationships between identity, power, and indeed situated ethics. Therefore my emerging ideas, to be contemplated and explored, relate to a play of power as a strategy to be performed and that people, and relationships, are the place whereby power is enacted and resisted (Foucault 1976, 1980).

Hammersley and Trianou (2014) draw further on the work of Foucault by considering the autonomy of the researcher as well as the autonomy of the research participant. According to Raaen (2011:628) Foucault considered autonomy to be an 'illusion', in

that the idea of personal autonomy is socially constructed, and that the individual can, and will, only follow the agreed rules of the situation. The irony is that the individuals believe they have freedom and autonomy. Individuals become constrained by what Foucault referred to as 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980), and that this is also the case for professionals in a professional context. The notion of 'regimes of truth' relate to the dominant discourse that are enacted and re-enacted by society, and groups or culture within that society. Patterns of accepted behaviour, values and beliefs become the 'truth' and are produced and replicated, and learnt by those in that social group. According to Foucault 'Each society has its regime of truth' (1980), and this was certainly the case when I reverted to my dominant identity by behaving as a professional teacher. This in itself demonstrates the link between power and autonomy, I believed I had the autonomy to be the researcher in the first pilot study but responded to the 'regime of truth' that dictated my professional behaviours at that time.

Within my experiences as a researcher I believe now that I did not have autonomy, the decisions that initially I believed to be autonomous decisions were bound as a result of the dominant discourses of teacher professionalism that came to the surface when carrying out the pilot study. The overwhelming urge to revert to my 'teacher identity' demonstrated that I was powerless in relation to the strong underlying behaviours I was sub-consciously aware of (Reay 2015). As I now align my understanding of power at play with Foucault I see the nexus, I see the bearing of the school environment and culture and how this impacts on the play, and flow of power in any research context.

Moving forward through these reflections on literature reviewed, my new ways of thinking become troublesome as I consider their impact on ethics. The question I have posed as a result of my ontological shift begins to challenge my ethical approach and in particular my consideration of the role of the gate-keeper, which may not have been an autonomous role? How can I now understand the place of consent and assent, in carrying out research with and by children? I now feel that the values and beliefs of those who create/perpetuate the environment within which the norms of behaviour, and the conditions of culture are developed, need to be examined further to problematise how research with, and by, children is facilitated. I need to consider how the values and beliefs of the Head Teachers, or other leaders and managers, are established and normalised, what are the origins of this normalisation, and why is there an acceptance, or resistance, to the dominant discourse in terms of professional identity?

The flow of power and resistance (Foucault 1980) I see now lies within the complexity of the relationships between researcher, gate-keeper and research participant, and consequently require further consideration. Like Heath, Charles, Crow and Wiles (2007) I see I reflect on the tension between the consent practices of practitioners working with children and young people and the researchers. Drawing on Huckaby (2011) I realise that the power of relations between researcher and research participant is not a transfer from one to another but that the 'fluctuations of power and vulnerability are held within the relations at all times' (2011: 174).

This fluctuation of power and vulnerability can be seen in relation to the pilot study whereby the adults, as gatekeepers consenting to or denying access, adopted what could be seen as a vulnerable position. Huckaby (2011:177) expresses the relations of power and vulnerability like this: ʘəwɔq ʘə ʒnoɪʘləɪ relations of vulnerability.

Using Huckaby's position helps me to interpret the response to requests for access to children as research participants. Denial or hesitancy of consent to access children as participants could, in light of this, be seen not as the adult holding power and using this as an object to denying access, but rather as the vulnerability of adults acting to protect the children as research participants from harm.

I am left wondering why, given that teachers know and understand child development and have a working, and one would hope theoretical, understanding of the curriculum, would teachers not be supportive of young children as research participants and importantly as researchers themselves? Is the issue here then not an understanding or awareness of children's abilities, interests, personalities but rather a lack of understanding of research itself? Is there a perceived mistrust of research and researchers, do teachers see themselves as researchers, does the idea of carrying out research intimidate teachers? What do they understand about the skills needed and how are those skills understood outside of the academic world away from the somewhat foreboding vocabulary and philosophy of what it means to conduct research? Can the role of gatekeepers be better understood by recognising the relationship between power and vulnerability? How can I explore these issues further?

3.12 Problematizing Research Methodologies.

At this point I want to critique the methodologies I adopted in the pilot. The purpose of any pilot study is to check for feasibility and identify any flaws, with the usual intent being to make minor adjustments to overcome any issues identified through a review to reconsider methods them, unpick their usefulness and effectiveness. Having done this, and responded to questions that continue to come to the surface my position now is that I am beginning to wonder if my research is participatory and if the methodological tools I adopted really 'empower' children. As I reflect and replay the interactions, drawing on the children's reviews and evaluations, as well as the silences that were part of their experience of being research participants I find myself unpicking threads of ideas I did not have at the start of my research journey.

Given my previous discussion, about power relationship at play, and acknowledging the influence of Foucault in my developing thoughts, I am now drawn to re-evaluate the concept of the participatory nature of the research tools I originally proposed.

Again, almost apologetically this time, I acknowledge a naiveté in my approach. In my eagerness to engage the young children I admit to what Waller and Bitous (2001) and Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) warn of, an adult engagement with tools whereby the tools become the focus rather than the methodological decisions in using them. The benefits of adopting a child friendly, participatory approach, may well be based on principles and values and an epistemological position but in practice there is little evidence to suggest that through adopting these research tools researchers are in fact able to 'deliver all that they promise' (Gallacher and Gallagher 2008:449). They

go on to suggest that confidence in children knowing childhood best and being experts in their own lives, something I have advocated throughout the planning stage, needs to be acknowledged within a context that there are other experts and ways of working. I find myself questioning the tools I used within the pilot, noting that Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) suggest that by adopting research tools such as drawing and writing 'researchers are expressly taking advantage of children's' schooled docility towards such activity' (pg.503). I am not alone when reflecting on this; Dalli and Te One (2012) examined a range of research involving children by interviewing the researchers and critiquing their methodological approaches and drawing on their reflections, many of which resonate with mine. These included the space, not just the physical, but the impact of social and cultural expectations as well as the space that formed the relationship between researcher and participant. Similarly Lather (2006), McWilliam et al (2009) and Mazzei (2007) all examine 'spaces' and the impact of spaces, physical and emotional on what they collectively now deem to be unreliable claims of 'authentic voices' (St Pierre and Jackson 2014:715), through the use of participatory/emancipatory methodologies.

I come to this point having further explored literature and ask myself the following questions. How much did the researcher have in common and how close was the relationship between researcher and the child? The space in which the relationship was developed is intriguing; as discussed in section 3.9 (pg 98 ff) when considering professional identity, trust forms a central theme. Reflecting on the role of the children in the pilot study phase 2, as researchers who were invited to share their findings at conference, what was the purpose here? Encouraging children to be researchers in

their own right was perhaps not uppermost in my aspirations for this activity, with hindsight was I taking advantage of the children's 'schooled docility' by creating a space for them in an adult world. In doing so was this about demonstrating my effectiveness as a researcher or to show their effectiveness? The realisation now is that the second pilot study, was based on my professional identity as researcher and my research needs, and not theirs. Knowing that colleagues would be supportive and welcoming to the children who presented, but the thought remains was this more about the novelty factor rather than mutual respect of their research? Does this reflection indicate a mistrusting episode, were those children ever going to be treated as researchers in their own right or just subjects of my research? Again this reflection brings to the surface the need for researchers to examine the adult role in such a participatory research methodology. The complexities and 'messiness' of adopting qualitative research designs were also noted by Dalli and Te Ong (2012) and interestingly in one interview the researcher commented on what was termed 'an ecology of trust' (Pg 227) mirroring my own concerns. Dalli and Te Ong also recommend a need to adopt a 'fitness for purpose approach' (pp231) which is cited in a desire to show respect for participants. When those participants are such young children this respect plays out through an awareness of the significance of attachments and bonding, giving rise to an ethical approach to include time and sensitivity for caring, secure relationships to develop.

Further consideration and problematizing of research by children is offered by Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2015), they aim to support the researcher committed to participatory methodology, and to raise thoughts and considerations to avoid what they

describe as a potential raft of child-led research. Issues around ethics, methodology and pragmatics are discussed, although the solutions they offer do not address the challenges from my perspective that are not so much about the child's role in Children-as-Researcher projects but are increasingly becoming about the adult role when conducting research with and by children. The challenges highlighted by Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2013) support and insist that debate happens to ensure that the fashion of child-led research is not running away unchallenged and without scrutiny in an aura of blind-faith.

According to Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2015:161) participatory methodologies in educational research whereby children's participation sees them being co – researchers is said to be 'de rigueur'. Whilst this trend gathers momentum they argue that assumptions that this is indeed in children's interests and in society's interest, and that Children-as-Researcher projects need to be further critiqued from an ethical, methodological and practical perspective. Furthermore Chae-Young (2016) argues for a rethinking of the assumptions made by those interested in research by children which is clearly important, however her reflections offered again simply focus on how children are perceived by adults in society. She identifies methodological and normative assumptions that firstly children are competent to conduct research, that they are epistemologically better placed to research their lives and that the research enables the child's right to participation and in doing so they become automatically 'empowered'. Conclusions drawn by Chae-Young (2016) suggest that these assumptions have limited evidence to support them and suggests a need to explore further.

I would add that there is also an assumption, held by researchers committed to participatory and/or emancipatory approaches that other adults and professionals are also committed, and that gatekeepers believe in children's competencies and share an epistemological stance that fixes children as being best placed to know and share self-knowledge. Reconsideration of research methodologies supporting these approaches, including the research tools, epistemological positions, as well as ethics and skills needed to conduct effective research is called for. It is at this stage in reviewing the literature that I realise how all of these aspects are interrelated, how my musings here represent the messiness that is doctoral research and continue to give rise to important questions and provocations.

3.13 Inter-connectivity and relatedness.

To draw conclusions my review of literature is best considered as a framework of interconnectivity and interrelatedness. The aspects considered here are interlinked and connected and as such cannot be approached in a linear way. Throughout the writing process I have come to realise that not only has this review enabled me to hear the previously unspoken questions that have emerged through the pilot study but I am now in a position to go backwards positively (and then forwards again), rather than simply forwards. This is demonstrating not a lack of progress but rather a more rhizomatic way of working, and as such demonstrates a blurring of my methodologies.

Classically at the end of the literature review the research questions to be asked are stated with confidence, and with equal confidence that the literature review has demonstrated, validated and set the context for the key question to be examined. However what I have now is no longer a series of questions that come from the original aims of the research. Rather I am at a point where my thinking is less linear and more holistic. The rhizomatic nature of my multiple ponderings and reflections that have emerged during, and as a result, of this review of literature cannot be straightened out and smoothed to form discrete one dimensional questions, but rather in recognition of the messiness need to remain 'dishevelled' to acknowledge the interrelatedness and interconnectivity of my new ways of thinking. In essence then I have become what Deleuze and Guattari (1980) identify as an unfixed nomadic subject that is not sedentary and as such responds to the movement and spaces between, within, and beyond the researcher, the research and the research participants.

To review, I started thinking my research questions would be:

How might young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?

How is children's participation, within the field of education, understood by children and other stakeholders?

Having explored these themes in literature, I then planned the pilot study, which consequently presented me with the 'event' that changed my thinking and gave rise to many different thoughts. The subsequent review and dialogue with the literature

offered and presented above continued to form the provocations discussed in this chapter.

Adopting a Deleuzian position the rhizomatic nature of these themes is demonstrated in Figure 6 below. It is no longer possible to consider each of these themes in isolation for each depends on a relationship with the others, the position of a view in one theme will impact on the views within another, this is not just a linear impact but a cyclical one that demonstrates the complexities of the place of research in school and teachers' roles in relation to this, as well as Children-as-Researchers projects and the perspectives, values and beliefs that teachers have about such initiatives.

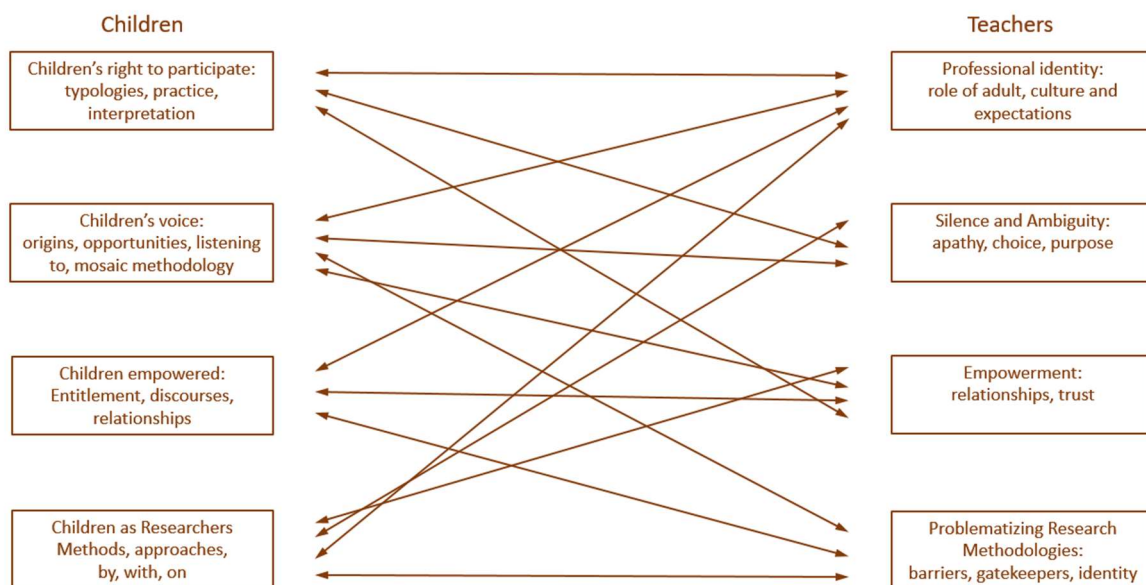


Figure 6 – Interconnectivity of subjects

The interconnectivity of subjects within this exploration, the adults, the children, the researcher, the teacher, the participant, the respondent, and the reviewer need to be

understood here not only as an indicator of the complexity of the subject but in understanding the to-ing and fro-ing of the discussion and emerging ideas. I have aimed to demonstrate my shifts in perspective I have taken as part of the review, to show not only what others have contributed to the knowledge but to illustrate how by interacting with that knowledge I have not only shifted my position but that in doing so I have placed my enquiry in a different direction. I am not here explaining the critical approaches taken but trying to show how the pathway of emerging and shifting thoughts generate a whole different range of ponderings to open up new lines of enquiry. Accepting that the review of literature itself is a data-set, and influenced by St Pierre (2012), I see my relationship with my secondary sources as the same kind of relationship a researcher has with her participants, further evidence of my blurring of methodologies. My interpretations and questioning, reflections and ponderings in response to those texts and authors contemplated throughout this chapter are not though 'objects of knowledge' rather, lines of flights that have taken me some where new (St Pierre 2014).

My mind has changed as a result of my research and reading so far and I am now understanding Patti Lather when she refers to the 'value of rigorous confusion'. (Guttorm, Hohti and Paakari 2014: 16).

The initial questions asked, which I sought to answer and gave rise to the pilot studies and the initial review of literature, give way to tiers of asking, multiple ways forward and multiple wonderings clamoring to be heard and responded to.

So now I am left with asking...

What place does research play in teachers' professional lives and what do they believe is the relationship between research and their practice?

How do teachers understand and promote the right of the child to conduct their own research?

How does professional identity impact on teachers seeing themselves as researchers?

What prevents or encourages teachers to carry out research in their classrooms?

How do teachers value the voice of children and how are they responding to opportunities for children to become researchers?

Why is it so challenging for adult gatekeepers to consent to access and involvement with research?

My initial focus was children themselves as researchers, with an ontology that they were experts in their own lives. Having now reviewed literature and contemplated the pilot studies I see now that my focus needs to be on the teachers, to examine and understand their position and in doing so clarify the foundation and underpinning identities, beliefs about research and the understanding of key stakeholders in school-based research of Children-as-Researchers.

The next chapter explores this re-orientation, reviewing proposed methodologies and plans for the next steps in the journey.

4 Finding the Way – Methodological Orientations.

In which my voice becomes more playful as I grow in confidence to do things differently. Methodologies are unpicked and then woven back together to fashion a blurred approach, establishing my professional identity as a post-qualitative researcher.



4.1 Introduction.

As indicated in previous chapters the stop/start approach to my research maps the emerging trajectory of a qualitative to post-qualitative researcher. I am someone initially grappling with feelings of awkwardness and dissatisfaction when adopting a conventional humanist qualitative approach who then finds a new confidence when using a post-qualitative approach. Again here the thread of professional identity becomes apparent; when adopting a reflexive approach I find *my* new professional identity as a post-qualitative researcher. No surprises then, (bear with this comment, all will be explained below) that what follows from this point is an assemblage of ideas, justifications, values and re-positionings hinted at previously and now celebrated with passion and commitment.

4.2 Style, Tone, Presentation.

Having cautiously adopted a creative approach to the exploration of literature in the previous chapter, the compulsion to go further and beyond a traditional approach of writing a thesis has been influenced by Honan and Bright (2016). When presenting the previous chapter *'Dealing with Wanderlust'* I initially felt uncertain of the responses from my more experienced colleagues who would review the emerging ideas I offered when trying to capture my new identity in the *'shift or rift'* reflections. At the time of writing the review of literature I was not aware of the work of Honan and Bright (2016). Up to that point my tentative exploration of Deleuzian philosophy had led to an awakening, an awareness of a lack of

understanding coupled with the desire to make sense of his ideas. Throughout this period of exploration there was/is a sense of a defamiliarisation and inevitability that, as MacLure (2013: 661) puts it, equates to a feeling as if 'we have chosen something that has chosen us'. However up to this point I remained uncertain as to how, in writing the thesis, I would be able to communicate in a style akin to a postmodern, post-qualitative approach, despite the Deleuzian appeal of using creativity through language or ideas, not just through an application of language. It was Honan and Bright's (2016) discussion of Deleuze's suggestion of a 'spark' breaking out from the shadow of words that crystallises a moment of revelation for me as a writer/researcher. Indeed it was/is this spark that ignited a confidence to explore with words, with structure, in order to challenge the orthodoxy of traditional organisation and approaches to thesis writing that, from this point on I will seek to demonstrate, and in doing so continue to affirm/reaffirm my ontological position. The multiplicity of my ideas, my thinking and emerging position did not occur, and are not reported here, in a linear approach. There is not/cannot be a statement of fact, and an argument for/defence of, my philosophical positions. The reason being is that these developed, and are developing, as I journey through the writing up stage of this study.

These emerging ideas are indicative of the layers of understanding, the assemblages and the messiness of adopting what I now know to be a postmodern paradigm and a post-qualitative approach. Exploring with 'permission' granted by Honan and Bright (2016) to embrace an individualised style in the writing of this

and subsequent chapters will also enable me to respond to the issue of exclusivity of a post –qualitative approach posed by Greene (2013). Careful consideration of language adopted when attempting to communicate my emerging ideas is not, for me, just an expectation of writing at doctorate level, but will go some way towards actively responding to the critique of post-qualitative research offered by Greene (2013). Recalling the feeling of being excluded that she experienced when exploring post-qualitative ideas for the first time, which I have to say I totally empathised with (again the use of informal language here will be explained later). Greene (2013) comments on the exclusivity of language adopted in post-qualitative research and identifies that initial feelings of being blocked from the approach arose from a ‘lack of linguistic fluency’ (2013:749).

When initially introduced to the idea of post-qualitative paradigm my naiveté, and my lack of experience, left me feeling that I was essentially encountering ‘*The Emperors New Clothes*’. I was unable to penetrate the complexities of language used, of unfamiliar terms, of concepts beyond my experience and comprehension. For this reason, and because of it, I was initially cautious in my use of vocabulary, not wanting to be accused by those committed to a conventional approach of smoke and mirrors, of sleight of hand, of diversion tactics that may result in the story of this lived research experience being misunderstood, misinterpreted or even worse dismissed. The recognition of ‘dominant discourses, or research literacies’ (French 2016:115) explain my initial uncomfortableness in tackling something new, for me, that challenged the idea of the ‘best’ way to write a thesis.

French (2016:216) identified 'pre and post thesis conceptualisations of academic writing' offering a series of 'problematized reconceptualization'. (See Figure 7)

Pre-thesis 'autonomous' conceptualisations of academic writing		Problematized reconceptualization of academic writing emerging out of the PhD research
Autonomous	↔	Ideological
Objective	↔	Subjective
Technicists skills set	↔	Social Practice
Universal	↔	Situated
Functional	↔	Creative
Performative	↔	Developmental
Fixed	↔	Fluid

Figure 7 - Pre and post thesis conceptualisations of academic writing (French 2016:117)

To be clear, a desire to do something different with my writing is not just searching for an opportunity to challenge the orthodox and rebel against the dominant research literacies. As I grow in confidence I am accepting my emerging ontological position and becoming more confident with it. I feel able to seize the opportunity to illustrate my position through every part of the research design and decision making process.

As confidence grew/grows I continue to carefully choose my words but do so in order to not only capture meaning, and communicate that, but to offer a glimpse into the playfulness that surrounds this exploration of new ideas, reflections and ponderings. To this extent I hope the style adopted henceforth will go some way to diffuse the complexities whilst at the same time not over simplifying.

4.3 Different directions – starting at the end, or the middle?

St Pierre (2010, 2013) along with Lather and St Pierre (2013) provoke a repositioning of qualitative research arguing that the development of a 'posts' movement is as a result of the desire and need to produce different 'knowledges', and to do so differently from traditional qualitative research methods /paradigms . These differences challenge tightly held and valued ontological and epistemological positions in qualitative research. Embracing these differences, for me, has enabled a presentation of methodological decisions mirroring the shifting and changing conceptual positions I adopted/adopt throughout the transformative process of this doctoral journey, and continue to demonstrate my blurring of methodologies.

When attempting to structure this discussion about my methodological approaches taken in the study, I was initially drawn to a variety of texts offering advice and presenting the traditional qualitative approaches to thesis writing. As I indicated in

Chapter 3: *Dealing with Wanderlust* adopting a linear, traditional qualitative approach would contradict both my need to keep the research creative and to remain within a post paradigm. Linearity would also limit the opportunity to reflect on how the ideas, perceptions, provocations and questions arose throughout the data gathering period. Adopting a creative approach was key to achieving a coherent design approach for the whole thesis.

Deleuzian lines of flight are multiplicitous, marking the interrelatedness between and beyond concepts, and which at the start appear messy and lacking clarity. They influence the decision-making process that this chapter will attempt to examine and explore. The discussion will not be just about the description and justification of approaches but rather how the implementation of approaches selected enabled me to ask further questions, ideas and uncertainties, to be explored. An organic approach rather than a linear approach will enable epistemological and ontological positions to come to the forefront as I make links between methodology and methods. This will enable me to explore the organic character of the processes as it becomes apparent. Unpicking lines of flight, identifying where inter-sections lay and drilling down to examine why and how they have emerged allows for key junctures to be acknowledged, and is what Deleuze (1990:141) identifies as the moment to 'see and think what was lying in the shadow around the words'.

4.4 Challenging Orthodoxies.

As a doctoral learner-researcher my expectation was to learn from experienced and expert others who have trodden the path and successfully completed and defended a thesis. In short I expected to adopt what Deleuze and Guattari (1986) in Colebrook (2002) call the 'major language', the dominant discourse of thesis writing. Lecerle (2002) in Honan and Bright (2016) however identifies that through adopting a *minor literature* you become at odds with the dominant discourse and that this is a process through which alternative identities may emerge and/or be confirmed. In fact the blurring of my teacher and researcher identity is symbolic of this approach.

I can refer back to the experience of decentring my teacher identity as examined in Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller* as an example of this. This concept of a decentring of identity, blurring, and layers of revelation, is a significant part of my *new realisation* as a researcher. Through this process of becoming a 'minor-writer' I slowly came to terms with the fact that this research approach and doctoral journey will not result in clarity but rather an opaqueness and complexity where my self-identity is inevitably multi-layered. I have realised that the process of completing and writing my thesis may not result in clarity and affirmation of intent and discovery, but rather a lack of clarity and answers, leading ultimately to more questions than at the start of the research. However, this position is not about a failure to conclude (O'Donnell 2014 in Koro-Ljunberg 2016) but rather is about a re-positioning and re-thinking of the issue of *Children-as-Researchers*.

Acknowledging the complexity of my emerging position in this way has been influenced by Lather's mistrust of binaries (2006, 2016) and the perceptible exclusivity of binary modes of thoughts, which Lather (2006) identifies as being dominant in western conceptual frameworks. Gannon and Davies (2012: 75) suggest that deconstructive writers, and I would happily use that descriptive mode to position myself, tend to resist binaries and unpick them in order to 'disrupt their grip'.

The newness of my thinking and challenge to the orthodox will be/is evident through not only the structure and organisation of the chapter but through the language I use. Deleuze (1983) and with Guattari (1975) recognise the impossibility of attempting to capture the social world and accepts the limitations of language. With this in mind I want to reveal and allow my thinking to emerge in an active/proactive, and at times reactive manner. I will therefore make use of ellipsis, brackets, and pay attention to typology. This is about the 'look' of language, in its written form and how the 'look' can be enhanced so as to better communicate other levels of meaning and understanding that goes beyond a simple representation of phonemes and digraphs.

Mazzei (2010) explores the possibility of *viewing* voice in qualitative research. She considers how Deleuze's work on cinema (1983, 1985) and his concept of 'image', has influenced her to reconsider a 're-imaging' of voice, to include the silences, the context, the before and afters that all contribute to the 'speech-act' (Deleuze 1985). Mazzei (2010) also assesses the problem of 'voice' in qualitative enquiry

and how it has been presented as being 'authentic'. She sets out to problematise the idea of voice that is assumed to be captured by the qualitative researcher, by questioning what else is being communicated by stuttering, pauses, silences and omissions. This analytical linguistic approach will be explored later, (5.5 pg 175 ff Critical Analytical Framework.), and will help to provide a framework for my analysis of primary data gathered in the study. Accepting the importance of capturing, recording, re-presenting and interpreting/re-interpreting 'voice', is a key aspect of my data analysis that will follow in the '*Going off the beaten track...*' sections of my analysis in Chapter 6: Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track. Pg. 190ff.

At this point in the testimony of the study it is *my voice* which is being heard, my identity, blurred though that may be, that is to be explored. To enable the 'voice' of the researcher, to be understood, considered and made visible, consideration of the language used in this written piece, through contemplation of typological decisions, will offer a further layer to the multi-dimensional perspectives that form the methodology. The form of presentation used in the previous chapter to demonstrate the shift in my thinking through changes in style, font, size and colour will once again be adopted.

So having indicated, and somewhat cautiously inferred at various points above, that I would be presenting my own way of expressing myself I'll try to explain this through sharing some of the ideas offered by, yes you've guessed it, Honan and

Bright (2016). You will have seen the ‘major language’ in my introduction and certainly the first part of my literature review, and then subsequent passages making use of brackets, rhetorical questions, alliteration and rhythm of language, similar to the attempts I make here. These provide a platform for a discussion about the use of what Honan and Bright (2016: 736) term, ‘vehicular’ and ‘vernacular’. Vehicular describes the orthodox style and use of language in a thesis which is formal, concise, structured, and objective. Whilst ‘vernacular’ is a style that is informal, which speaks to the reader, and is subjective and lyrical. Reconsidering the position Honan and Bright offer takes me to a place where I don’t have to be ‘vehicular’ or ‘vernacular’, recognising my suspicion of binaries (Lather 2006, 2016).

The liberty of not having to always be the formal academic adopting and playing the academic dance of what it is to produce a doctoral thesis, I can be myself, adopting whatever identity feels right at any time and in so doing I embrace the multiplicity of what professional identity means (again I refer you back to section 3.8 remember the blue font?.....). I’m neither being journalistic, as I often criticise my undergrads of being (maybe it’s time to stop doing that?) nor am I hiding behind a shroud of convoluted academic language. I have given myself permission to take on different academic identities in my writing to reflect my rejection of the linear, stylised approach of a traditional thesis. My Weary Traveller chapter developed out of the time on this journey of discovery, being thwarted and pushed back, by the silence that was heard from potential participants in their declination to the invitation to take part, by ambiguity and getting nowhere fast. Whilst not a story

teller I am reminded of the power of narrative, and when I consider the narrative of my research journey I see the stopping and starting points, the short resting points and the long stop overs that reflect the journey travelled. I am trying to achieve a revelation of my research journey that reports on a new way of thinking, particularly about methodologies and offers a blurring of methodological approaches. The mutable styles adopted throughout this thesis will articulate my rhizomatic ontology – that is an overlapping of meaning, of questions and answers, and questions left unanswered.

Honan and Bright (2016) offer suggestions that the inclusion of literature, poetry, images and sounds in research can elicit discourses of understanding. Whilst I have referred to Classic English literature within my Epi-Prologue, the capacity of expression through these other forms remain limited; words and text, and tentatively images, remain a preference for me in presenting and re-presenting the complex decision making processes that occurred as the project reported in this thesis evolved.

4.5 Re- thinking and Re-Presenting Positionality.

Through the process of revealing the layers of understanding and questioning the spaces that this thesis opened up, I struggle to find a way that will be seen as coherent, strong, well-argued, original in knowledge-seeking and knowledge-found, that will meet the requirement of a traditional doctoral study. I want to create not just a record of the research but a way to evidence my thinking, illustrating how that

thinking has developed. The end result is that I get to a level, according to my peers, whereby the title Doctor can be given. I recognise that this thesis is more than an assessment to meet academic benchmarks or a product that conforms to agreed conventions. I remind myself, that the origins of the word “thesis” comes from the Greek tithenai, meaning “to place” or “to position”. My thesis is my position, my point of view, my stance on the complexities of Children-as-Researchers and, as I concluded having reviewed the literature, my stance in relation to the role of teachers, research and children, and the revealing of the new spaces between them.

Consequently having illustrated in previous chapters how my Post-Qualitative position has emerged, is emerging, I need now to explore that realisation. In doing so it may be that I do not just offer discussion and debate, critiquing and justifying, but rather as I review the emergence of this stance I draw on a reflective analysis of my initial research proposal, offer findings and events from pilot studies and thereby to some extent offer analysis and interpretation of data. The layers of this study will continue to be related and interrelated; what at first appears to be a chapter on methodology soon becomes an exploration of findings in relation to, and analysis thereof, the initial methodology, a deconstruction to demonstrate the development and emerging new (er) -methodologies and methods that were adopted to gather subsequent data. And in doing so I present a blurring of methodologies that leads to an enquiry of new spaces between:

Children– Research-Teachers.

4.5.1 Beginning, middle.....end....

So as I struggle to consider the representational value of language, the limitations of the language/material binary that St Pierre (2013) notes, I become aware that from the start I am trying to do so sequentially, there is it 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and now 4.5.1. I clearly cannot move away from my training as a conventional humanist qualitative researcher. I recall Elizabeth Adams St Pierre's commitment to a qualitative approach in the 1980s and how her doctoral study, like mine, as being the moment of realisation, rejecting a conventional humanist qualitative methodology, a coming to recognise the contradiction of the approach in terms of her ontological and epistemological claims. Initially I went through that weariness and confusion without knowing (is that the right word?) that an alternative to the dominant discourse of qualitative research existed...if indeed 'exists' is the right word??? This is why my journey of the deconstruction of my initial methodology is necessary. I am like St Pierre.

Reading, reading,and reading; layers of learning, layers of messy chaos at times bewildering and then momentarily flickers of light as I recognise myself in her story, and I find connectivity in her deconstructions and recommendations for new lines of inquiry.

St Pierre (2013) argues for any doctoral student to start with the theory, to ensure there is no disconnect between theory and methodology, on her recommendation

(can I view this relationship now as mentor/mentee I wonder?).... I have found the methodology of conventional humanist qualitative research, in my case, to be wanting and inadequate for my purpose. Moving on I see myself trying to bring to the foreground the ontological and epistemological commitments of post-qualitative analysis, trusting that studying the theory will enable the methodology to follow. However, initially the journey of this study began at a different point, starting with different epistemological frameworks and to an extent avoiding the complexities of a post-qualitative ontology. No doubt influenced by my earlier Cartesian learning experiences, both taught, and reinforced by government policy, and the dominant expectations in society both in academic cycles, and from a personal perspective, familial. "But what are you trying to prove in this research???" asks Dad?

On reflection I see now that I started in the middle, returning to the beginning, revisiting the middle, progressing not towards an end point but a rest point. In itself living what Deleuze (1980) suggests is this rhizomatic analysis of the social world, the social world that in this case was ...and is... my research experience. In dialogue with Deleuze I understand this to be my 'ontology of becoming', a belief in what could be and what has not yet been thought of (Deleuze and Guattari 1991). I see that at the 'start' of the project I showed little attention to ontological consideration, focusing on epistemological decisions. Again knowing now that this was indeed my built in and trained response to focus on a Cartesian way of thinking. My first ever piece of (undergraduate) research in 1980s set the path for my thinking and lay tacit foundations which remain at the bedrock of my research journey. To ignore them is

challenging, head-aching and distracting. ‘This is why I think ontology is so hard to think’ (St Pierre 2014:650).

4.5.2 Neither....Becoming.

I remind myself and others again of Maggie MacLure’s consideration of data acknowledging that in a materialist ontology data cannot be seen as an inert and indifferent mass waiting to be in/formed....., in the same way I feel that my acceptance of a post approach was not based on decisions at the beginning but rather decisions in the middle, the end and the beginning – can I be bold enough to say that the uncomfortableness of deconstructing my initial methodology when it seemed not to be working enabled a revelation that there was indeed something else out there waiting for me? Lather (2013) identifies a schema of methodologies which she calls Qual 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0, outlining the development of qualitative research. This is summarised in Figure 8 and will be useful as the deconstruction of initial methodological approaches will depend on these.

Qual 1.0	Traditional humanist inquiry, a humanist Subject with authentic voice, transparent descriptions of lived experiences, better methods can get closer to the truth
Qual 2.0	Multiple realities and voices, reflexivity and empowerment - grounded in humanist concepts of language and knowledge. Regulated design processes
Qual 3.0	Beginning to use Post –Modern theories – about inquiry, voice, data, interpretative mixed methods – this is normalized.
Qual 4.0	Becoming – in a Deleuzian sense Not tidily described in text books Beginning to do it differently wherever we are in our projects

Figure 8 – Schema of Methodologies

(Adapted from Lather 2012)

Being open to all possibilities, in the Deleuzian sense, during the pilot study period meant that the momentary happenstances with subjects, with language, with feelings and with disturbances of thought awakened new ways of thinking. It wasn't that I was on 'the lookout' (Deleuze and Parnet 1977) but questions and ponderings came to the forefront of a reflexive experience. Greeting these troubles as opportunities for new ways of thinking in effect became, after a time, a long time, a 'kind of method' as McCoy (2012) comments. Having noticed these unexpected encounters brought about a new realisation that my previously realist (maybe critical realist) ontology was problematic, not least in the insistence that ontology and epistemology require definition and delineation. Subsequently I am drawn to Barad's (2003) concept of ethico -onto-epistem-ology which she uses to explain how the inter-relatedness of thinking about what is in the world, and how we know about things in the world, are continually determining the other. According to Barad we cannot think about epistemology without, or separate to, ontology, (nor can we separate out ethics – which will be discussed later 5.7 Ethical Tourism – Respectful, Responsive, Research/er pg.185 ff). This is not just about recognising that language is fluid, but that consequently thinking about things, as we do by being dependent on language, means that those 'things', those subjects, are also fluid. The idea of 'things' being resistant to representation is well established by Bennett (2010) who also offers the idea of the 'thing- power' whereby objects in society are not just definable by the dominant discourses that society employs to make sense of them but that the 'vibrant matter' of 'things' have a power to shift and to challenge that dominant discourse when they interact with the subject. If this is the position taken it follows

therefore that materiality too is not stable; as things emerge in the world they are both shaped by what we know, and material, simultaneously. This New-Materialism that Barad (2007) advocates offers an understanding of reality that can be said to be about matter and meaning 'becoming', in that

Matter does not pre-exist discursive practice, rather all becoming is 'material-discursive', with neither prior to the other, happening simultaneously as the world is enacted rather than pre-existing, then known or even shaped by particular ways of knowing. (McCoy 2012:766).

And here, another smile, recognising that in this thesis, which was initially bound by everything qualitative, interpretivist and constructivist, I am now 'in dialogue' with the work of a particle physicist, with whom I would have confidently said I had nothing in common. However this is just further proof of the plasticity of identity as I recognise that this in fact may be true of my old 'I' liberal, humanist, unitary identity but the new 'I' that emerged/emerges/will emerge as part of thesis now has more in common with Karen Barad and Jane Bennett. The significance of identities again becomes apparent.

4.6 Deconstructing Conventional Methodologies/Orthodoxies

The initial aims of this enquiry were:

To describe and analyse the origins of, and context to, children's right to participation in education

To explore how to actively involve children as co-researchers in investigating their participation in their educational lives.

To elicit children's views of their right to participation in education.

Through asking the questions:

How might young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?

How is children's 'participation' within the field of education, understood by children and other stakeholders?

As anticipated the *event* (Derrida 1994) of the pilot project proved to be the turning and re-setting point of the research. This *beginning again* (Said 1978 in Pryke et al 2003) in part triggered by emotional responses of disturbance, desolation, demotivation and disheartenment which I can see now as an opportunity – in itself the troubles and puzzlements of the pilot study led to a re-examination of the proposed methodology. At this point I want to use the term deconstructing but in doing so I am cautious that my approach will not in its entirety do what Derrida (1967a, 1967b) named as deconstruction. The language used in the proposal was the language at my disposal and within my understanding at that time. In deconstructing the text of the proposal I can demonstrate how my ontological perspective was subsequently troubled. That is not to say that if the study had been carried out as planned and designed it would not have been successful in a conventional humanist qualitative way. I may have answered the questions posed and would have offered knowledge and findings to warrant the successful examination and be awarded the title Doctor. However to listen to and recognise those troubles, and to respond to them, demonstrates

what Deleuze (1991:141) means when he suggests that ideas are being hidden in the 'shadow of words'.

From here on then, I offer this reflection and process of peering into the shadows as a data set (what is data?) with analysis. I will share my initially proposed methodological ideas and attempt to classify and interrogate before offering a summary of the new-now rather than the old-now.

4.6.1 Old now (then).

The continuation of this, if a label is necessary, documentary analysis of the Form 9R proposal, will attempt to be presented , through images, as an interactive moment – however once the text is finalised in the writing of the comments, reflections and analysis it becomes not now but rather then. In trying to capture the movement and the speed of continuity of thought I drew upon the use of 'comments' facility as part of the word processing application; the reason for this is that the comments remained hidden from view until a 'spark', a 'line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) becomes apparent. I recognise though that when presenting the analysis of the proposal I cannot capture that process in the moment; for this reason the series of images that grab that moment in time are offered, not in a complete linear and systematic analysis of the Form 9R methodology but as snapshots of emerging ideas hidden in Deleuze's 'shadow of words'.

The images that follow are taken directly from the proposal of the initial project. This approach is part of my continuous exploration of visual communication my journey and, at this moment, begins to take on a significance that, as yet I cannot quite articulate effectively, except to say this is something that may need to be revisited later.....

I have taken some paragraphs into the shadow of the proposal, not to eliminate sections that may be deemed irrelevant but to demonstrate their importance in the background and how as a holistic document this was, then, my starting point, although for me as a post-qualitative researcher not necessarily the beginning.

For me this illustrates the way the new blurred methodology and all its possibilities were/are there, hidden until I found them. The possibilities weren't/aren't there in relation to me, I did not impact on them and then they became a reality, but rather they existed/exist alongside my lack of understanding and awareness.

As with most journeys of doctoral study the proposal comes after a period of study of research methods. I undertook this, to be honest, with a degree of interest but not openness. My perspectives at the time were fixed in a

conventional qualitative world, fully committed to interpretivist beliefs and an understanding that reality was created by the interaction of the subject and object, and whilst not generalizable would be relatable. In my case relatable to those who held the same values and beliefs about children, voice and emancipatory/participatory research.

Hidden in the shadows though are the emerging post –qualitative beliefs, the contradiction and the urgency in trying to communicate a multi-layered approach, a recognition of the rhizomatic nature not just of the complexities of the methodology designed but rather the inter-relatedness of questions, uncertainties and contradictions of the task ahead.

For confirmation this process is not about discovery but rather, again an illustration of my ontological (onto-epistem-ology) perspective

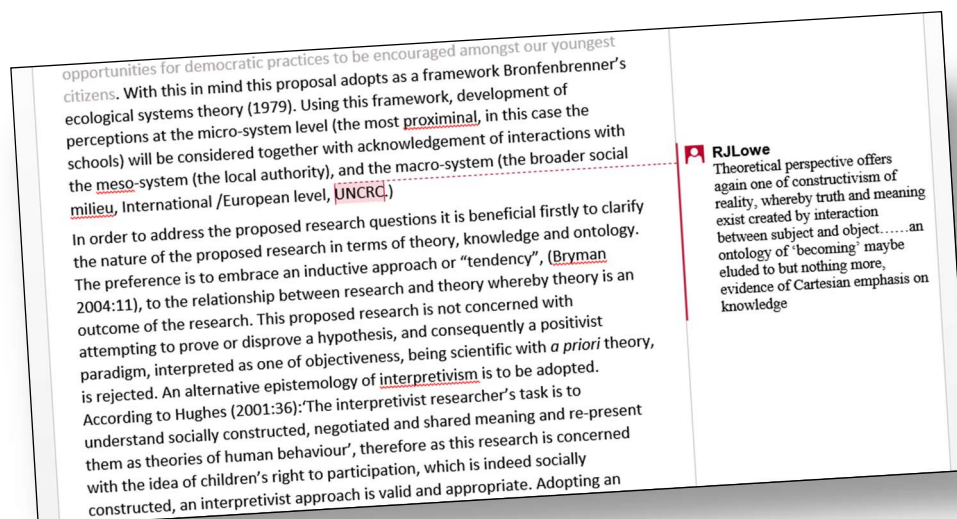


Image 1 - Dominance of a constructivist paradigm – ontology of 'becoming' alluded to.

be described as homogenous, or critical, sampling but rather typical sampling (Cresswell 2009).

The proposed research needs to be understood and designed with two separate but complementary research methodologies. The research tools adopted by the adult researcher can be expressed with clarity; however the research tools to be adopted by the children remains at this stage less clear. Accepting the need to build a micro to macro framework (Bronfenbrenner 1979), demands that data needs to be collected at a micro, meso and macro level. This sampling framework will add validity to findings and acknowledges the wider influences on children's understanding of their perceptions of rights within education. Children's engagement with the world and their 'voice' is constructed only in relation to their physical and social world which includes significant adults.

Hence it is proposed that at a macro level detailed documentary analysis of UNCRC (1989) and an exploration of children's rights both at International level and European level will enable a contextual understanding of policy and practice. This process of analysis will enable the motivation, purpose and intent of the concept of children's right to participation to be understood in an historical and cultural context.

At the meso-level a combination of documentary analysis and expert interviews will identify how, at a local level, the child's right to participation is understood and how UNCRC (1989) is implemented. A key document for analysis will be the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011 – 2014 produced by the local Children's Trust. This scoping exercise will also include interviews with local authority representatives, anticipated to be the Lead Member for Children and Young

RJLowe
As discovered through pilot study the challenges of involvement and working with gatekeepers proved an initial barrier – the many knock backs and the rejections in itself formed a data set of not just silence but of avoidance. With little expectations that the response would be anything other than a

RJLowe
So here the beginning of 'becoming'...post qualitative, the recognition that this could not be a linear systematic approach, from here I see that as I struggled to communicate my thinking of what I would recognise now as a humanist conventional qualitative piece I offer contradictions in words used and concepts revealed. – Separate, complimentary, multiple researchers, but the adult and the children, me as participate and the children as participant.

RJLowe
The emphasis on the face to face, the primary importance of the adult voice, to go alongside the children voice, the hierarchy of local government and key figures

Image 2 – Slowly 'becoming'

Finally at the micro-level the head teachers and class teachers of the first schools will be interviewed, (maximum of 16 adults), thus recognising that children's right to participation is constructed by these significant adults. The rich data generated by semi-structured interviews will enable an understanding of the context of the school environment and how participation is understood and implemented. It is within these school environments that the children are based and their role as co-researchers will now be explained.

The proposal is to work initially with a group of Year 3 and 4 children (7-9 year olds) who will be taught a range of quantitative and qualitative research strategies, aspects of data collection, ethical approaches to research and analysis.

Whilst not specifically identified as 'research skills' aspects of learning in these areas are identifiable across the current curricula for this age group. Previous research methodology programmes designed by Kellett (2005, 2010) will be developed to suit the needs and interests of younger children. The designed programme will adopt a balanced approach so as to not influence the young researchers in their selection of strategies and tools. Research tools will be presented and children supported to evaluate and consider a range of tools that they may wish to adopt in researching views of both their peers and then younger (5 – 7 year olds) children's perception of participation in education. Viewing

concerns that the voice of the child

RJLowe
Significant adults, children not having rights without those adults – a binary understanding of power relationship here, the orthodox view of power being given and received – not recognising the power of the too-ing and fro-ing of such relationships.

Image 3 – Binaries...of power-not recognising the to-ing and fro-ing.

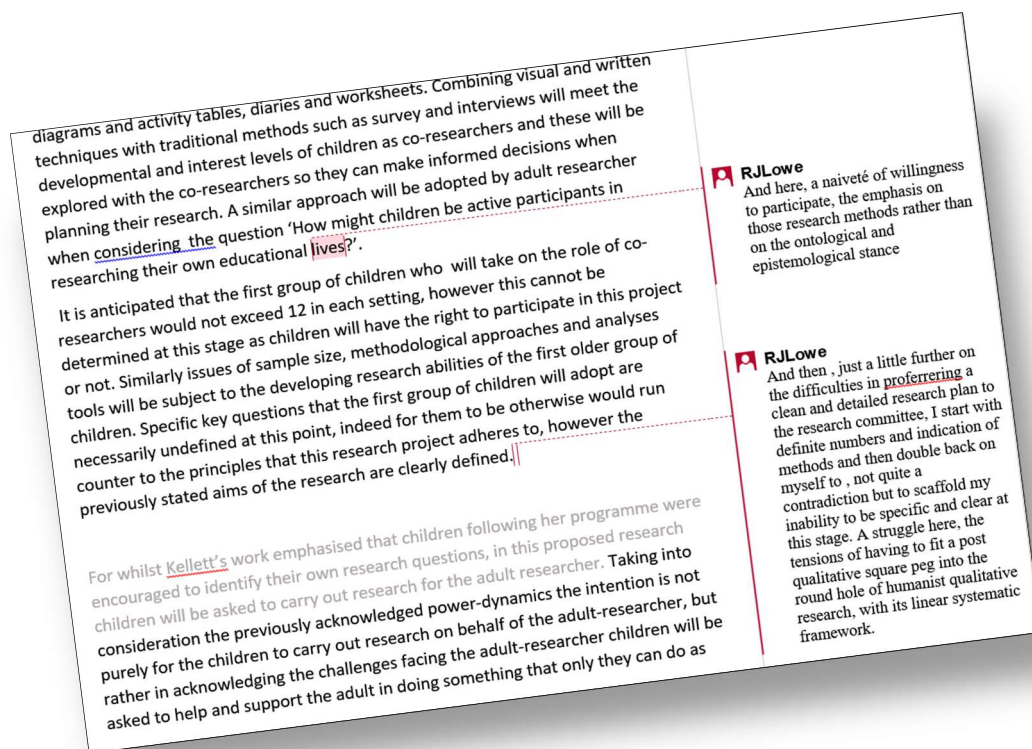


Image 4 – Tensions made clear – confusion with conventional approach.

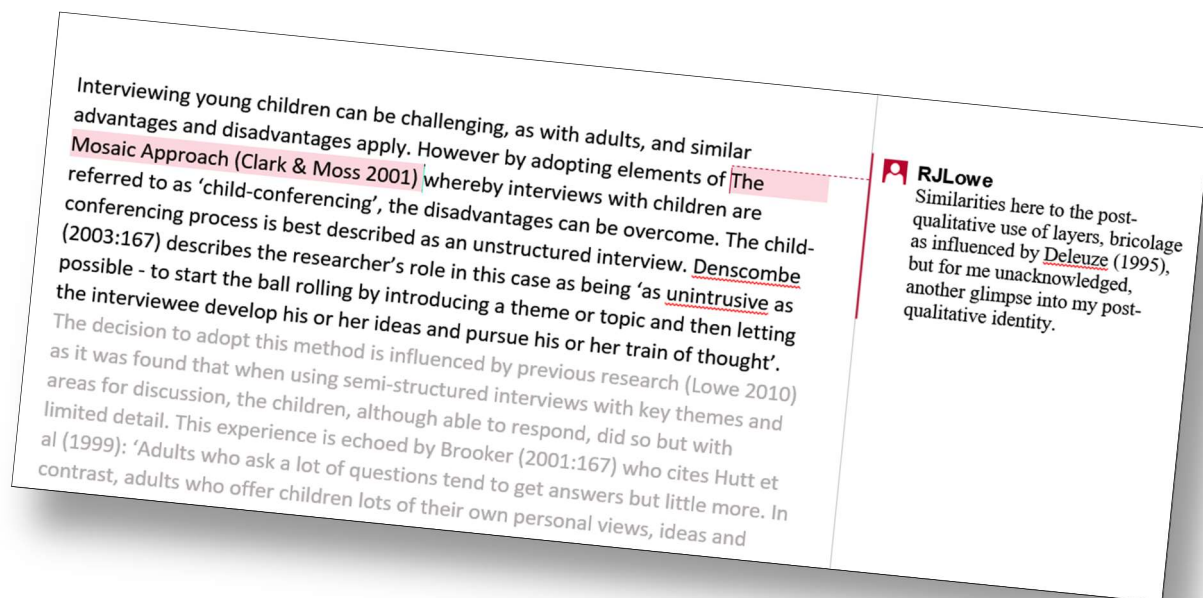


Image 5 – Drawing on methods that hint at Deleuzian layers

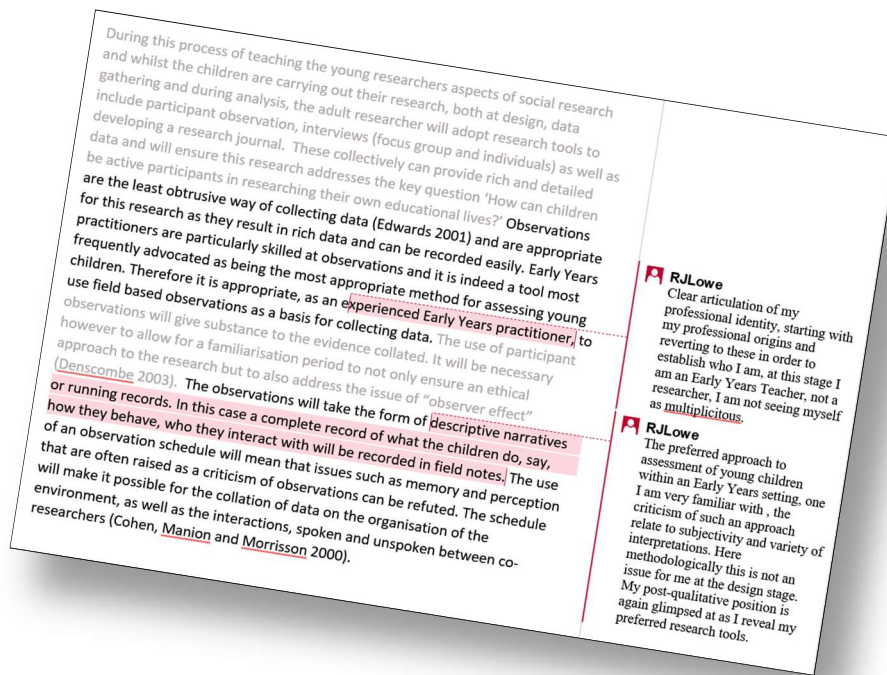


Image 6 – Introducing identities and subjectivity – aspects to be unpicked later.

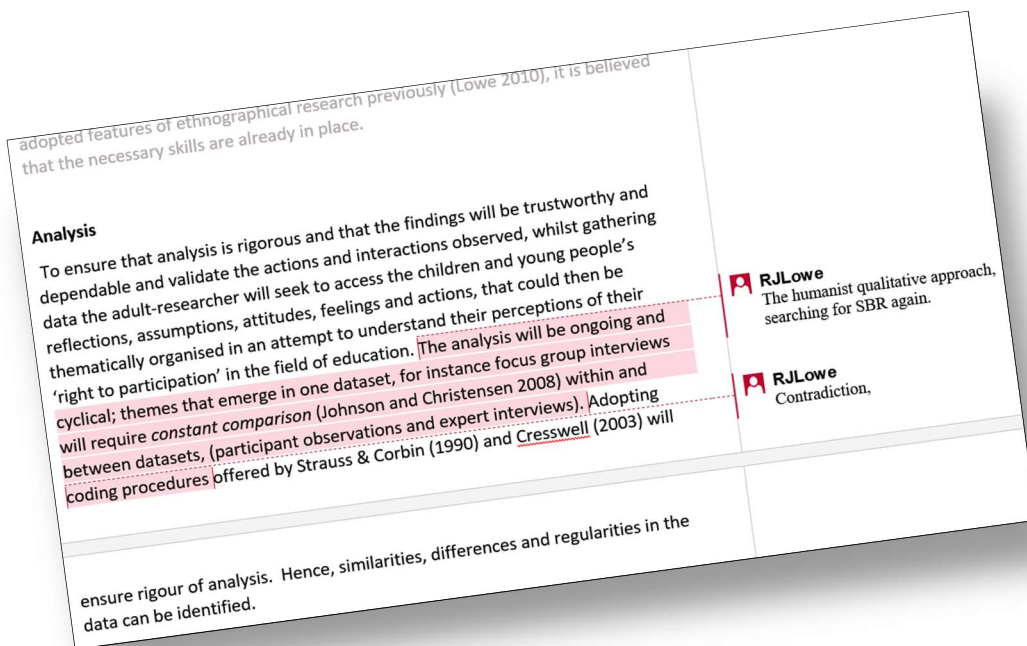


Image 7 – Dominance of Science Based Research again

4.6.2 New-Now (now and then...).

To offer a summary here as a rest point, I offer these ponderings as an illustration of my ongoing ontological (onto-epistem-ological) position. At the time of beginning (not yet becoming), the pilot offered a defined methodology. I didn't at the time have the language (although I had some vocabulary) to communicate what I felt I wanted to explore, or what I needed to explore (the emotive connection here, for me cannot be discounted). This is not to say I didn't have the desire or the thinking of how and what I wanted to create. I would argue that the thinking of a post-qualitative approach was there but the lack of theory that I had at my fingertips at the time resulted in an inability to formulate and communicate my thinking. This inability was/is in relation to myself and my own knowing, as well as in relation to more experienced researchers and colleagues both through the process of initial supervision and through the evidencing of recognised academic standards by the rigorous process of completion and interrogation of 9R. In attempting to capture a collection of my thinking the following figure will demonstrate the evolving methodology and how I found/am finding my way (Figure 9).

Ontology	<p>Initially an ontology, (if at all) of Parmenidean 'being'. There is a clearly formed, stable, entity of <i>Children-as-Researchers</i> to be revealed</p> <p><i>Heraclitean Becoming</i> <i>Formlessness Chaos</i> <i>Interpenetration</i> <i>Silence (Gray 2013) – these will be important concepts to return to</i></p>
Epistemology	<p>Constructivism – truth and meaning exist created by subjects interaction with the world in this case: <i>Children-as-Researchers</i> and their rights defined by the research world and community – in response to e.g. UNCRC, agreed and proffered from the move by adults to empower and enrich children lives, promote democracy which in turn is created by /socially constructed by the adult community</p> <p><i>Subjectivism – meaning of the world does not emerge through the interaction of the subject i.e. children and the world (adults/teachers). But rather that the meaning of the subject is imposed on it by the world though a collective unconsciousness, dreams, and religious beliefs – could this also be professional identity????</i></p>
Theoretical Perspective	<p>Interpretivist –interpretations of the social world – differing to natural world (science)</p> <p>Phenomenology – grounded in social reality, allowing the phenomenon to speak for itself – tendency toward ethnographic approach research club , participant observers – research club, exploration of overriding understandings</p> <p>Naturalistic inquiry – evolving more questions than answers, multiple realities, and phenomenon explored in situ –participant observations – research club.</p> <p>Elements of Critical inquiry – challenges conventional social structures – research children to support them in becoming empowered, making a change for selves, making a change to adults' perceptions of them.</p> <p><i>Post-Modernism – rejects emancipation, reject therefore critical inquiry, emphasising 'multiplicity, ambiguity, ambivalence and fragmentation' Gray 2013: 28. Discourse analysis of survey to expose and deconstruct values within them – not to see reality of world in that data but rather how meanings are produced and presented in that data – becoming.</i></p>
Research Methodology	<p>Phenomenological – emphasis on inductive collection of data, pick up themes, grounded theory – research club, interviews with stakeholders interviews with children provide thick descriptions of experiences and perspectives in natural settings- not just school initially – school, club, other ages and activities outside of school experience. Qualitative analysis of data. Case study approach need to refute criticisms of generalizability</p> <p><i>Post qualitative – Exploration of data including the empty set, the silences and the emptiness, giving rise to connections, rhizome</i></p>

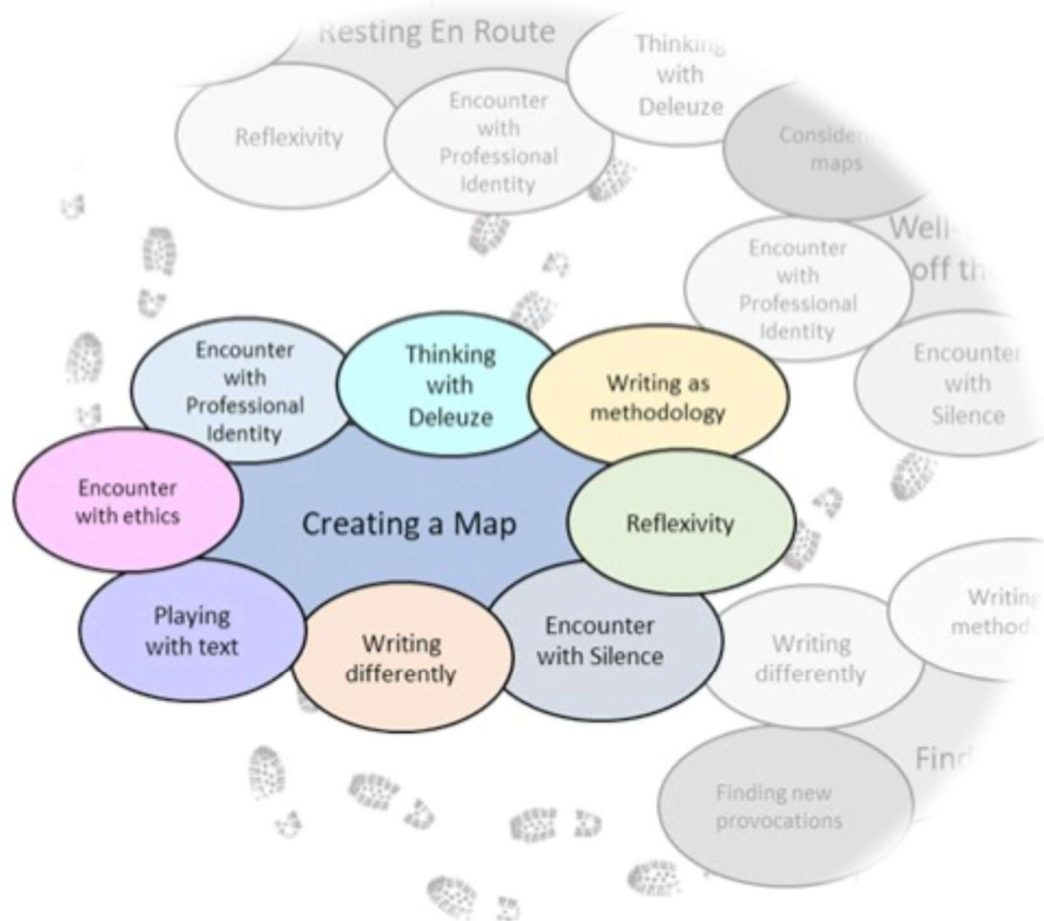
	<p><i>analysis of inter-relatedness. Not linear coding but connections, ‘assemblage’ and emerging ideas. A growing, moving, organic and ‘living’ awareness of future and past connections – recognition of the need to go back to enable a move forward and examine the professional identity of teacher. Disentanglement not to straighten out but to see the ripples and waves, in examining the concept of Children-as-Researchers.</i></p> <p><i>Not using theory the ‘rhizome’ Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980) to collect data, or to create a data gathering tool but rather to think with a rhizomatic approach to analysing data.</i></p> <p><i>Discourse analysis of questionnaire responses – not coding but through establishing network of concepts, seeing the future configurations of professional identity, understanding of the nature of educational, practice based research, Children-as-Researchers, children’s voice and agency.</i></p>
Data Gathering Tools	<p>Participant observations, Child focus group interviews, Adult (teachers and parents) semi-structured interviews - as part of research club experience. Expert interviews – leading stakeholders, local and national.</p> <p><i>Analytical Survey to gather perceptions, views, and understanding of the place of research in contemporary classrooms, the role children have as research participants, the role teachers have in research. Consideration of literature and writing processes as an integral part of any data set.</i></p>
Analytical approach	<p>Adopting coding procedures offered by Strauss & Corbin (1990) and Flick (2014) will ensure rigour of analysis. Coding – ongoing and cyclical. Similarities, differences and regularities in the data can be identified.</p> <p>Themes that emerge in one dataset, for instance focus group interviews will require <i>constant comparison</i> (Johnson and Christensen 2008) within and between datasets.</p> <p><i>Adopting Deleuze Rhizomatic analysis – lines of flights, ‘centrifugal’ forces</i> <i>Patchwork of interrelatedness</i> <i>Becoming – unknown futures</i> <i>Visible/invisible</i></p>

Figure 9 – Evolving Methodologies

The following chapter moves on to demonstrate how data was 'found' as a result of the reorientation presented here and how this opened up opportunities for subsequent analyses of the spaces between children-research-teachers.

5 Creating a Map.

In which the refocussing of the research is established, in dialogue with Deleuze, and plans are made to find data enabling an exploration of newly discovered spaces in between children-research-teachers.



5.1 Mapping, plotting and signposting.

In both the previous chapters '*Dealing with Wanderlust*' and '*Finding the Way*' I have shown how my ontological stance emerged/is emerging. With each chapter I review the points of my re-positioning that illustrate how the design of the research came about, with my identity as a researcher '*becoming*' more evident as I interact with the research design. As outlined in Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller* which featured the impact of the pilot study, identified as the 'event' (Derrida 1994, Zizek 2014), my first attempts were designed to explore the concept of *Children-as-Researchers*. However, I was initially lost amidst the contradictions and false starts, finding myself surrounded by silence. Nevertheless in dialogue with, St Pierre (2010, 2012, 2013, 2014), Lather (2006, 2013, 2016), and Mazzei (2007), I have been encouraged through their profferings, ponderings and provocations to engage more with Giles Deleuze (1925 – 1995). It is at this point on the journey that I begin to feel refreshed, reinvigorated, having rested and considered tracks taken so far. In finding my feet, and finding my way, I need to create a map to see the potential in the landscape, and to determine which trails to follow, and to see where those trails cross, connect and combine.

5.2 Uncharted Territories

As I explored/am exploring Deleuze and the 'ontology of becoming' I appreciate that as opposed to a conventional humanist qualitative approach there is not one way of doing post-qualitative research. Creative approaches and ways of data-gathering

include, images (Lenz 2016), videography (Higgins 2014), incidental conversations (Berad 2017 in Higgins et al 2017), to name a few. Being trained both in conventional-humanist-qualitative approaches, and indeed as an Early Years practitioner, my skill set includes questioning, interviewing, talking, probing, verbal interactions, and not photography, painting, images, dance or drama. That being said I make no apologies for the conventional approaches to data gathering adopted, which will be shared in subsequent sections. Indeed St Pierre (1997), Jackson and Mazzei (2012) and Mazzei (2013) also use conventional methods - interviews and ethnographies, and in dialogue with them I focus on the mode of analysis rather than the tool adopted. When adopting a Deleuzian approach to my research I am cautious of not being criticised for just using the metaphors, vocabulary and style of phrase. I am thinking with Deleuze, anticipating that through analysis, I will potentially think previously un-thought questions and knowledge.

Fair to say at this time, now/then...??? I am still uncertain of the approach to be taken. I need to immerse myself further and did so/am doing so/will do so, as the survey was designed, and questionnaires analysed and as those 'lines of flight' emerged/emerge through consideration of multiple possibilities. At a later stage I recognised a need to review again policies and literature which came about having completed that analysis, for now though that is in the yet to come, another indication of the to-ing and fro-ing of this rhizomatic approach to analysis. Again I am accepting that I am in the middle of it all, but will return to the beginning of the thesis, before/after reaching the end or rather what I am starting to recognise was/is/will be a resting place, before the next line of flight.

The consideration of how, for example, to determine what to ask, how to phrase, how to enquire, how to 'de/sign' (Higgins et al 2017), an effective questionnaire will be/was influenced not just by previous conventional skills, but by the previously un-thought questions that emerged following the initial piloting of the survey - which now I would rather call *phase*, of the research; and notably through a subsequent wider examination of literature. To reposition these previously un-thought-thoughts at this point is helpful. By taking each provocation I will explore what influenced the de/sign of the questionnaire before moving on to discuss how the initial engagement with responses to the survey enabled me, to adopt a Deleuzian approach of 'rhizome' analyses.

5.3 Surveying Topographies of Practice.

Given that I was/am familiar with how effective carefully crafted questionnaires can be in qualitative research methods, I had/have a confidence in their design. This time however I was acutely aware of the data that I desired to collect and where that might come from. I had come to the position of now wanting to focus on teacher perspectives, views and beliefs about research with children. As explored previously, (4.6.2 pg. 154 ff.), the continuous closing of doors, empty data sets and 'data-fog' that had been part of the first phase of the research had, through adopting a Deleuzian approach, given rise to previously *unthought –thoughts*.

My initial starting point was the children. However having reviewed literature and reflected on the pilot study/first phase I began to see/see now that I need to explore and clarify the foundation and underpinning identities, beliefs and understanding of teachers as key stakeholders in school based research. I cannot understand the concept of *Children-as-Researchers* without examining the place of research in school and how the adults, teachers, perceive the idea of *Children-as-Researchers*. I form the idea that *Children-as-Researchers* can only be understood in relation to adults as researchers, not as binary opposites, either /or, but as interrelated actors/players.

The questionnaire to explore these new spaces was put together not so much as to *gather* data as that would assume there was stability at play (Jackson and Mazzei 2012) but rather as a tool to *produce* it (Johansson 2017). For this reason open ended and closed questions were included, questions to gather material (*not data*) for example, about professional backgrounds and qualifications as well as job roles and previous experiences of research, in addition to how *Teachers –as- Researchers* may have included children in research. Furthermore participants were asked to rate various skills and tendencies in relation to research skills and teaching skills. The broad approach to style of questions was taken in an attempt to be accessible to a wide range of teacher professionals who would have a variety of interests and time constraints.

The silence in response to involving teachers and educational professionals from a variety of schools as part of the first phase of this research influenced the design of this questionnaire. I had called upon professional and trusting relationships to be able

to gain access to schools in order to develop 'Research Club', and as discussed in the Chapter Two: 'The Weary Traveller' this was met with varying success. At this point in the research I was interested in gathering information which I could then analyse to see in which direction I would be taken, I wasn't trying to find a definitive answer but did/do want to find a way to respond to the puzzlements that had come into thinking as a result of the difficulties of the first phase.

In this second phase I wanted to follow these other lines of flight and think about professional identity, to ponder on teachers' perspectives of their role and the role of research, specifically research with children, in relation to their role.

I wanted to try to make sense of the silence that had occurred in Phase 1 of the pilot study when trying to gain access to schools to do research with children/pupils and to see of how teachers' perceptions of their professional identity related to this.

Previously my research (French, Lowe and Nassem 2017) had considered what teachers gained from the experience of undertaking children as co-researcher projects, concluding that teaches who did so gained a new realisation of the contribution young children could make to those decisions that impact on them at school and elsewhere. For me this suggested a need for further exploration of attitudes to the place and purpose of research in teacher education.

Using the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) tool enabled a fast and efficient distribution for participants. Accessibility to the questionnaire, which was password protected for

increased security, was simple. Acknowledging the challenges that I had experienced when communicating face to face with Head Teachers during the first phase, and indeed the recognition of the multiple demands on teacher's time warned me and I approached the creating of the questionnaire with caution. I was able to draw upon a database of Faculty School Partners who worked alongside the faculty in the initial training of teachers.

And so with bated breath I clicked on 'distribute' and waited, and waited and waited. And there before my very eyes I became acutely aware of the dominance of a positivist research approach, the nagging inner voice that said 'but how many will you get?', 'what wonderful graphs you can make with the numbers', 'just think, you will be able to capture what teachers think'. Immersing myself again in dialogue with Deleuze, St Pierre, Mazzei and McCoy I enquired again...and continue to do so both then and now, about data and what that looks like and what you can do/could do with it when adopting a Deleuzian approach to analysis.

I play with the word 'Image' to test the water and see if this is really what I mean. Drawn to Deleuze and the idea of assemblage, a coming together of the messiness and complicatedness of matter, I see that 'image is not quite right, suggesting stability, a freeze frame – 'Image' just won't do.

'Bricolage' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972)..... maybe, but in trying to respond to my identity that feels 'already taken'... and I'm looking for newness, having found new

ways of finding new things. I like the idea of 'Collage' reflecting my early childhood professional identity and memories of creative activities with young children, but the 2-D-ness suggested by the term doesn't quite fit with idea I have of fluidity, interaction and interrelatedness. Taking time and cogitating the use of language, words and how they are both used and presented in text allows me to merge this with Deleuze's (1983) thoughts on cinema and his exploration of montage.

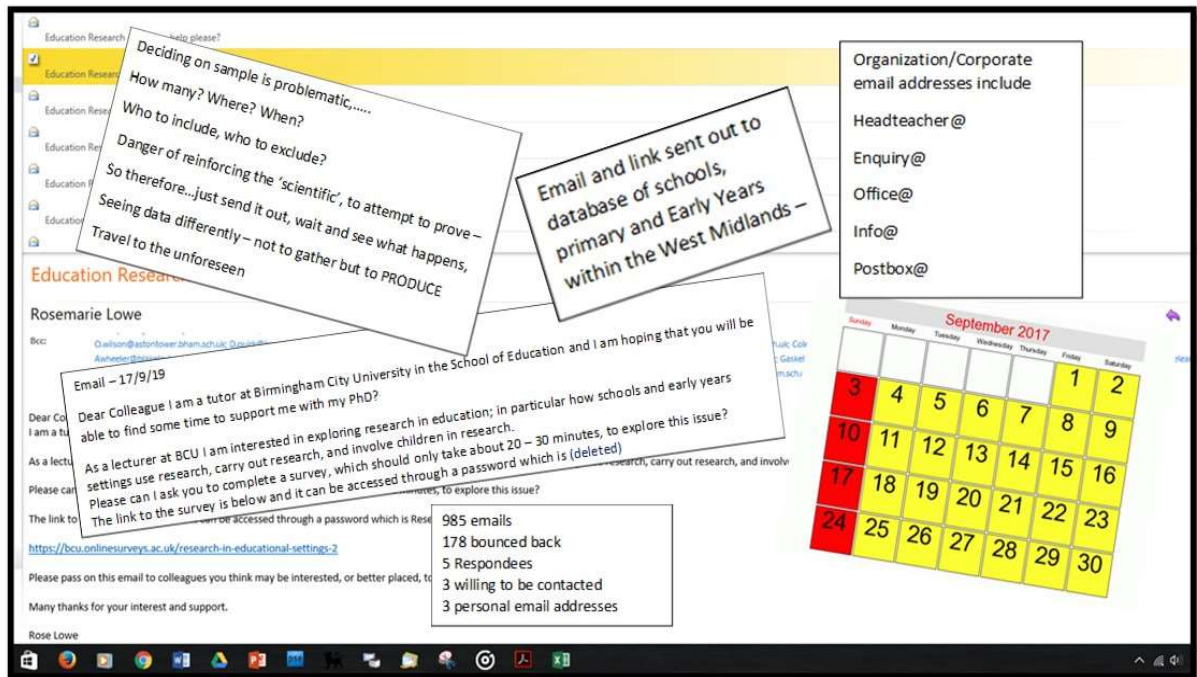
I settle with a new term: 'Graphotomontage'. If somewhere out there this term exists then I apologise for claiming it as my own, and stand corrected, however for now this feels new and encompasses what I want to communicate.

'Montage' meaning collection, whereby images form a blended whole while remaining distinct, 'photo' referring to the use of images, not being solely reliant on text, and 'graph' relating to the text, the graphemes within and including the font and visual representation of that text.

So moving on then to explore my first offering of my 'Graphotomontage', and to explain why I am positioning it here.

In one sense this might be considered to be aspects of findings and the data-set that some might call Survey 1; however this glimpse of my thinking, and once again using writing as a thinking process, Graphotomontage 1 will present a point of consideration in the Direction of Travel – to be called: STOP....Diversion Ahead.

To examine this at this point demonstrates the start-stop of my research journey, the messiness and importantly the thinking process behind my evolving methodology.



STOP.....Diversio Ahead

Graphotomontage 1 – STOP...Diversio Ahead

5.3.1 Diversio Ahead.

In trying to appreciate this encounter with the survey I adopted/adopt a reflexive stance, so I am therefore asking and thinking about...

What happened here.....?

What about me.....?

How did I influence the product from this experience?

Why silence from so many?

At this point, now, and then, I'm not measuring the return rate, I'm not thinking quantitatively in a scientific manner to measure the success of the questionnaire. I'm not aiming to be able to, based on numerical figures, say yes this is a proved result or this is a disproved result. I am though 'noticing the silence', the empty set. I am wondering about the lack of engagement in this concept, in this area of enquiry. I wonder if it is just me and the others -writers/academics- who are keen to examine and explore the role that children have in research, and not the teachers?

As I reflect, review, reconsider and revisit I attempt to make sense of it all by imagining the experience as a whole, mapping out the experience and taking a step back to examine the territory, so see how the land lies. My first Graphotomontage shows the product of this encounter, and I recognise that in doing so I make my first naïve attempt to analyse with Deleuze, the 'going somewhere' that follows such an encounter.

I immerse myself in my first Graphotomontage and am led along a path asks:

Do teachers see themselves as researchers?

Do they see the email invitation to participate and think this has nothing to do with me?

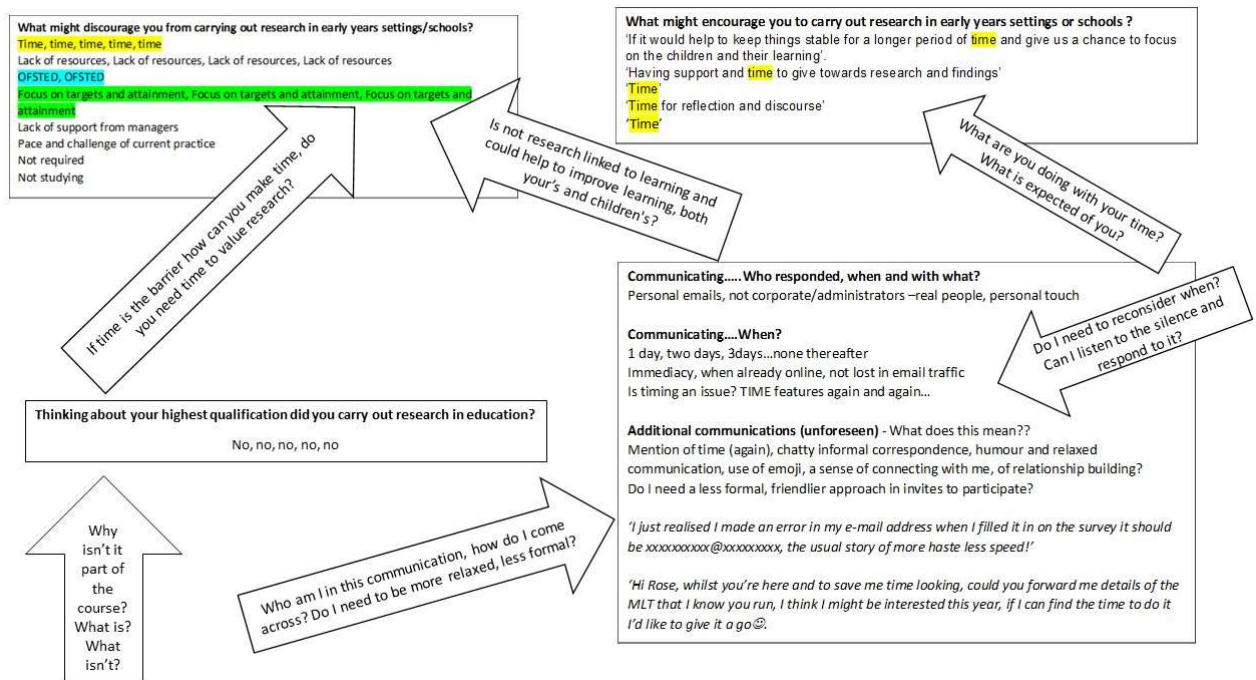
I deliberately sent the email invitations in September, remembering my own feelings when I was that primary school teacher at the start of a new school year. I remember the sense of optimism at the start of a school year, the feeling that this year I would achieve this and that, I would make a difference to this child, that child, those children, that family, those families. I would see how the children from the previous year were

growing, changing, continuing to be curious about the world and everyone in it, including themselves and learn about it/them, in awe and wonder.

But that was/is me...albeit some 25 years ago, I wonder how I would have responded to an email invitation to participate – would I be one of the few that responded or one of the many that ignored? What might have influenced my professional identity, and importantly what might be influencing teachers now?

How can I unpick the roots/routes of this response/non response?

Looking again at the data in dialogue with Deleuze, I re-focus, not in terms of focussing again on the same matter but by changing the lens I look differently at the data produced from this initial survey. I re-focus on the few participants who offered me a glimpse at their perceptions, values, and beliefs about research in schools and children as participants in that research. In trying to make sense of those responses I present Graphotomontage 2 in this Direction of Travel to be called STOP...Diversion Ahead: Why? Who? What?



Graphomontage 2 - STOP...Diversion Ahead... 'Why, who, what?

My Graphomontage 2 above shows how the teachers who responded to the survey encounter identified **TIME**, and resources, both being a barrier to carrying out research in schools, 'with' and 'on' children, resonating with my previous research (French, Lowe and Naseem 2017). Seeing **TIME** repeated again and again triggers a feeling that perhaps **TIME** is also an issue for me. The silence that is the empty set shrieks and shouts loudly to me, and makes me listen up and then think about the timing of when I sent out the invitation to participate in my research. Maybe the constraints that are part of the teacher's day to day role, the pressures of a start of a new year with new targets and new expectations means that few teachers are able to give me their **TIME** to respond to my probing of their attitudes to research? This means that a more

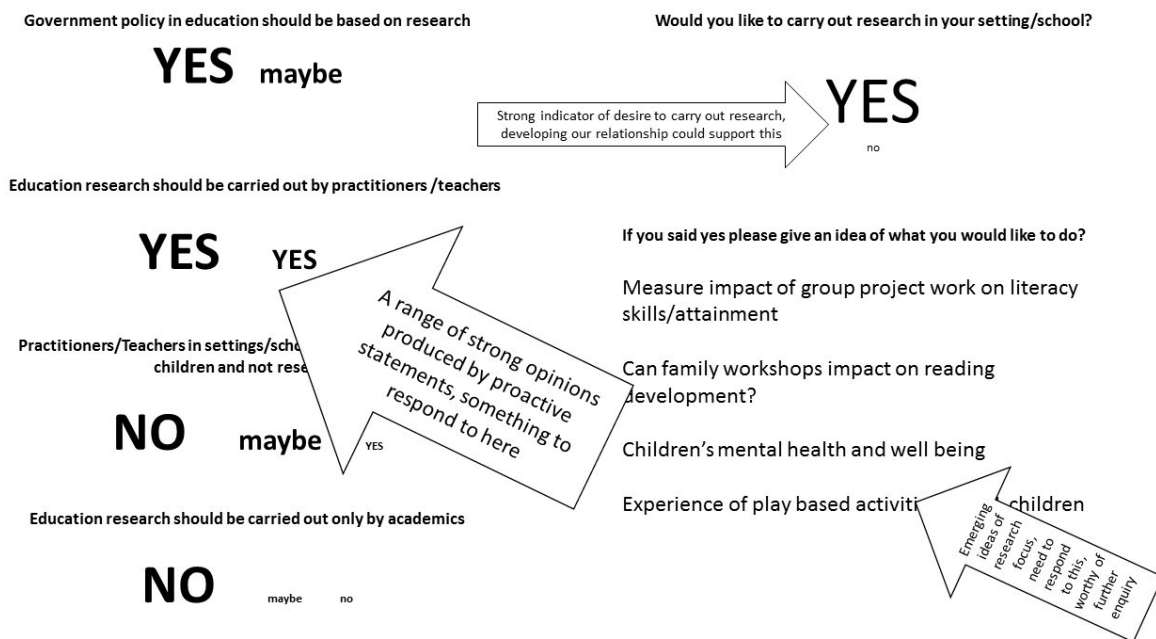
*careful consideration of 'when' is essential, if indeed there is another 'when'. The beginning of term would seem not such a good **TIME**, the end of term similarly may be met with fatigue and exhaustion.*

*Another re-focussing on the data produced draws me to consider the **WHO** of this invitation to participate in the research, again I consider the empty set, the silence in the lack of responses. Those who did respond to the survey did so from an individual, not a corporate email address. This makes me wonder, who is participating and who is not, and why not?*

Do the corporate email addresses just link to administrators, bursars, and office staff who are tasked with trying to filter the email traffic and have decided not to bother busy colleagues with something that may not seem to be directly linked to teaching and curriculum?

*And then there is the question that grows out of this silence; what place do individual relationships between participant and researcher have here? The silence would seem to be saying that relationships, friendliness and sensitivity is key, the communication from participants who gave me their time suggests a less formal and more relaxed approach is the preferred tone, certainly in giving messages but does that also mean in receiving messages too? The use of language in these few email communications from participant to researcher re-presented in *Graphotomontage 2*, would indicate a tone of camaraderie, of informal humour, relaxed yet respectful. If the silence from those who did not respond is saying this to me then I can't ignore and need to listen*

to it. So the dilemma becomes do I resend the questionnaire having listened to what the silence is telling me? I'm not sure, am I being pulled towards the conventional humanist qualitative position, not enough data, try again to get MORE. Hushing the conventional humanist qualitative voices in my head I return to the responses I had received to listen again and try to hear what is being said in silence, in order to make my decision. Graphotomontage 3 called 'A New Pathway?' re-presents the product of the encounter in relation to my questions.



Graphotomontage 3 – STOP...Diversion Ahead: A New Pathway?

5.4 Surveying Topographies of Practices - further encounters.

Reviewing the initial attempts to engage teachers as participants in my research, not just in an attempt to get more responses but as a direct response to listening to the silences that had come from the first invitation to participate, I made decisions about planning a further encounter/opportunity. Listening to the initial responses I heard the eagerness of teachers who wanted to carry out research, I recognised that doing so had time sensitivities, and that relationships with me as a researcher was also something to be considered.

Listening to this whisperings I made the decision to resend the survey during a half-term break, six months after the initial distribution. I rejected the idea of making a new data-base from the faculty held data-base of Primary and Early Years settings that worked with the School of Education. My thinking here was influenced by St Pierre (2010, 2014), I did not want to emphasise a Science Based Research approach of having a defined data set. I rejected the notion of adopting purposive sampling to justify the responses of the participants as being reliable and determined. According to St Pierre (2014) the conventional humanist qualitative approach which draws on Science Based Research, is 'monolithic and stifling' (2014: 3). She advises to forget 'normalising humanist concepts' (2014:10) such as data, and indeed sampling, and to start with the theory of analysis, which I will examine in more detail in Section 5.5 (pg 175 ff).

As St. Pierre suggests her approach is about asking questions that 'puzzle me' (St. Pierre 2014:3). I commit to a Deleuzian approach to analyse and question the relationship between teacher identity, and teachers' perceptions both of research, and of *Children-as-Researchers*. St. Pierre (2014, 2010, 2012) argues that conventional humanist qualitative methodology is incompatible to analysing with, for example Deleuze, and given my determination to do this, the idea of purposive sampling was not compatible, or indeed necessary in my case as I had accepted/accept that however many responses received was the 'right' number of participants. For this reason I used the same data base as before, being confident now with the idea of an empty set and being able to analyse something other than just positive active responses. In response to my analysis of the silence from the initial survey I felt that I needed to restructure the invitation email, opening it up more, communicating in the way that the participants who contacted me appeared to prefer. This meant a careful re-crafting of the tone, vocabulary, sentence structure and style that I hoped would be more inclusive and would recognise the creeping and tentative enquiries about research I had previously received and that I felt were whispering to me in responses to questionnaire. This in itself was an indicator of an ethical approach to the research which will be examined further in 5.7 Ethical Tourism (pg 185 ff). I wanted to also acknowledge in the invitation email (Image 8) that TIME was important and that I would be able to respond to their research ambitions if that was required.

Dear Colleague

I hope you are enjoying your well-deserved mid-term break! I am a tutor at Birmingham City University in the School of Education, you may know me from supervising Trainee Teachers students who have been placed at your school. I am hoping that you will be able to find some time to support me with my PhD?

I am really interested in exploring research in education; in particular how schools and early years settings use research, carry out research, and involve children in research.

I realise that you have many demands on your time but I would be really appreciative if you could complete a survey, which should only take about 20 – 30 minutes, to explore this issue?

The link to the survey is below and it can be accessed through a password which is (deleted)

xx

I know from talking to teachers that there are many of you who are interested in carrying out your own research and are also keen to get involved with research projects to include children. If you leave your contact details as part of the survey, or email me directly, we would love to work with you on this.

In the meantime thanks for taking the time to read this email and for considering taking the survey.

Many thanks

Rose

Image 8 - Email Second Questionnaire Encounter

NB Not a graphotomontage, just example of email sent.

5.5 Critical Analytical Framework.

With my rejection of a Cartesian position I have also rejected associated coding of said data. This approach draws on the work of St Pierre and Jackson (2014) who raise concerns about:

analysis that treats words (e.g. participants words in interviews transcripts) as brute data waiting to be coded, labelled with other brute words and even counted (2014:715).

My preferred approach will not be one of forcing qualitative data, in the conventional sense, into quantitative re-presentations. For me the data is not just the completion and so-called objective of the questionnaires, but rather the reflection and reflexivity of my experience of, encounters with, the actions and interactions associated with the process of designing, reviewing, receiving and analysing the questionnaires. For this reason I would argue that reflections on the pilot study as outlined in Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller*, and the reflections and reflexivity following the initial communication to teachers form not separate discreet data sets but are to be cross-referenced and taken holistically as one rhizomatic data set.

Each data set (using the conventional humanist qualitative research vocabulary) cannot therefore be seen in isolation but will be poured over, pondered and perused. Encoding the data produced through the communications and questionnaires, in order to demonstrate clarity and therefore validity is not the point of this analysis. This is because the conventional process of coding often results in ignoring the values, the unsaid and the living language itself (St. Pierre and Jackson 2014). Mazzei (2012)

suggests that through coding and separating out the texts, the words, meaning within the text become decontextualized and unhinged, suggesting that this results in an attempt to smooth out the data as opposed to a recognition of interrelatedness, entanglement and complexity that a post-qualitative approach aims to respond to.

St Pierre and Jackson (2014) promote the idea of starting any process of analysis with an understanding of a theory through which to view the data rather than starting any analytical process with decisions regarding a specific coding system. They suggest that analysing with theory, which for me would be analysing with Deleuze, is difficult.

There is no recipe, no guidance that offers a step by step approach, for this reason at this stage of writing I cannot outline the approach I will adopt. Having explored the work of those who have offered an insight into a post approach to analysis I will find my way of *becoming* a researcher of this data. The approach I will adopt/did adopt/am adopting 'cannot be easily explained' (St Pierre and Jackson 2014: 717). I'm reminded again of the nature of this thesis in terms of beginning, end, middle, beginning, middle and take some comfort in that being in the middle of things, like a rhizomatic approach there is no beginning or end (Deleuze & Guattari 1980).

Adopting Deleuze's rhizomatic approach will ensure that I avoid being purely deductive and/or reductive with the material data (Martin and Kamberelis 2013:669). My analysis will respond to not only what is there but what isn't, what is said and unsaid, the voice and the silence. In doing so it will acknowledge the feelings, the prodding and poking, that occurs when exploring the meaning of any data produced.

For example in Graphotomontage 4, I became particularly focussed on the two emails that were returned to me, the use of the emoji and the thinking that led to me scrutinising the tone of the emails, from both the participants and then the tone I adopted. The idea that this was a new line of enquiry, was worthwhile of thought. As MacLure (2013: 612) observes: 'On these occasions agency feels distributed and undecidable, as if we have chosen something that has chosen us'.

Additional communications (unforeseen) - What does this mean??

Mention of time (again), chatty informal correspondence, humour and relaxed communication, use of emoji, a sense of connecting with me, of relationship building?

Do I need a less formal, friendlier approach in invites to participate?

'I just realised I made an error in my e-mail address when I filled it in on the survey it should be xxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx, the usual story of more haste less speed!'

'Hi Rose, whilst you're here and to save me time looking, could you forward me details of the MLT that I know you run, I think I might be interested this year, if I can find the time to do it I'd like to give it a go.'

Graphotomontage 4 – Unforeseen Communications

5.5.1 Analysing Approaches.....muddying the waters.

Stepping away further from a conventional humanist approach to qualitative research, I recognise that any data from the questionnaires was not generated in isolation from

the pilot study, nor the initial invitations to participate. McCoy (2012) poses the idea of 'encounters' to explain the inter-relatedness of the methods, the connectivity of data and the messiness of doing research this way. As with Davies (2014) and St Pierre and Jackson (2014), McCoy (2012) rejects the idea of a simplistic approach to coding data but rather offers what Deleuze (with Parnet, 1977) referred to as 'being on the lookout', remaining open to the niggling voice that disturbs and becomes troublesome when emerged in the product of enquiries. Similarly MacLure (2013: 228) examines her responses to data and offers the idea of 'wonder' as an 'untapped potential in qualitative research'. She suggests that more 'wonder' from researchers would be a positive response to a rejection of the traditional methods of coding and analysis that form a core principle of conventional humanist qualitative approaches. Neither MacLure, nor myself, suggest that conventional approaches are invalid but rather they represent a different view of the world, a world that is more fixed and assumes more stability. Researchers adopting a Deleuzian view of the world argue otherwise (MacLure 2013). By aligning my ontological position with Deleuze I want to avoid fixing data rigidly in boxes or themes which would result in a possible misrepresentation of data, and potential misunderstanding of what is available to be considered and realised as part of any enquiry. MacLure (2013) argues that the awkward/unusual response to a survey question, the stand alone expression in a document is what needs to be responded to by the researcher. When this is noticed, '*on the lookout*', (Deleuze & Parnet 1977) this data is what MacLure (2010) terms '*glowing data*'.

Maggie MacLure warns that this approach is not easy and is often uncomfortable, more than just being troublesome. The uncertainties of a journey are exciting but

simultaneously worrisome. The task of analysing the product of questionnaire interactions will be just the same – worrisome as I don't know where they will take me, what will unfold and what I will discover. At the same time though there is an excitement as I imagine opportunities and surprises that could become apparent – providing of course I accept the invitation and listen to the sound of the glowing data.

5.5.2 Diffractive Analysis

Davies (2014) offers the idea of a diffractive analysis that allows the researcher to map thoughts and practices as interactive, and interdependent to, and of, each other. In my case this process is/was/will be about analysing, and mapping that analysis, that examines the interrelatedness, dependency and independence of teachers as researchers with their thoughts and perceptions, values and beliefs, about young *Children-as-Researchers*. The idea of diffraction is different to reflection and reflexivity. For example, reflection, which is the preferred method of analysis for a conventional qualitative research is, according to Barad (2007) about noting the similarities and the sameness, a theme or mirrored repeated patterns. A diffractive researcher however does not depend on coding to identify patterns but through immersion in the data finds the places of interruption and interference, identifying the interrelatedness of the data. Barad (2007) explains that the aim of the post-qualitative researcher is not to offer up what is already there. This is only possible if we assume that objects of investigation are stable.

According to Barad (2007, 2014), Davies (2014), and Taguchi (2012), diffractive analysis allows for the unpredictable and the newness of new ways of knowing to become apparent and also for the place where data interferes, (as in diffractive light waves), to be not just acknowledged but to be considered both in terms of what is there and what is absent. McCoy (2012) offers the idea that diffractive analysis opens up the data to allow a new sense-making that goes beyond the ordinary, the expected and the common sense, to come *into being*. In trying to make sense of a messy world that is not fixed it should be acknowledge that a diffractive approach is not cyclical in nature. By being on the Deleuzian 'lookout', for those differences/interferences we can not only examine how the differences come to matter, but can also see how they matter specifically in research practice (Davies 2014). It would seem that taking a diffractive approach to analysis is still not a common approach, those that have reported on it and justified it, for example Barad (2014), Davies (2014), Taguchi (2012), MacLure (2012) all suggest that the diffractive approach accepts not only the multiplicity of differences but, influenced by Deleuze, views those differences as being positive. They argue that this is the opposite of how differences are viewed in traditional interpretivist research where differences are identified in data as being contrary to the norm. However, viewing differences as being more representative of a lived reality, through diffractive analysis, I can see those differences as a positive, as an effect of the matter (data) responding to, connecting with and swerving as a result of interactions thereby going in new directions and unpredicted places (Taguchi 2012).

The key feature of diffractive analysis is that, unlike a reflexive approach, in this form of critical analysis the researcher is acknowledged to be part of the data; to ignore that

would be to have just partial data. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) propose a methodology which is against interpretivism. They argue that a conventional interpretivist approach which places the emphasis on, for example, the participants' voice in interviews, or written responses in questionnaires, ignores the social and cultural factors that influence and surround the participant. If through analysis the researcher also ignores these then the data can only be partial and incomplete. Similarly to ignore the impact and interference of the researcher on the participant, the research tool, the analysis would be to only offer partial data.

5.6 A Brief resting point – (Diffractive Self-Analysis).

I need to rest here, to gather my thoughts and consider where I am now situated on my research journey. Laurel Richardson's and Elizabeth St Pierre's view of writing as a methodology, together with Liz Honan and Dave Bright gives me the permission to take a breather. I need to look back on where I have come from and to consider the way ahead.

So..... I am an integral part of this whole experience, having been told from the outset that I needed to have more of me in the thesis I now, through this process of developing methodologies, see myself not only in the research but feel that I AM the research and that the research is ME. Using traditional research vocabulary, I offer myself as another data set. All this means that

.....I need to consider in my diffractive analysis not only the responses to the questionnaires, but the context and content and subtleties of the responses, together with the social constructions in the language used and not used.

.....I need to examine the meaning of self-identity, both mine and participants.

.....I need to examine the methods of communications, the characteristics of the vocabulary, the timing of the communications in order to see not just the holistic nature of the subject matter but to ask myself how I did/do/will see myself as a social agent in relation to Children-as-Researchers, and the teachers' values and beliefs of Children-as-Researchers.

.....All this is being experienced with a sense of urgency.

At this point I am experiencing Deleuze's idea of 'minorization', I come here offering a minor language as a researcher eager to disrupt the norms of thinking. To achieve this I need to use all my senses, mind, body and soul to become saturated in the data and to approach the analysis by reading it in order to listen to what it says, and through a mapping of intra-connections see where the voice, and silence, of the participants take me.

So I see that I am not just looking for answers any longer. As suggested at the end of Chapter 3: Dealing with Wanderlust I can predict nothing..... only that I have no idea where I am going to be taken.

My approach was/is/will be so much more than just presenting an alternative point of view, taking this diffractive approach is the ethical position to adopt. By this I mean that my responsibilities as a researcher are ethically binding and to ignore the interactions and silences, the minors, would be to ignore my ethical responsibilities to my research participants. This diffractive approach is one that listens to silence, responds to empty sets, and is on the 'look out' for what isn't there as well as what is. Whilst it may be the minority language, it does not mean that it lacks importance or is seen as less than. As I play with these ideas I come to appreciate that responding to the minority in this analysis will be empowering, as the diffractive analysis will invoke potential realities that are able to challenge the majority language and the hegemony.

At the beginning the idea of examining children's voice seemed pretty straight forward, the idea that there would be teachers/adults/gatekeepers who did not hold the same beliefs as I did had not occurred to me, I had no understanding that I was speaking a minority language. I had no awareness that not only was I approaching this from a completely different standpoint, I also had no awareness that as part of the minorization my self-identity would be challenged and changed throughout the journey of this research. This in itself is an illustration of an event, (I'm trying not to use the word evidence; it feels uncomfortable...), that relates to my understanding showing

that I am an integral part of the research. My changing identity is captured through these inner thoughts, this internal dialogue.

To be at this junction now, a kind of methodological lay-by, gives me some space to allow me to double check my professional and social responsibilities, (then and now, or now and then?), not just in following through the research but checking my approach was/is/will be an ethical one. Having explained my onto-epistemological stance in Chapter 4: Finding the Way, I believe I have here captured aspects of my ethical position. Karen Barad, of course adds ethics to form a triad of concepts that cannot be separated and need to be understood in relation to each other; ethic-onto-epistemological. For me there is an ethical responsibility to following the lines of flight that emerge from this diffractive analysis. To ignore the empty data set would be unethical, to only focus on the loud data that pushed to the forefront and not to respond to that which is in the shadows wouldn't be ethical. In the same way that a conventional humanist researcher has to make a commitment to not be biased and not to ignore data that may not fit in with a particular perception of the world, an ethical post qualitative researcher needs to be on the lookout for that which is hidden in the shadows and needs to be acknowledged. In this way it is, as Barad (2007) suggests, not possible to separate out ontology from epistemology and indeed ethics.

In a traditional writing of a thesis there is an expectation and indeed a requirement to demonstrate an ethical approach to the research. For me at this point I have a crisis of confidence. Throughout the exploration so far in this, and in previous chapters, I

believe I have offered a cyclical situated ethics approach. However given the enormity of the original task, to research Children-as-Researchers, to see how children can be active participants in researching their educational lives and to see how stakeholders view the idea of participation I believe I owe those children a thorough exploration of my ethical position. This includes how I adopted an ethical approach to the initial phases of the research with children research, and subsequently following the refocussing of aims how the adults in the second part of the enquiry were treated ethically.

5.7 Ethical Tourism – Respectful, Responsive, Research/er

In aiming to present a coherent summary of how the research was conducted/is being conducted in an ethical way I will offer here a record of how I fulfilled the requirements of my home institution as well as my professional and personal responsibilities. Firstly a summary of the documentation prepared and offered to faculty ethics committee with be considered. This will relate initially to the participants (children) and as part of the pilot/first study and then the participants (adults) in the second part of the study. These will then be analysed through a diffractive approach to consider how my ethical approach has been not just approved as part of an institutional process and policy but how it has been influenced by my onto-epistemological position and how that is an integral part of decisions made.

5.7.1 Permission to Travel- Ethical Approval.

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Birmingham City University's Faculty Ethics Committee. In addition, the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011, 2014) and the precepts of the Data Protection Act 1998 have been adhered to. Furthermore guidelines offered by National Children's Bureau were taken into consideration acknowledging the specific and special status of children in research (Shaw et al 2011).

The process of obtaining ethical approval involved preparation of a case to justify my approaches taken. Whilst there may remain some debate as to whether or not children deserve different ethical considerations to adults, (e.g. Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Harcourt, Perry and Waller, 2011; Kellett, 2010), my background as an Early Years practitioner and having carried out previous research with children as active research participants influenced/s me otherwise. Consequently I tackled the approval process firmly believing in the need and desire to demonstrate my commitment to UNCRC Article 12 – the Right to Participate. At the heart of this decision was the recognition and belief that children are social actors (James and Prout 2014), who are competent to interpret and report on their own experiences. Such recognition is explicit in Article 12 of the UNCRC which stipulates the right of children to express their views and to be heard in all matters which affect them. The initial aims of the study placed children at the heart of it, particularly the aim 'To elicit children's views of their right to participation in education'. This had a significant influence on the initial design and how the research was to be carried out. Children's rights to information and to be heard

needed to extend to ethical procedures (Alderson and Morrow 2011), including fully informed consent (BERA 2014, Shaw et al 2011).

My change in direction following the 'lines of flight' that were exposed through a diffractive analysis (although at the time I wasn't aware that that was what was happening), also required further ethical considerations. As a researcher this meant a subsequent application for approval from the FEC, but as a post-qualitative researcher, now strongly influenced by Barad and Deleuze, I can see that this is a further indication of the ethico-onto-epistemological concept offered by Barad (2007). Davies (2016) considers the place of ethics in a *post* era paying particular attention to Barad and Deleuze. She argues that for Barad the position on ethics is not about following a bespoke set of rules, ethical practice requires thinking beyond what is already known (Davies 2016). On the surface it may seem like Barad's position is very similar to 'situated ethics' (Ebrahim 2010) which promotes a cyclical approach to ethics, an ongoing response to the matter, the subject. Essentially situated ethics is about the researcher *inter-acting* with the subject, the matter and the participants. Barad (2007) though promotes the idea of *intra-action*. In terms of ethics then the approach is not just about being responsive to the participants but being aware of the *intra-actions* between subject, participant, culture, environment, social constructions, the non-human, and human participants in the research. This entanglement demonstrates again how Barad's term 'ethico-onto-epistemology' captures the essence of my stance.

For ease Table iii helps to identify how for both child and adult participants at different phases of the research ethical considerations were adhered to. This includes the process of gaining access, informed consent, with clarity of the right to withdraw, along with how I proposed to maintain privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, whilst protecting data.

Table iii – Summary of Ethical Considerations

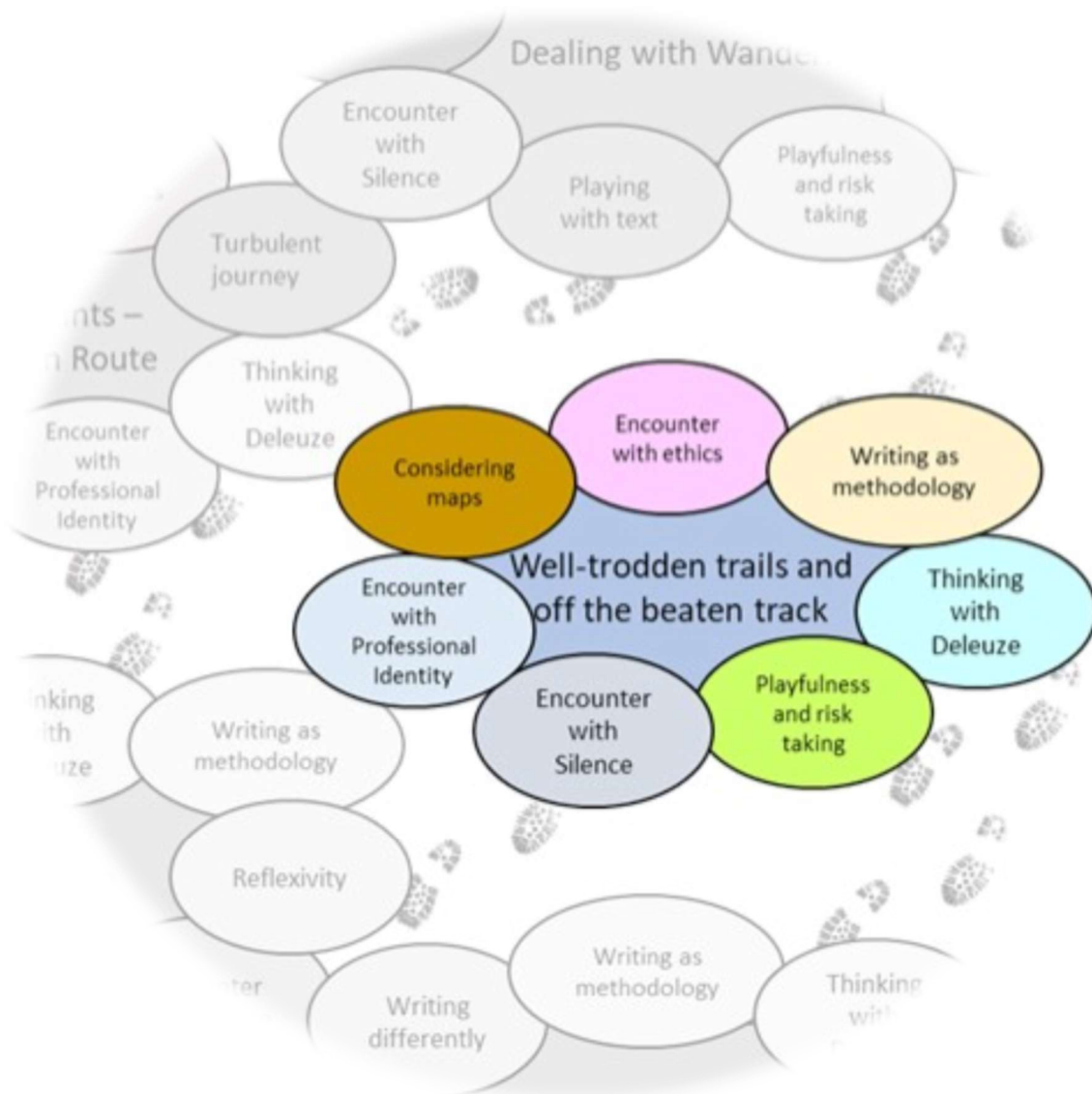
	Phase 1 & 2 - Children	Phase 3 - Adults
Access - Gatekeepers	Head Teachers – personal and professional relationships through aspects of my work in ITE. Initial contact through email, phone and individual meeting to explain project. Information Sheet prepared outlining aim and purpose, investment required, benefits, ethical process approved and rights of participants – teachers, parents and children.	Access to Partnership Database. Partnership agreement set up with faculty and partner schools identifies research as a potential opportunity and that schools may be contacted with regards to that, individual details of any research would be shared at that point.
Informed Consent	Phase 1 & 2 Introductory letter to parents outlining project and requesting permission for children to participate – indicated by signing and return slip to school office. Phase 1& 2 Introductory leaflet to children introducing myself and project– age appropriate images and text Letters of consent for children to sign Continuous checking with children at each stage they are happy to participate. Phase 2 – Checking with parents that children are happy to participate at end of each session. Pilot 3 – Secondary School Letters to Children and Parents Slip to sign for children and parents	Email and Opening page of online survey outlined aim of project, confirming confidentiality, right to withdraw, anonymity, and waiver for this if wish to have further information at end of project. By actively completing the online questionnaire, consent is given.
Right to Withdraw	Phase 1 & 2 Introductory leaflet and consent letters clarified right to withdraw at any time. Children reminded through subtle use of language their right to withdraw. Phase 2 reinforced this by adopting an ‘optional’ after school club.	Opening invite confirms right to withdraw from survey at any point.

	Phase 1 & 2 - Children	Phase 3 - Adults
Privacy	<p>Phase 1 Interactive session – children reminded that what we talked about was just for the research and wouldn't be shared with other children or adults and only referred to in my research</p> <p>Phase 2 Children reminded at start of session that this was not school and that we had a 'circle of trust' that meant we could speak openly about our work and that this remained within your Research Club.</p>	Opening invite confirms privacy, stating responses shared with supervisor for analysis and presentation of findings. Responses remain anonymous.
Anonymity	<p>Phase 1 & 2 Parents and children informed that real names (Children and School) would not be used when sharing findings, either in discussions or in written work.</p>	Opening invite confirms anonymity stating responses remain anonymous, opportunity to add email address for further contact if desire – this would be a waiver to anonymity.
Confidentiality	<p>Phase 1 & 2 Parents and children informed, initially through letters and leaflets, that anything discussed would remain confidential as part of the project. The exception being in terms of disclosure.</p> <p>For children this was explained by confirming that if they told me anything that I thought meant they were not safe then I couldn't keep it a secret.</p>	Opening invite confirms confidentiality with access to findings limited to researcher and supervisor, stating responses remain anonymous, opportunity to add email address for further contact if desire – including this would waiver anonymity.
Data storage	<p>Phase 1 & 2 Parents and children informed through introductory leaflets and letters of consent that the data gathered would be looked after and that there were passwords to protect files on computers so that no one else could see the data.</p> <p>At the end of the project all original data would be destroyed.</p>	Opening invite confirms arrangements for data storage, including password protected link to online survey, and hard drive that may store working documents as part of any gathering of analysis and subsequent findings.

Having outlined my post qualitative approach to finding data the following chapter moves to analyse this in order to open up the spaces with the concept of *Children-as-Researchers*.

6 Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track.

In which the data found on this nomadic journey is explored, conventionally and then with a post qualitative diffractive lens to reveal not just the expected, but the unexpected new spaces. By blurring methodologies the entanglements within those spaces become more apparent.



6.1 Where now?

Returning to Martin and Kamberelis' (2013) idea of post-qualitative research being about mapping new territories rather than tracing existing ones, I aim to consider the product of the questionnaires as a process of mapping, and in this way to create a holistic interpretation of the key issues under discussion. The idea of maps and journeys echoes a geographical understanding, and investigation of, the 'lay of the land', albeit from a human geographical perspective. In my thesis the 'lay of the land', is the territory of *Children-as-Researchers*, this curiosity resonates with the discipline of Children's Geographies. Colleagues from this field of study for example Horton and Kraft (2006), Horton, Kraft and Tucker(2008), Pyer (2008), and Hadfield-Hill and Horton (2014), aim to examine the places and spaces of children's lives, their lived experiences and how these experiences are influenced politically, socially and environmentally, and this is the definition adopted here. Within this disciplinary approach there has been a call for a 'slowing down' when analyzing data (Millei and Rautio (2017: 2), in order to look again at the ordinary, the routine and the familiar in relation to the lives of children. Millei and Rautio (2017) discuss a strategy whereby their data, in their case the event of an interview, is reframed and re-presented to elicit an analysis of the inter-actions between researcher and the children participants in order to ensure their findings are not simply a cleansed and sanitized version of data that answered specific aims. For Millei and Ratio (2017) this period of reflection was challenging emotionally as they explored reasons for ignoring some interactions and subsequent exclusions. They go on to draw on Michael (2012) who coins the phrase 'overspills' to identify the data that doesn't quite fit in, the irksome pieces that fall out

of the pattern, that provoke a possible 'other'. Influenced by Millei and Ratio (2017) and finding their work resonates again with MacLure (2013), and Deleuze and Guatarri (1980), I too will highlight and focus on the overflows as it is this data that 'glows' (MacLure 2013).

In finding the glowing data I adopted/adopt a process that Revsbaek and Tanggaard (2015) call 'analyzing in the present'. Their approach creates a narrative out of the responses gleaned through the range of interviews they conducted for their research. They achieve this through listening again, and again, to interviews; not just to format a transcript but to become fully immersed in them. In doing so they are not just acknowledging the role they have as researchers but are accepting and responding to it, noting and giving careful consideration and analysis to their emerging thoughts and understandings, recognizing their emotive responses and role rather than simply trying to code what was said; I am likening this to St Pierre's discussion of 'transgressive data' (1997), which she describes as being 'emotional data, dream data, sensual data, and response data- that are out-of-category and not usually accounted for in qualitative research methodology' (St Pierre 2010: 171). As such I aim to adopt/adapt this process as I analyze the responses to the survey in the moment in order to reveal the 'lay of the land' in my research.

6.1.1 Pause for breath.....

So for Line and Lene (Revsbaek and Tanggaard 2015) their responses to the transcription interview data becomes an analytical tool in itself and as I think about what this means for me I am reminded again of how Richardson and St Pierre (2017) propose that writing up research becomes a methodology, and for me this processes highlights my blurred methodological approach. This approach reinforces the notion that research is an active and emotional process; that the writing of a thesis is not just a record of the research but is a record of how the processes of the research are not separate from the researcher. For me the practical process of analyzing the responses from my questionnaires involved trawling and making notes of the data that glowed, at the same time noting my emotions, the questions that occurred, the problems I could foresee, the wondering and the irksome nudges. These were/are the musings and contemplations about the research that bothered and troubled me, often awakening me at night and can be likened to what Deleuze and Guattari (1986) refer to as the 'stutterings' and 'stammerings'.

The practical process I adopted to work with the data involved using rolls of lining paper for walls, that scrolled forward and backward, on which I could express myself freely, (

Image 9), pulling out key words, phrases and details from the questionnaires. As I went through this superficially random, even chaotic process, I began noticing links,

overlaps, connections and inter-connections, the developing documentation became busier and messier as the links and connections became more numerous.

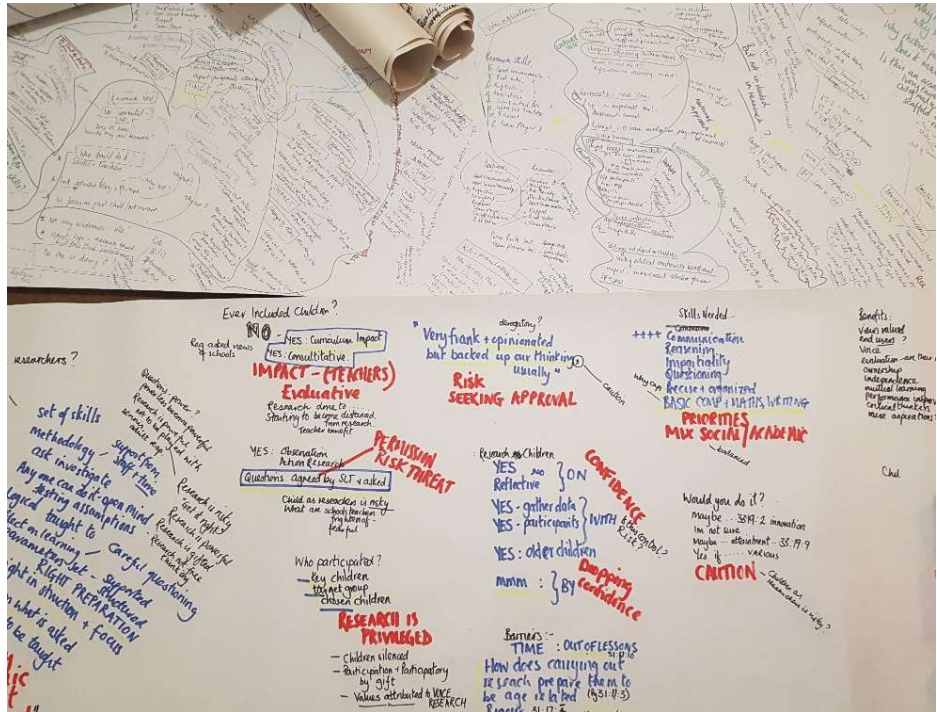


Image 9 – Wallpaper Analysis – Free Expression.

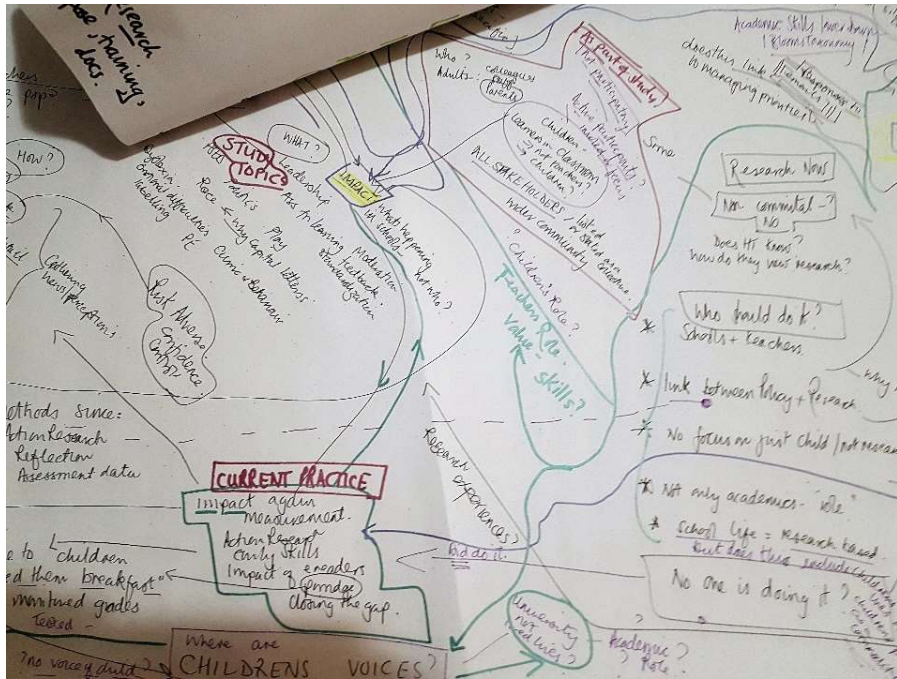


Image 10 – Wallpaper Analysis – Analysis in the present.

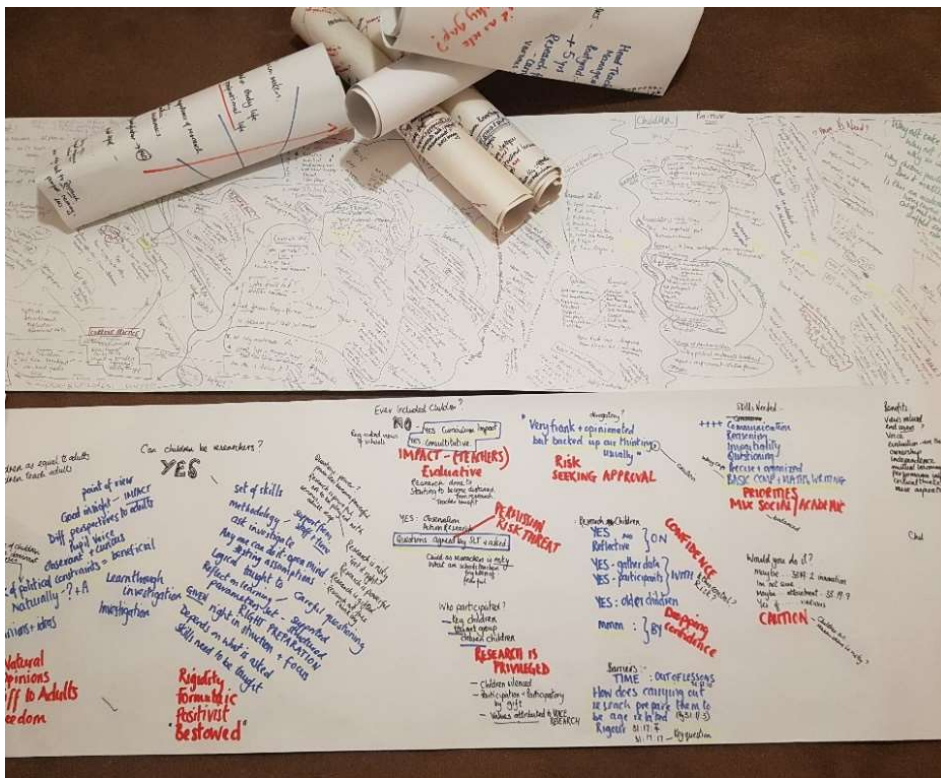


Image 11 – Wallpaper Analysis - Enough is enough.

My 'Wallpaper Analysis' demonstrated not just the complexities of my subject matter but captured a process of 'analysis in the present', (Image 10). Returning to these visual illustrations of my thinking on each and subsequent visits I found/find new data that glows, that wants to be noticed anew. As with many apprentice researchers I had initial concerns about quantity of my data and was afraid whether it would ever be enough, however frequent visits to my wallpaper told me enough is enough (Image 11). I cautioned myself against the fear of drowning in data and shushed the ideas that comes from phrases, punctuation, vocabulary and the voices captured in the questionnaire responses.

In trying to determine a way forward I am suddenly conscious that I am in danger of drawing together a thematic approach based on patterns and repetition, which I have already declined as I have rejected conventional humanist qualitative (CHQ) research. I need to quieten the CHQ voice that keeps coming to the surface, not to dismiss or to eradicate the value of it, but I find myself responding in a way so as to hush a persistent toddler, 'Not now lovely'. 'This is not your time', I want to say, in a gentle but respectful way. These ongoing internal dialogues demonstrated not just my involvement with the research but illustrated that I cannot be separated from this research, and that writing out my discussion with the data is indeed an integral part of the process of the research. However, in order to hear the persistent voices within the data I needed some level of organization and my natural instincts as an Early Years practitioners kick-in. Thinking of the many voices in the data, all of whom have valuable things to

say, I needed to facilitate some turn taking, not by finding themes but by exploring the data through layers or domains.

The constant revisiting of my 'Wallpaper Analysis' prompted me to respond to three domains, those being:

Children-Teachers- Research

Teachers-Research-Children

Research-Children-Teachers

These three domains are not just linked but overlap, react and inter/intra-act. Each cannot be analyzed, contemplated and considered in isolation. Whilst the teachers became the research participants the children are involved and considered at each layer and each new space is considered in relation to them, they are not in isolation.

I prioritized, for that is all I could do, the provocations that come from the questionnaires. I start with Children-as-Researchers – my initial starting point, the heart of the matter and the main aim of the whole journey. Imagining my analysis as a crystal, the following sections then are offered as a holistic interpretation, focusing on one face whilst not completely losing sight of the other faces, they each remain there but are somewhat out of focus, for the time being...

But....

.....the need to find ways of presenting the findings that remain true to my onto-epistemological stance still needs further consideration, and after time and thought I arrive at a new place, which will be offered next, where I can present data in a way that shows where we have travelled from and offers a direction, pointing towards new spaces.

6.2 Well-trodden routes and going off the beaten track.

Hunting through the data I easily find the predictable and expected, that which reaffirms what others have already noticed and found. Walking through well-trodden routes I can identify themes that emerge easily that I can gather together to offer a snapshot of the views and perceptions of this group of teachers. However I need to present and then re-present. I decide I will firstly offer those 'predictable' findings, by adopting a conventional humanist qualitative approach using traditional ways of presenting – grids, tables and charts, to present the 'predictable'.

And then, courageously I will take a bigger breath and venture off the beaten track....

....with each subsequent exploration of the data, through analysing in the present, I can see how the concepts, the nuances, tones and textures within, are not just cyclical and connected but have degrees of relationships with each other and within each other. I recognise that I need to find other ways of presenting this.

I consider the 'knots' that De Freitas (2012) offers as one way of using diagrams to illustrate and interpret classroom interactions, and draw on Deleuze's rhizomatic processes to understand this. The benefits of this as a tool to adopt and adapt could be to 'better capture the entanglement of interaction' (De Freitas 2012:557). The knot diagrams, she says, offer 'not a mirror of the event but an experiment or mould' (2012: 568); by this she means that the 'knots' she offers are not just a representation of the specific interactions in the data, but are representative of how those interactions have shaped other interactions, by doing so De Freitas captures the fluidity of those interactions. For me though, the image of the knot itself offers a two-dimensional perspective that, with my mind's eye, I find challenging to interpret. The changing rhythm of the data does not appear to be captured in the knots, the image of the 'knot' presents a finality of interpretation that in my thinking does not reflect the multiplicity of the concepts examined.

I move on not having found what I'm looking for yet.

Martin and Kamberelis (2013) appeal to me with their analogies of maps, I see the whole thesis as my journey and have already, acknowledging their influence, adopted the idea of maps through the use of associated vocabulary in my writing. Visually I do struggle to see the whole of the research as a mapped out entity, but I find myself attracted to the idea of maps and cartographies. I note the use of maps again by Elsa Lenz-Kothe (Higgins et al 2017) with her colleagues who illustrate their data gathering

tools and analytical processes, whereby the maps sketched out illustrate the 'individual momentary experience' (pg 28) that becomes the data for analysis. The idea that maps are never complete and are ongoing and responsive has resonance and provides another communication tool that adds another plane to my thesis writing, and draws me again to a new, for me, aspect of visual communication and images, and I will tentatively return to this later.

For me though the sensory pattern, rhythm, emotion and sound of words remains my primary focus. As I read Bronwyn Davies 'Notes on Anger: Some Observations' I am gently encouraged to enter the event she analyses as she ventures to present the thoughts and practice relating to anger amongst preschool children. Her narrative style captures the full rich description of 'moments of rage' (Davies 2014:738), which are analyzed and discussed, and offer the reader not only an example of diffractive analysis, which is the purpose of her writing in this context, but also a refreshing presentation of data that can be read in a way that aides the reader to see/hear/feel for herself the multidirectional, emergent intra-active inferences that Deleuze calls 'Being' and Barad calls 'the world' and its 'possibilities of becoming.' (Davies 2014:740).

So the presentation of what Davies uncovers and reveals through her research writing, in itself, reflects the ontological, epistemological and ethical stance she adopts. I feel the need to employ these qualities in my own work. Growing in confidence I revisit

other studies that have adopted ways of presenting data that go beyond conventional written methods. I am intrigued and welcome the creative and playful nature of alternative ways of presenting findings and analysis. I find myself though, rejecting cabaret (Hill 2014), and rejecting ethno-poetry (Owton 2017, Millei and Rautio 2017). My rejection of these ways of presenting findings and analysis is in direct response to my own emotions and self-assessment. I do not connect emotionally, I respond to the poetry and cabaret with awkwardness and an uncomfortable confusion, I do not recognize my ability to create song nor poetry.

Eventually I come to a place of realization where I understand that the need to express myself, and the voices of the participants through text, is best achieved by adopting the narrative /internal dialogue style of Davies (2014), which triggers both an emotional and intellectual response in me. I also need something more to allow the agentic characteristics of the entanglement I have uncovered (in the wallpaper analyses) to be felt and understood, as well as read and understood; a way which also portrays the enjoyment of this research experience. The accompanying map, I believe, achieves this. I offer a reminder of this now with promises to engage more fully with the map in the future (Cartographic Images – New ways of seeing.pg 364 ff).

In this mode of analysis the fixed moment of the written word, the finality of words committed to paper becomes the problem to overcome. I realize that I am in danger of repetition, of talking in circles, and whilst accepting that my thinking is not linear but triggered by those lines of flight, I still need to demonstrate progression and movement

to a new place and new thinking through 'other than' linear routes, or through 2-D presentations, whether they be maps, diagrams, images or narrative.

To understand where I am going though I need to see where I, and others, have already been. To understand the significance of the new spaces, the overflows, as well as the unsaid and silence, firstly I will offer the foreseen, what both MacLure (2013) and Millei and Rautio (2017) refer to as the 'expected'. Thereafter, with an alternative style of presentation and interpretation I will consider the new spaces of this journey, in doing so I am accepting the challenge of presenting and then re-presenting offered by Millei and Rautio (2017).

6.3 Children-as-Researchers within the domain - Children-Teachers-Research

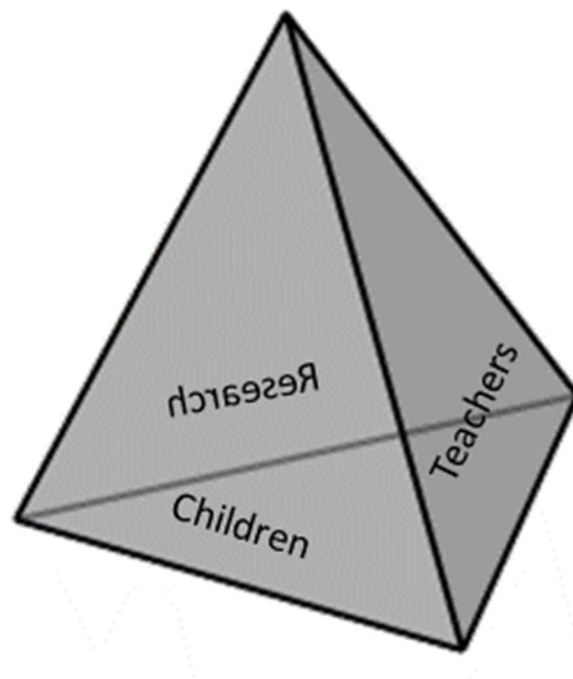


Figure 10 - Facet of Children within the domain of Children-Teacher-Research

Drawing on the idea of crystals and diffractive analysis Figure 10 above demonstrates how, whilst focusing in this section on children, the influences of teachers and research per se is never far away, although for this discussion is recognised as being slightly out of focus.

Within this section I will summarise findings from the survey; the headlines that emerged from a conventional humanist approach to my qualitative research data. The questionnaires aimed to explore how teachers perceived *Children-as-Researchers*, by examining previous, present and potential research opportunities. Teacher-Respondents were asked to provide overviews of when they had carried out research with children and how this had been achieved. Open ended questions gave opportunities to provide context, methodology and tools adopted and children's involvement. *Teacher-Respondents* were also asked about how they currently involved children as research participants, as well as possible barriers and what might encourage them to involve children in research. A final question asked for *Teacher-Respondents* to reflect on the potential benefits of involving children in research. The structure of the questionnaire was divided into three sections the first being about the participants themselves, their role and beliefs about research, the second being about research in general and the last being about children's role in research. The first domain to be examined here features children at the focal point whilst aspects of teachers and research in relation to children, waited in the background. This reflects that children remain very much at the heart of the original research aims and research design.

6.3.1 Well-travelled routes – Children as Competent Learners

As noted by previous authors (eg. Kellett 2010, Bucknall 2012, Bradbury-Jones and Taylor 2013), Teacher-Respondents present a positive perception of children, both as pupils in their schools and as research participants. When asked if children could be researchers, what the benefits of *Children-as-Researchers* initiatives might be, analysis of the vocabulary used demonstrates a positive discourse of children, with repetition of key phrases as presented in Table iv.

Table iv - Word Frequency

Phrase/vocabulary	Frequency
Open minded	5
Have a different viewpoint/perspective/opinion to adults	3
Curious/curiosity	6
Always asking questions/ask why	7
Children's voice	8
Naturally enquiring	2
Competent/Able to learn new skills/new ways of working	2

By considering the vocabulary used I can see that Teacher-Respondents reflect a dominant discourse of childhood that sees children as competent learners who have an innate ability to be curious and to question. This is not surprising given the dominance of the Piagetian theory of constructivism in Western Educational practice

and Initial Teacher Training courses (Terhart 2017). Rather than holding a deficit model of children in the tradition of the empty vessel to be filled, the Teacher-Respondents demonstrate, through their responses, both a belief in children's abilities, and also communicate a commitment to involving children in their own learning.

Teacher-Respondents also offer their perspective of children as learners, commenting that they are able and are competent, and that in relation to a question about children learning skills to become researchers they respond by saying:

'[This is the] best way for children to learn, through doing and investigating'

'Children can easily pursue a line of enquiry'

'Ceilings should not be placed on children'

'They have investigative skills and a desire to explore and answer'

'We are keen to involve children in the development of the curriculum'

This positive discourse of children as being valued as competent learners would initially seem to contradict those who argued that the idea of children being undervalued in society is a dominant discourse within western culture, whereby children are surrounded by protection and care and only understood in terms of their future adulthood (Postman 1995, Heywood 2001, Cunningham 2006, and Palmer 2015). This also challenges the culture of compliance extant in schools fostered by

Initial Teacher Training and government policy. However seeing that the schools by their very nature are about learning, and the purpose of the social environment within is to value and nurture children as learners, it is not surprising then that the Teacher-Respondents present a positive discourse of children as learners. Conceivably this positive discourse of children as learners could be said to reinforce a sense of identity for teachers as facilitators of that learning, in relation to the intrinsic rewards of the role itself.

6.3.2 Well-travelled routes – Children as Competent (Age Related) Researchers.

Regarding children as growing in competency with age as researchers is evident from the responses to questions asking if children at, Key Stage 2 (7 – 11 Years), Key Stage 1 (5 – 7 years) and Foundation Stage (3 – 5 years) could be researchers. Not surprisingly Teacher-Respondents indicated that they believed older children to be more competent in carrying out their own research than the younger children. Interestingly of the participants that responded, more identified that their teaching experience was in Key Stage 2 (73%), then in Early Years (Foundation Stage), (27%), which raises the question as to whether a lack of experience of working with the younger age groups limited the Teacher-Respondents' understanding of competencies of those younger *Children-as-Researchers*. This would begin to suggest a developmental perspective of children and childhood by the Teacher-Respondents. Again this would seem to fit in with the overarching values, professional roles, and understanding of children, that would be anticipated and has been

considered previously by, for example, Bucknall (2012), Kellett (2005, 2010), and Elton-Chalcraft (2011) as discussed in Chapter 3: *Dealing with Wanderlust* (pg 91 ff).

Similarly, when Teacher-Respondents were asked *if* children could be researchers, all respondees replied with an emphatic YES. They went on to explain their answers commenting that that:

'Research is based on a set of skills and those skills just needed to be learnt'

'Children were able to reflect on their learning and make assessments of that'.

'If they are taught the skills required they can do this'.

This suggests that Teacher-Respondents believe children are able and competent to learn these skills whilst indicating that they also believe children may not already have them. To this effect then *Teachers-Respondents* in this survey could see research skills as an extension of the children's current learning. Furthermore they go on to suggest that children can effectively participate in research in relation to the curriculum, noting in particular what they are capable of:

'Offering a good insight into my teaching'

'Children are more independent thinkers and can offer improvements to the curriculum'

‘Children would feel involved in the process and therefore respond positively to any conclusions drawn’

These statements would suggest not only a high degree of confidence in the Teacher-Respondents of children’s ability to be able to conduct research, but also a belief that their opinions and voices are worthwhile listening to.

6.3.3 Well-travelled routes – Children as Competent (Age Related) Research Participants

Those Teacher-Respondents who had conducted some research with children each had a curriculum focus and described those research projects as *‘Resources for Teaching Mathematics’*, *‘Participation in PE lessons’*, *‘Boys in Role-Play’*, *‘Reading Skills’*, and *‘Impact of eReaders’*. This suggests that Teacher-Respondents are looking for children to help them to understand aspects of children’s lives, specifically their learning experiences, within a school context, as previously identified by Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014) and discussed in the literature review (pg 90 ff).

There is also a sense from the Teacher-Respondents of mutual respect in comments such as *‘I learn from them as much as they do from me’*. The idea of children being listened to and the importance of that is well documented (for example, Krappmann

2010, Lundy 2007, Kellett 2010, Bucknall 2012) and was previously reflected on in section 3.5 Children's Voice (pg 84 ff). Teacher-Respondents also used terms such as 'Voice' and 'School Councils' when giving examples of how children had participated in research. Both concepts linked to the idea of children's participation, and tried and tested strategies implemented by schools as ways of listening to children and 'getting their voice out'; the latter, according to Tisdall (2015), being fully entrenched in policy and practice in UK schools. The quantity of research which focuses on *Voice* and *Participation* is acknowledged to be plentiful by, for example, Lundy (2007), Ruck and Horn (2008), Reynaert et al (2009), Payne (2009), so it is not unexpected then that Teacher-Respondents use both these key terms, and familiar strategies, when offering an insight into children as research participants. The examples offered by the Teacher-Respondents related specifically to children who are targeted, or are chosen members of a group or activity, but not usually in relation to whole school or whole class projects or approaches. As other researchers have noted, (Dalli and Te One 2012, Schnoor 2012, and Bradbury-Jones and Taylor 2015), the selection of children for these types of pupil-led activities is often based on their perceived superior academic ability or social competence which creates a stumbling block when arguing for the benefits of promoting research *with*, and certainly *by*, all children in the school. The same reluctance to include all children can be seen here when Teacher-Respondents comment that barriers to children becoming researchers would be:

'Basic comprehension, maths and writing'

'Communication and data handling'

'Negotiation, respect and organisation'

'Communicating and listening to others'

'Literacy and independence skills'

'Social skills'

For Teacher-Respondents children were most likely to be the focus 'of' research rather than as active participants. However, they felt very confident that children could carry out interviews, and be interviewed if they were given a chance to do so. The commitment Teacher-Respondents showed to this sort of activity placed children as co-researchers rather than researchers in their own right, what Kellett (2010) refers to as research *with* children rather than research *by* children. Despite Bradbury-Jones and Taylor (2015) suggesting the concept of participatory research with children is *de rigueur*, there was no evidence that these Teacher-Respondents have adopted this concept. This is despite strongly indicating an interest in research and strongly agreeing that children could be researchers; providing that teachers remained in control and were able to choose who the children as research participants would be.

6.3.4 Summary (Trip Review).

In summary then interpretation of the data produced by the survey in relation to *Children-as-Researchers* from a *Teacher-Respondent* perspective would suggest

that, in line with Kellett (2010, 2005), Bucknall (2012) Bradbury-Jones (2015), that they believe children could be competent researchers, given the right support. Teacher-Respondents express high levels of confidence in children and see *Children-as-Researchers* projects as being effective ways of empowering children and promoting the value of children's voice. Essentially then, Teacher-Respondents recognise that children's opinions matter to them, especially when evaluating practice within learning experiences. A further discourse of children evident through the Teacher-Respondents' responses to the questionnaires could be described as a 'developmental perspective'. Teacher-Respondents demonstrate the idea that through experience children move to the next stage of their development and that their ability is based on those experiences, of which there is a natural order. Older children are more competent than younger children in terms of being researchers as they have already had experiences that are necessary for them to undertake research. Teacher-Respondents identify literacy, and social skills, as being key to research success; without these skills children would not be able to carry out research effectively.

6.3.5 Going off the beaten track – Caution and Control.

BUT –looking closer I notice that a previously concealed trickle of caveats to the views expressed above grab my attention and glow....

Calling out for further attention.

I asked '**Can children be researchers?**'

They said:

'Yes....as long as the focus is *given to them*'

'Yes....with support to make sure it is rigorous, they tend to *go off track*'

'Yes....but depends on what is *asked of them*, sometimes their judgments are not accurate'

'Yesbut they need parameters *set for them*'

Punctuation demands attention here.

The ellipses tool..... integrated to demonstrate a further thought, not fully explained, but hinted at through that punctuation.

Denotes a passing of time, brieflya pause and a reflection, in this case to present a second thought, in these instances the caveat.

That caveat being a condition needed for children to be able to carry out research, which is not based alone on the children's ability to do so. The briefest of pauses, the briefest of silences seen here screams out at a bigger issue that demands to be scrutinized but which remains un-vocalised.

The pause (**'Yes...but depends'**/'Yes....with support ') - could this be a Deluzean 'stutter'????

This.....momentarily interrupts their choice of words... their flow of thought, and can be interpreted as a movement away from certitude... toward caution; so despite the expected and overt position of having total confidence in the children and offered previously... we see in the ellipsis/stutter a more cautious position... in itself denoting uncertainty.

Representative as a subtle move away from the assertion that children are capable of carrying out research....unless in certain ways.

What hangs questioningly is the 'context' for the children's research; this is the - 'yes, but'.

Teacher-Respondents (T-Rs) are happy for children to be researchers provided that investigation remains in the control of the adult, and that the research itself matches the understanding of research that the adult holds. The ellipses though is key in that the T-Rs may not acknowledge this explicitly to themselves.

The verbs used [*given, set, asked of*] as well as the use of the metaphor 'go off track' reinforce the desire to control, that there is a desired track to follow.

That is not to say that the control is necessarily about keeping the children down or dominating them but perhaps it hints at, or gestures towards, something less overtly threatening but equally managerial and controlling.

Given that the dominant discourse of children is positive, with talk of 'voice' and 'opinion', I would interpret that control in this context is more akin to the idea of supervising and maintaining security, which may not always be a neutral position.

However I am seeing the use of caveats and ellipses by the T-Rs as an attempt to 'protect' their perception of themselves as being 'for' pupil voice without going beyond a very safe version of what it means in practice. In this way they maintain the status quo, keeping everything smooth and steady, offering me, the researcher a soothing encouragement rather than provocation (i.e. that they are not on board with the idea of pupil led research) .

The vocabulary used indicates the worth that the T-Rs place on the idea of research, as something to be **given** to children, something to be bestowed, and as with many gifts this has value, particularly in the eyes of the giver. However it also belies a reluctance to overtly position themselves in this way.

How T-Rs view research will be explored later, but through this lens we can see the importance of T-Rs' perspectives of research on the peripheral... although at the moment this is just out of focus.

6.3.6 Going off the beaten track – 'SLOW Children at PLAY'.

The caveats discussed above suggest then that, as far as the T-Rs are concerned, there is a right and wrong way for research to be carried out. Most specifically, without the RIGHT support and guidance there is a sense that they believe that children would get research wrong.

The idea that children are *developing researchers* in the same way that they are developing readers, mathematicians and scientists does not seem to feature here. It feels important and I leave it here for now to bubble away, maybe to return to later... and I do... 7.7 Emerging Researchers pg 334 ff).

T-Rs refer to levels, assessments, targets and offer these as the main reason why *Children-as- Researcher* projects are not common practice in their schools, does this suggest they perceive children not as who they are now, but who they will be and what level they will achieve, and the small steps to be taken that the T-Rs need to plan to make sure the children achieve the goal, step by step, level by level?

And this then creates a niggling provocation and question in the research, why is it that T-Rs don't hold that same developmental perspective with regards to *Children-as-Researchers*?

Why such a different position in relation to *Children-as-Researchers*?

There is no mention of 'playing at research', no mention of experiential leaning, or of younger children being researchers in a different way to older children?

This seems to be something that is missing here and not considered, the absence of a developmental perception of *Children-as-Researchers* is stark. The 'glowing data' that calls out, by its absence and silence, to be picked over.

So to try and answer/respond through offering a possibility I wonder if this is because there is a shift towards the position that research *per se* lies in the domain of the adult world and not the child's world. Research, not being part of the child's world sits against a backdrop within academia that views the idea and ideal of *Children-as-Researchers* to be highly valued and desired, different but interconnected professionals viewing and understanding research differently, and viewing and understanding children and their world differently, and how they might research that world differently.

Understanding the child's world and how the T-Rs perceive children within the world of schools and education is not clear. I remember that the responses here have been from T-Rs who have acknowledged that they have included children in research...yet the focus of that research is not children themselves but a curriculum area, a resource, an approach – there is something missing, and that is research about children's lives, their worlds.

The would-be areas to be researched, as well as the already researched, remain fixed within the curriculum, often presenting as an evaluation of the T-Rs performance, research that promotes feedback on teaching and teachers.

Curriculum centric and not child-centric.

If the lived experience of *Children-as-Researchers* is only within a framework that the adults in the schools design, and their participation is limited to views and evaluations of their learning experiences then where is pupil-led research that can be said to be child-based?

And what of the curiosity of teachers to understand a child's ontology?

Is the T-Rs' idea that research is fixed within an adult world actually only adopted because they are unfamiliar with, and lack a curiosity about, the child's world, with the

exception of the inter-section where children fit into the world of the teacher as a professional?

How does curiosity entangle T-Rs' perception of children themselves or indeed their perceptions of research, the entanglement that at times results in strangulation, and suffocation seen by the holding of breath /the silence of the ellipse. For within the entanglement I am beginning to see maybe not a position whereby children's voices are heard, as T-Rs reported, but the opposite whereby children's voices are quietened in the silence of their ellipses/stutterings.

How else can this be explained, what alternative possibility may help to understand? This silencing and shushing leads me to think that this absence of children from research may actually not be about the children but the T-Rs themselves, or more precisely, how they see and understand child-led research. (Another line of flight, to be picked up later..... and reader it will be).

6.3.7 Going off the beaten track.....Risky Play.

I can see, 'glowing' in the data produced, the idea that T-Rs place great value on research, holding it on high, a pedestal in sight perhaps? Items of great value are often described as being high-risk in insurance policies and the T-Rs suggest that for *Children-as-Researchers* the risk factor becomes very high.

The value and influence that is attributed to research by the T-Rs is tangible. Research is about 'impact' (the words of T-Rs). The value of research seen in the power of research to make changes that matter is an interesting position offered in answer to the question '**Would your setting promote the idea of children as researchers?**'

I am drawn to key words here with one T-R stating

'Yes, it needs to be done *properly*, if there is no impact then it isn't *worth doing*'.

If research 'needs to be done properly' then *Children-as-Researchers* can be said to be risky if it isn't done properly...and that begs the questions what does 'properly' mean??

When adults determine the value, worth and 'correctness' of child-led research the research stops being child-led. What would children say, what would their idea of research look like, how would it be judged and assessed?

Teachers, and Parents, admire and respond positively, eagerly, and with encouragement to what may be deemed immature marks made by 'emerging writers', and accept their 'shopping lists', their 'message', and their 'greetings'. Adults look on in awe and wonder at paint splattered paper that represents the child's ideas and creativity as it drops upon the floor and adults remain unsure as to whether to view it

horizontally or vertically. Within child-led research could the decision of 'properly' lie within the child's domain?

Adopting guidance provided from adults who generate the framework within which children can be researchers, seems to be the strategy deemed necessary to reduce risk and ensure research is done 'properly'. The perceived need by T-Rs to ensure the research is done 'properly', as an adult would, with the so-called RIGHT outcomes becomes the barrier to *Children-as-Researchers* for the T-Rs.

Concerns are apparent about *Children-as-Researchers*, (or the T-Rs management of the child-researchers), getting it wrong, or getting the wrong outcome by doing research wrongly dominate, and in doing so reaffirms the 'respect' teachers hold for the idea of 'research'.

So the glowing data reveals, just off the beaten track, other paths to follow.....

Where is the commitment to learning to be a researcher through play, through trial and error, through experiential learning?

What does this mean in terms of T-Rs' understanding of how children are learning?

The myriad of questions and evidence of inter/intra-connectivity and relatedness between children, teachers and research rear up again, the business and messiness,

with so many pushes/ pulls in different directions, some turn-taking is required as I try to deal with one issue at a time. Not taking issues in isolation or in ranking order but rather to give justice and time and space to think clearly. I promise to retrace these steps and consider the T-Rs' understanding of how children learn later (7.7 pg.334).

(For now I gently ask that idea to wait its turn as now I want to delve deeper into the idea of risk.)

The perceived barriers to carrying out *Children-as-Researcher* projects are therefore visible, when one tries to look through the lens of the T-Rs. When initially considering *Children-as-Researchers* the barriers I experienced during the first phases of the research and documented previously can now be seen more clearly.

The silence in response to invitations to participate and the hesitancy I encountered and explored in previous chapters *The Weary Traveler* and *Finding the Way* now come in to focus, helped with the backlighting, coming from a recognition of the power and strength of the influence of risk.

To limit risk teachers want to provide structure and support and identify a focus for children. And furthermore teachers want to select key children, reviewing Bradbury-

Jones and Kellett explores this. Perhaps the idea of autonomous researchers may just be too risky, with little opportunity for teachers to oversee if this is the case.

T-Rs demonstrated a concern about status quo being challenged and see potential risks if children are allowed a free hand.

I read, hear and feel the sense of this when having to respond, albeit in my own reflections and deliberations, to a direct question asked of me, as the researcher, that I trip over when scrutinizing the questionnaire. A T-R in the survey responds to the question about barriers to carrying out projects with *Children-as-Researchers* by writing/asking

‘How do you know as teachers that the children’s evaluations of us are accurate?’

Rhetorical it may be but as a provocation I find myself trying to understand what is meant here, and what has unsettled the T-R, sensing both concern and anxiety.

One interpretation sees an aversion to risk as being interlinked with the idea of protection, which may be linked to a justification for surveillance and control. However the T-Rs are holding tightly a dominant discourse of wanting to protect and maintain

the innocence of children and childhood, which in itself is not uncontested but does resonate with the dominant, Western, romantic discourse of childhood.

Why would they risk damaging the innocent child or placing the intricacies of professional and personal relationships at risk by opening up opportunities to dig more deeply and perhaps uncover that which is not fully understood by children, or the wider community, and is best kept under wraps? That is not to suggest that the T-Rs want to cover up or keep children or the wider community out but rather they want to maintain the status quo, and that this maintenance role is the preferred course of action.

For those T-Rs who have involved children in research projects, through the act of taking control, teachers are providing a 'secure'/RISK AVERSE environment for those children to be successful, in so far as the teachers understand the purpose, design and participation in research.

Risk again features here when trying to unpick research that has been carried out in school. The purpose of research sits well within the aim of evaluation and measuring impact. Even this is deemed to be risky for one T-R who identified that the process for planning their research involved a series of questions to be asked of the children that were **'Approved by the Senior Management Team'**.

Seeking validation from senior colleagues adds a layer of protection for staff, and as considered in previous chapters '*The Weary Traveler*' and '*Finding the Way*' is another barrier for the sort of research that intrigues me. I wonder if for some T-Rs there is a glimpse of seeing children as a threat, professionally, especially if the research they consider is linked to evaluation and feedback. Cautiously then I see T-Rs oscillating between needing to protect children, and needed to be protected *from* children.

Pondering this further I ask the question of myself:

What it that schools and teachers are afraid of?

Is it all about accountability?

Another line of flight....

6.3.8 Going off the beaten track.....Children Silenced.

The idea of child- led research as a professional threat to teachers continues, taking me along previously unthought-of pathways of alternative interpretations. I wonder if the impact of the risk adverse behaviour is about protecting teachers not children.

The opening question in the survey '**Can children be researchers?**', is followed up by an invitation to T-Rs to explain their responses – positive responses included key

words such as **'voice'**, **'empowerment'**, **'opinions matter'**, all of which would be expected and have been discussed in section 6.3.3 *Well Travelled Routes – Children as Competent Research Participants* (pg.208ff). However, I wonder how these concepts are to be seen within a school context, previously not noticed, that promotes emotional protection, safety and security.

Overprotection limits opportunity and resilience (and here I wonder if this relates to children's or teachers' resilience? – one or other or both?).

Overprotection that can be interpreted as being suffocating and smothering. If this is the case then such an environment, for some T-Rs, rather than empowering children, disempowers children.

Where teachers are limiting participation in research by selecting children, taking control over structure and organisation, and the context of research, essentially the who, how, what, where and when of *Children-as-Researchers* then, despite the positive explanations offered by teachers so emphatically, children are being silenced and bounded in a particular sphere of action .

The irony is then that in trying to promote one kind of children's voice teachers are actually closing down the opportunities for voices to be heard in other more autonomous ways. In this way one could argue that children are rendered powerless by the protection of teachers.

However, if the risk adverse behaviour is interpreted as being the result of teachers perceiving the 'voice' of a child as a professional threat, and a challenge to the status quo, then the converse may be true. In such an environment it may be the children who actually hold the power at play to promote and provoke different ways for teachers to consider their learning, their individuality, and their opinions with regards to the learning environment that is school. The power they hold then may in itself be the threat that teachers are responsive to, and this is seen in the empty spaces of *Children-as-Researchers*.

In the survey, when T-Rs were asked if they had ever involved children in research the dominant response was NO. At a surface level this could be understood in relation to the previous discussion, and the dominantly held discourses of childhood held by teachers.

But....

It is interesting however to look at how children have been involved in research from the few participants who responded 'YES'.

Those few T-Rs who identified that children had been involved in research, specified that this was in action research and in evaluations of curriculum activities or school environments.

The T-Rs' narratives told of children being involved but in a way that research was done to them, the concept that Kellett (2010) refers to as research *on* children as opposed to *with* or *by*.

In this case the idea of the aim of children's involvement in research being to explore, examine and understand the lives of children becomes more distanced.

The opinion or experiences of children who participated in research that the T-R's reported on, were not at the heart of the research question; rather it was the role-play area, the playground, the library that is the focus of the research.

'Children were asked to review the playground and to give some ideas about how it could be improved'

'My research with children looked at children's engagement with the role play areas and how boys and girls used this space differently – we then made changes to encourage boys to get more involved.'

'We looked at how they [children] liked new maths games and how these impacted on the lower achieving children.'

In the narratives of the T-Rs the impact of a lesson or theme planned becomes the focus of investigation. Children's views are part of the T-Rs data sets but only in so far as they are triangulated with adult views, with quantitative data that measures attainment and progress, levels, grades and outcomes.

For one T-R the focus and impact of breakfast cereal on children's attainment is at the heart of the research. I wonder how this, even given in isolation, can enable an understanding of children's lives. The underlying thoughts are that this approach to research benefits teachers and schools rather than children, individually or collectively. In an era of accountability maybe this isn't surprising but the aim of research being about measuring impact on children is dominant and calls to be revisited in other domains... Teachers-Research-Children.

The value of *Children-as-Researchers*, according to the T-Rs can be seen not just in the comments about children's 'voice' and 'empowerment'. In response to the question asking about outcomes of previous research with children that had been undertaken I am drawn to this comment, the sense as well as vocabulary and punctuation.

They backed up our thinking, usually!

We are familiar with the idea of children's emotional needs being met through secure attachments with key persons, maybe what we see here is that need reciprocated..?

In this way this T-R is seeking affirmation from the children that they care about and that are the focus of their professional love/care. Seeing the comment in isolation our attention is drawn to the use of punctuation, in this case the carefully posed... comma, followed by the word USUALLY.

Taking this need for affirmation with the earlier discussion about risk I can notice hints from the T-Rs whose levels of confidence are waning as they explore their values, perceptions and beliefs, initially about research and research with children, but in doing expose their underpinning perceptions of children and the complexity of their relationship with those children.

.....Later I wonder what would happen if children didn't back up the teacher's thinking? Would this be riskier or dangerous...for children...or for those who teach them??

6.4 Spaghetti Junction.

Living in the Midlands the image of Spaghetti Junction is such a familiar one, being a child of the 1970s this was something I dreamt of seeing; the name, the news coverage of this feat of engineering and transportation intrigued me. Well at this junction then, this spaghetti junction, I am conscious of not just the messiness but the troublesome task of trying to unpick this concept of Children-as-Researchers. I am creeping now towards the trail that will take me a step away from the children, I am not excluding children from my analysis, and they remain there, but are for the time being placed in my peripheral vision. And become slightly out of focus.

*Relationships and professional emotional resilience become another line of flight that teases and beckons, and certainly one that I had no awareness of before starting the research and commencing on this journey of discovery. So I started with the children as my focus and came to a place whereby I realised that teachers, and their professional identities, was now the necessary direction of travel, a new route to be explored. I come to appreciate that the key to understanding Children-as-Researchers is to more fully understand the role of teachers who bestow this highly valuable gift of research. Phase 1 saw me identify the need to attempt to answer the question **‘How is children’s participation within the field of education understood by children and other stakeholders?’** And whilst teachers were always in my sights I started this journey considering other stakeholders, exo and macro system level (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The secret pathway revealed in the undergrowth at this junction takes me along a completely different voyage of discovery, that being to problematise both teachers’ roles, and identities, in child-led research, which is where I propose to travel next.*

6.5 Children-as-Researchers within the domain – Teachers-Research-Children

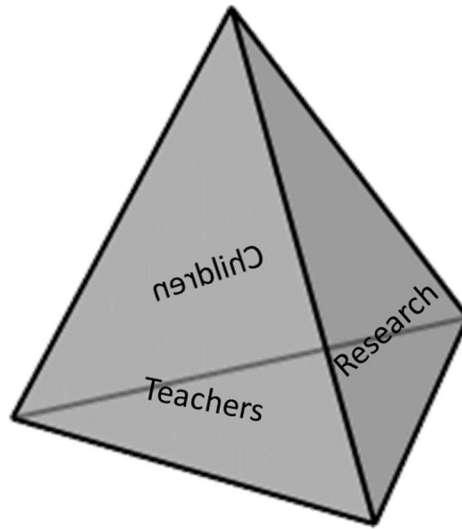


Figure 11 - Facet of Teacher within the domain of Teachers-Research-Children

Adopting this diffractive analysis allows me to move now to a different facet of the wider subject, (Figure 11), having examined the responses to the survey to glean an understanding of the how Teacher-Respondents viewed children in relation to research, the focus now moves to Teacher-Respondents themselves. How do they see their role and responsibility in relation to *Children-as-Researchers*? What skills do they believe are necessary to be an effective practitioner and what is the relationship between these and the skills of being an active researcher?

To ascertain this, questions were posed asking about the Teacher-Respondents' research experience, both current and previous, as well as asking them to identify what would support them in carrying out research with children, and additionally what barriers might be present. Perceptions of the skills needed to carry out research were gleaned through using scaled responses to statements. A series of skills and attributes were presented and Teacher-Respondents were asked to prioritise them in relation to the necessary skills for effective practitioners, and later skills needed for effective researchers. The responses to the questionnaires will now be explored adopting a CHQ approach in order to offer the headlines.

6.5.1 Well-travelled routes – Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities ...Children and Research (IMPACT).

Initial analysis of the data produced showed that nearly all Teacher-Respondents, (92 percent), have management roles in their schools. When asked to elaborate on this the Teacher-Respondents identified themselves as Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, Executive Head Teachers and Senior Managers. A small number of classroom teachers responded, 4 in total. The high proportion of senior leaders who responded suggests a positive response to the idea of research in schools, at least from a management perspective. However the analysis offered here will include data from both managers in schools and teachers who are classroom based in order to give further insight to any interpretation.

Nearly all Teacher-Respondents, (95 percent), had had experience of conducting research previously and identified that they had carried out a research project linked to their highest qualification. For most of these respondees (nearly 70 percent) their highest qualification was completed more than 5 years ago. However, in comparison very few respondees had carried out any research since completing this qualification, only 25 percent. As has previously been noted the Teacher-Respondents' main focus of research appears to be evaluative, with a direct aim to evaluate practice or measure children's progress. This focus on IMPACT is clear, with that term being used frequently when outlining previous research or in relation to ideas about potential research. Teacher-Respondents offered the following potential research ideas:

'Effectiveness of intervention programmes on English and Mathematics'

'Impact of setting and grouping'

'Impact of international dimensions in primary schools'

'Impact of arts education on pupil confidence and attainment'

'Impact of new curriculum on self-esteem and progress in the less able'

The same message about the importance of IMPACT on teacher's roles and responsibilities can be seen when considering some of the issues regarding both barriers to carrying out research, and the benefits of research in schools. For example

in answer to the question '**What might encourage you to carry out research in early years settings or schools?**' Teacher-Respondents referred again to the importance of 'impact' by answering:

'Assurance that there would be impact'

'If it would inform practice'

'If it has a positive impact on children learning'

'If it would change things, improve how we teach the children'

It would seem that IMPACT is a dominant discourse within a school environment, and the suggestion is that teachers are using this term to describe not just their performance of research but the value associated with that research performance, which is directly linked to children's progress towards identified targets. The dominance of the results driven agenda within schools in the UK has been well documented and discussed, particularly by Ball (2003, 2005, and 2016). The performativity agenda, directly linked to the idea of impact is one that demands that teachers respond to targets and evaluations. The emphasis of *Children-as-Researchers* in relation to evaluation of teachers' performance can be seen to be a natural extension and perhaps a direct result of the performativity agenda. Ball (2003) argues that in response to performativity teachers develop a 'passion for excellence' (pg 215). This craving for excellence and self-interest, as a result of performativity, may also explain why participants ranked *Team Player* as being least important when

asked to rank a series of skills and attributes needed to make an effective practitioner (See Figure 12).



Figure 12 – What makes an effective practitioner?

Ball (2016) presents the idea that schools are governed by numbers and that measuring and monitoring techniques, which are dependent on numbers, have become the strategies that underpin 'reflection and representation' and are used to demonstrate the quality of education. He discusses the idea that this dependency on numbers, measuring and monitoring, is a clear indicator of the dominance of neoliberal ideas in schools which are underpinning school policy. Ball (2016) also argues that the dominance of neoliberalism is also evident in how teachers respond to the performativity agenda itself. In addition he argues that teachers can be seen to be investing in themselves in order to not only improve performance, but to link this performance to financial reward. Whilst ultimately it is managers that make final decisions about any financial reward, teachers are, according to Ball (2016), seen to

be responding to the environment they find themselves working in. These financial rewards may take the form of performance related pay or additional funding for specific subject areas or projects that have a personal interest to individual teachers, hence there is also a financial motivation. This link to financial reward and investment is seen in the survey when participants responded to the question:

'What might encourage you to carry out research in early years settings or schools?'

Teacher-Respondents identified that finances, or a lack of, contributed to their decision as to whether or not to carry out research when they replied as follows:

'Time limited grants to support staff.'

'Funding.' (3)

'Funding and seeing there is a beneficial end point.'

'If I thought results would cause changes to be implemented - studies are sometimes done and they have no impact because the cost implications of rolling out change are too much.'

'Support, funding, or even minimal finding to make the research cost neutral to the school.'

The rise of neoliberalism in an educational context, as indicated in these responses reflects the accountability agenda which may well be the dominant discourse in education that in itself acts as a barrier to research. As schools have become

constructed to produce highly individualised professionals, the idea of undertaking research with, or without, children may well prove to be too risky, not only in terms of evidencing positive, or indeed negative outcomes in relation to children's performance, and by default teacher performance, but too risky in terms of investing money, time, and energy. Davies and Bansel (2007) argue that as a result of the rise of neoliberalism in education, financial outcomes and cost effectiveness become a priority over social welfare and that 'all aspects of social behaviour are rethought along economic lines' (pg. 249). The idea of cost effectiveness, or indeed as cited above 'cost-neutral', is upper most in the minds of these leaders and managers in schools. Whilst finances appear to be limited another key resource, TIME, as a commodity, is also considered to be limited, because of other priorities, and acts as a considerable barrier to conducting research with children in schools, and will now be discussed.

6.5.2 Well-travelled routes – Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities ...Children and Research (TIME).

As previously noted when considering the design for my research, TIME played a significant part in decisions made in distributing the survey. Not surprisingly TIME became a major theme when analysing, through a CHQ approach, the data produced through the survey. When asked '***What might discourage you from carrying out research in early years settings /schools?***' Teacher-Respondents identified that whilst external factors such as OFSTED inspections and focusing on attainment were

barriers, the most significant barrier was TIME. As can be seen by the chart below (Figure 13), 31% of Teacher-Respondents identified this to be the case.

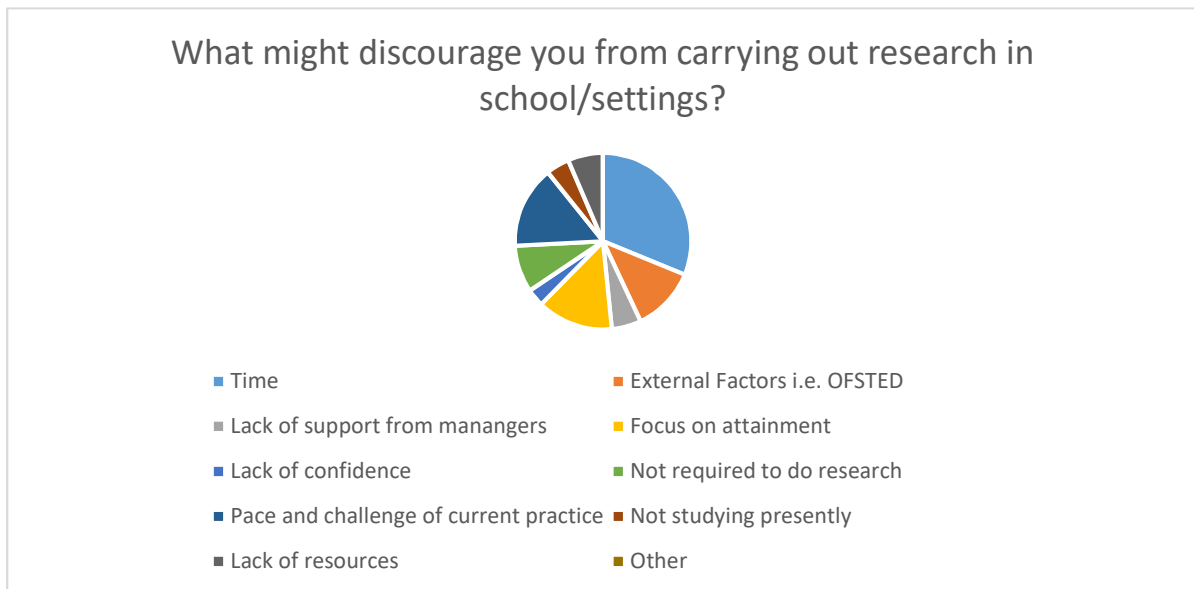


Figure 13 – What might discourage you from carrying out research in school/setting?

The 'barriers' pre-selected in this question had all previously been identified by pilot survey participants and replicate the difficulties in carrying out research as previously identified by Cordingley et al (2003), Edwards and Fowler (2007), Leat, Lofthouse, and Reid (2014), as well as Reeves and Forde (2004). In a similar way to Newman and Mowbray (2012), and discussed in the literature review, managing time can be said to be a priority for Teacher-Respondents in this survey. Newman and Mowbray (2012) identified that for teachers in their study 'time almost became akin to a member of the group as it dominated conversations' (Newman and Mowbray 2012:461). This same feature is replicated here, with time being identified as both a barrier to carrying out

research and as something that prevents Teacher-Respondents from promoting *Children-as-Researchers*.

Noticeably, 68% of Teacher-Respondents identified that having 'more time' would encourage them to carry out research in early years settings or schools, reflecting also the idea that research has a 'add on' value in schools. With 58% of Teacher-Respondents also identifying that a lack of time was a barrier to *children* designing and carrying out their own research. For example barriers to children designing and carrying out their own research were identified as:

'Time, pressure of the curriculum, testing government targets'.

'Time in the curriculum to make mistakes, revisits etc.'

'Time in the curriculum'. (2)

'Time'. (4)

'Time out of lessons'. (3)

'Time restraints in terms of coverage of the national curriculum'.

'Time, curriculum constraints (overloaded)'.

Interestingly all Teacher-Respondents indicated that they valued research and believed it to be what should be underpinning practice and pedagogy, although it would seem that the external pressures, perceived or otherwise, resulted in very few

teachers identifying themselves as being research active within the last 5 years (25%). Whether this is more about the demands of the teacher's role or their attitudes to research in general, or indeed both, is not clear at this point but will be examined subsequently. What this does show however is that the Teacher-Respondents have a clear and confident ability to voice the importance they place on delivering the National Curriculum and to see this as key to their role. Significantly though the Teacher-Respondents, remembering that the majority in the study are leaders and managers of schools, identify *Children-as-Researcher* projects as being *additional* to the curriculum, and are not interpreted as potentially being an *integral* part of the taught curriculum. In order to understand how Teacher-Respondents perceive the curriculum, and principles relating to pedagogy, a further scrutiny of data produced by the survey has revealed some interesting perceptions of pedagogy and curriculum.

6.5.3 Well-travelled routes – Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities ...Children and Research (CURRICULUM, ONTOLOGY, AND PEDAGOGY).

As has been previously considered (Beycioglu, Ozer and Ugurlu 2009, Newman and Mowbray 2013, Leat, Lofthouse and Reid 2014, and of course the seminal work of Stenhouse 1981, teachers' experience of research is predominantly in relation to curriculum planning and development, and this position is replicated in the survey. Added to this though is the Teacher-Respondents' position as they prioritise the delivery of the planned curriculum, particularly given the dominant view that sees

Children-as-Researcher projects as sitting outside of the taught curriculum as an extra curricula activity.

When considering attitudes to carrying out research, in addition to TIME being the main barrier, Teacher-Respondents also commented on the constraints of the curriculum, and indeed the emphasis being on children’s attainment in relation to the planned curriculum, as can be seen below, (Figure 14). As such this is illustrative of a powerful discourse within the school environment.

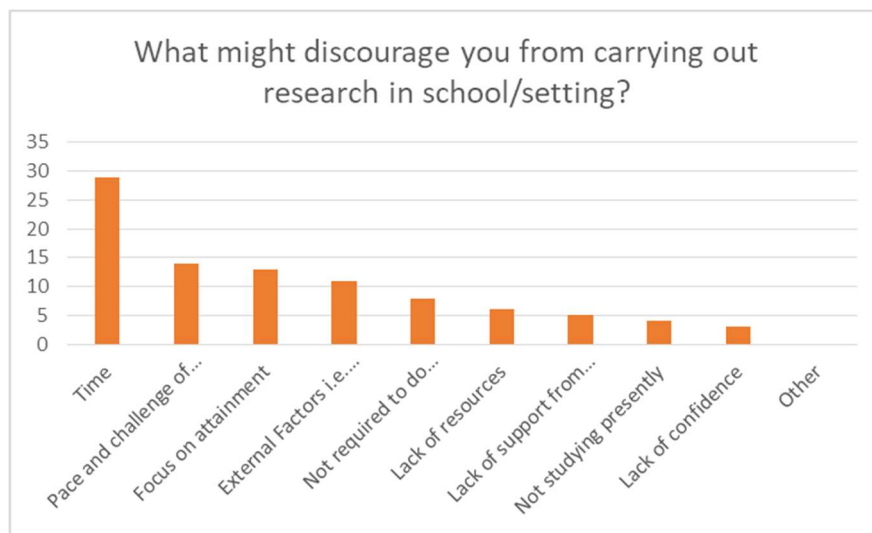


Figure 14 – Factors that discourage research in schools/settings: ranked order

The idea of attainment against curriculum areas and the emphasis placed on this in schools can be seen again in response to the question ‘**What, if any, would be the barriers to children designing and carrying out their own research?**’ Teacher-Respondents demonstrate how they believe the curriculum to be burdensome:

'The curriculum is already overloaded –how does carrying out research projects prepare them to be age related as dictated by the DfE?'

'Demands of the curriculum and timetable.'

'Coverage of the National Curriculum.'

'Restrictions by the curriculum in the educational setting.'

Similarly when asked if their school would promote the idea of *Children-as-Researchers*, Teacher-Respondents replied:

'Not sure this fits in with the curriculum'

'The current curriculum does not allow for this sort of activity'

'We would be keen, however as the curriculum stands there is little time to do this sort of thing properly.'

In other questions Teacher-Respondents identified that children involved in research projects would benefit in a number of ways, mostly linked to *'Voice'* and *'Empowerment'*, but also in relation to other skills such as developing the ability to ask questions, literacy and numeracy skills, working as a group, social skills, problem solving, and communication skills, as well as critical skills. It is therefore interesting to note that Teacher-Respondents seem to be placing more importance on subject knowledge rather than broader, what may be called transferable skills, that they themselves have identified children could develop when taking part in *Children-as-*

Researcher projects. Whilst these skills are within the National Curriculum itself they are not seen here to be as important as other aspects. Given this I would argue that the Teacher-Respondents generally see their role in relation to children's learning as deliverers and facilitators of a given curriculum. To understand what Teacher-Respondents are saying here about their understanding of what, and how, children learn, I will draw on the work of Anne Sfard (1998) who considered the use of metaphors to understand, communicate and discuss more effectively theories of learning and knowledge.

Sfard (1998) offers two opposing metaphors in relation to learning and knowledge namely the 'Acquisition Metaphor' and the 'Participation Metaphor' (see Table v). The Acquisition Metaphor, (which she abbreviates to AM in order to reduce 'tiresome repetition'), she argues, is offered to reflect the idea of 'knowledge acquisition' and 'concept development'. For her, this is evident when we think about (in this case), the child's mind as an empty vessel to be filled, and thus the child becomes the owner of said knowledge and concepts, and is able to use them in multiple contexts. For Sfard, AM implies 'there is a clear end point to the process of learning' (1998:6). The Participation Metaphor (PM) alludes to the idea that the learner, the child, is participating in various kinds of activities rather than in learning concepts. The idea of PM is that the learner is not just taking part in, but is *part of*, the new learning experience. It has to be said here that this is not the same as active learning nor social constructivism where learning is deemed to be part of a social interaction (Vygotsky 1978). Sfard argues that there can be social elements within AM just as there could also be active learning experiences. However, the participatory element of PM

features the idea that learning is more about movement and developing new learning and ideas, a move forward to new understandings not just knowing existing pre-defined concepts. Teachers therefore are not the providers of knowledge or facilitators of learning but are expert participants learning alongside the learner. Essentially these metaphors illustrate an ontological position that help to understand the practice of learning and teaching.

Table v – Metaphorical Mappings
(Sfard 1998:7)

The Metaphorical Mappings		
Acquisition Metaphor		Participation Metaphor
Individual enrichment	Goal of learning	Community building
Acquisition of something	Learning	Becoming a participant
Recipient (consumer), (re-) constructor	Student	Peripheral participant, apprentice
Provider, facilitator, mediator	Teacher	Expert participant, preserver of practice/discourse
Property, possession, commodity (individual, public)	Knowledge, concept	Aspect of practice/discourse/activity
Having, possessing	Knowing	Belonging, participating, communicating

For the Teacher-Respondents the emphasis placed on the delivery of the curriculum would indicate that the Acquisition Metaphor would best illustrate their ontological

stance, which I would also argue is directly linked to the dominance of neoliberalism within education policy and practice in schools. This is because it is knowledge as a commodity that is measured and valued, either as social capital for children, or as would seem to be the case for the Teacher-Respondents, as a measure of capability and unit of performativity (excellence) for teachers. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Teacher-Respondents place such a high value on the curriculum and adopt what Sfard identifies as the Acquisition Metaphor. Similarly, it is also not surprising then that there was a reluctance for Teacher-Respondents to move towards variation in the curriculum that would involve *Children-as- Researchers* projects that may in themselves be more akin to an ontological position that Sfard might describe using the Participation Metaphor.

Moving on from ontology to pedagogy, Teacher-Respondents demonstrated an interest in evaluating pedagogical approaches when they suggested the following may be the focus of any future research:

'Effectiveness of intervention programmes'

'Impact of setting and grouping'

'Arts education and its effect on pupil confidence'

'Learning identities/dispositions'

Given the responses above there is little detail about what particular pedagogical approaches are of interest to Teacher-Respondents, although these broad outlines present a curiosity about *how* children are learning and not just *what* children are learning.

Further examples of future research ideas relate broadly to curriculum areas:

'English – teaching creativity in writing'

'History for lower achievers'

'Mentoring to improve maths knowledge'

'Hand-writing and creativity'

This would seem to suggest that Teacher-Respondents are predominantly interested in curriculum areas, and that whilst they are curious about pedagogy this is in relation to specific subject areas. This prioritising is also evident when Teacher-Respondents are considering the skills and attributes necessary to make an effective practitioner whereby the rate 'Good Subject Knowledge' significantly higher than critical skills, such as being reflective and analytical, and the softer, personal teaching skills, such as rapport and being a team player (see Figure 15). This can also be said to indicate the dominance of the Acquisition Metaphor as proposed by Sfard (1998).



Figure 15 – Skills/Attributes for Effective Practitioners

Teacher-Respondents were asked if children *could* be researchers, with no one responding negatively. When asked to explain their response Teacher-Respondents gave explanations that would indicate their pedagogical position in terms of their understanding of how children learn. For example:

‘They have enquiring minds and are curious, we need to respond to that.’

‘Best way to learn...children learn quickest in first few years through play and asking/doing.’

‘Independent learning.’

‘Children have a desire to explore and find answers.’

These reasons would suggest that Teacher-Respondents are familiar with, and adopt, values linked with active learning, constructivism and social constructivism, all classical theories of child development linked to the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky that have dominated education practice in UK the latter part of the 20th Century. In itself this is interesting as it would suggest that whilst the Teacher-Respondents have a clear recognition of the positive attributes of *Children-as-Researcher* projects this is diminished by the dominance of the AM as a teaching metaphor and ideology of participative practice is not an integrated feature of the pedagogical approaches adopted by, or considered to be worthy of research by the Teacher-Respondents.

6.5.4 Summary (Trip Review).

The pressures of accountability and performativity would seem then to impact not only on Teacher-Respondents' self-identity but on their ontological stance and pedagogical decisions and, in this instance on their perceptions of *Children-as-Researchers*. The data from the survey would suggest that Teacher-Respondents are risk adverse, both in relation to *Children-as-Researchers* and the outcomes of any potential research, as well as how that research may be used to make judgements about teaching practices and the effectiveness of pedagogical decisions taken. This added to the idea that teachers place such importance on the delivery of the curriculum, through which they are judged and valued as a profession, it would seem then that the reluctance to

undertake *Children-as-Researcher* projects, whilst in principle is something to be valued and promoted, in practice this becomes more problematic.

6.5.5 Taking stock and preparing to go off the beaten track.

I ask myself is this what is expected? Mindful that I am not about confirming existing knowledge but I am about new knowledge and new ways of revealing that knowledge I sit back and reflect on my response to this consciousness.

A pause then.....

Continuing with my diffractive approach I am urged by the data to explore further. There must be something more that I am missing here. I'm called again to move into a different direction. I revisit the responses that the Teacher-Respondents who are also leaders and managers in the schools make, I have a feeling and an emotional response that in terms of current practice in schools there is a gradual closing down, a diminishing commitment to the idea of Children-as-Researchers...

...Whilst I can see the (perceived) danger in terms of teacher values and the risk linked to performance, I continue to hear the raising of the draw bridge, closing of the door, the locking of the gates and see this group of teachers not just as leaders in their schools but gatekeepers.

By this I mean not only in relation to engaging participants, adults and children in research, but gatekeepers to learning and development.

As decision makers, managers are leading the learning for their school, and subsequently are gatekeepers to what is learnt how and why. If research is not perceived as an integral part of the curriculum then there will be no research.

Having already explored the role of gatekeepers in relation to ethics and as an integral part of onto-epistemological decisions explored within the chapters 'Finding the Way' and 'Creating a Map' I was not expecting to consider this again.

That is not to say I had predicted the findings and analytical process in terms of where I would be going but my thinking was pulled up sharp to hear the data insisting that this concept is worthy of further positioning.

The glowing data turns me in many directions, once again I am conscious of repetitions (oh the irony) of muddling myself so need to find a way of organising my emotive and cognitive responses to the data produced, for my benefit and for the benefit for the reader too.

I move hesitantly forward in an attempt to capture that which is hidden from view, wondering if this is something that is SO well hidden as it remains in plain sight all along?

6.5.6 Going off the beaten track.....Gatekeepers to Research PARTICIPANTS.

In trying to see the development of professional identities of the Teacher-Respondents I look again. I'm trying here to work out who they are, and how do they see their role in all of this? Why have they agreed to take part in the survey as a piece of research and in doing so appear to value it, yet I have a sense now that despite what I'm told there is a fear of, and a mistrust towards, the idea of research? Or a mistrust towards the researcher perhaps?

Most Teacher-Respondents aligned themselves to leadership and management roles and as the recipient of the original email and invitation they then made the decision that they felt able, or best placed, to respond – which was what I asked of them.....

Completing the survey themselves makes me wonder if this is in fact an indicator of their gatekeeping role.

As gatekeepers to research about Children-as-Researchers, these leaders and managers take the responsibility to protect potential participants, the other teachers who were invited to complete the questionnaire.

A gatekeeper will only allow the research to proceed once they feel satisfied that participants will not be at risk by taking part. By taking on the task of responding to the survey themselves, rather than forwarding to their staff I notice an extension of this role and the associated responsibilities.

These gatekeepers could be protecting their staff who are perceived as being over stretched and as a result are vulnerable, for this is what the use of words such as 'overloaded' to describe the constraints of the current curriculum would imply.

The emphasis they place on accountability, impact and outcomes tells a story of a workforce who are stressed and as such are vulnerable. This buffer role taken by the leaders and managers may well explain why so few class based teachers responded.

As gatekeepers they may not be denying the research but are making decisions about who participates, by responding themselves they clearly value the idea of the research and maybe found it stimulating and engaging, but they are not passing that invitation/experience on to their staff.

That is not to say that the decision not to forward emails to staff was an obstructive decision, but rather a protective one. Given that time pressures, and the stress of the day to day work load of teachers has been previously noted, and furthermore vigorously stated, with CAPITAL LETTERS and exclamation marks [!!!] emphasising views communicated, perhaps the decision not to promote the survey with colleagues equally emphasises the huge responsibility felt by Leaders and Managers to protect, in this instance their staff...

(So does this need to protect also explain the reluctance of the leaders to be involved in the initial stages of this whole piece of research when I was seeking involvement of children, as explored way back in Chapter 2: 'The Weary Traveller').

But why? Yes, I see the need to protect but is this protection at a personal level for colleagues who are tired and stressed or it is about protection of something else...

Noting the tangled web of the issues here I have a sense, having re-considered previous ideas which suggested that my Teacher-Respondents perceive Children-as-Researchers projects as being risky to children's attainment and outcomes, according to their dominant ideas about what is valued as learning, that this may also be the conscious/subconscious roots of the decision to protect; children, staff, and furthermore, institutional reputation.

Forwarding the opportunity to respond to a research questionnaire about attitudes to any aspect of school life requires an element of TRUST. In this case does the gatekeeper TRUST the researcher to report findings accurately and honestly, does the gatekeeper TRUST the participants that are being given permission to respond, to do so impartially, and finally does the gatekeeper TRUST themselves to be able to respond to whatever the outcomes of the research turn out to be.

I consider all of these questions, and see that trust/mis-trust and the state of relationships between each stakeholder need to be acknowledged. TRUST as a foundation reduces any risk that may be present. Do these T-Rs as leaders of schools TRUST me?

.....They don't even know me, they know my professional reputation as an employee of my faculty so have a sense for TRUST towards the university and my professional background and identity.

I wonder, if in my previous role as a leader and manager in school, would I have taken that risk as a gatekeeper, to actively promote my school's participation in a research project such as this??

So risk continues to be tugging at my sleeve, layers of risky business within this domain too.

And whilst not necessarily taking a thematic approach to analysing the data I am noting that there is a flag that waves danger and I think this could be a point of intra-activity whereby risk is connected, not just to research, but to reputation and professional identity as well.

Clearly the role the leaders and managers play, and their perspective of research in this study, is important and will be considered more fully momentarily, but at this point I am drawn again to the absences. As very few classroom teachers responded how can I begin to understand their specific position? Scrutinizing data again looking for the 'overspill' I see a clearing amidst it all.

I find the stories of two T-Rs who identify themselves as neither a leader nor manager. When probing the responses they make I can see a glimpse of how the impact the perspectives held by leaders and managers in relation to Children-as-Researchers is played out.

*Not looking for a pattern nor consistency, but being responsive to the role that the leaders and managers have as gatekeepers to research participants as such, I am drawn to these responses to the question: **'Would your school promote the idea of Children as Researchers?'***

One narrative reveals the shared enthusiasm, coming from a head teacher to staff:

'Probably! (Very forward looking Principal, recognises that these are important life skills'.

The other story discloses the role that leaders and managers have in relation to giving permission to adopt new ideas such as Children-as-Researchers:

'Maybe, but support from senior managers is key'

I continued to wonder about these leaders and managers' levels of interest in research; as leaders they do not just model and show the way but have a gatekeeping role, giving permissions, authorisation and consent to develop research, and of course

Children-as-Researcher projects. The power at play within their gatekeeping role is tangible in these responses and reflects the staff perceptions of this role.

6.5.7 WARNING.....professional identity at RISK.

*As I review again the responses gathered I begin to feel the enormity of the task here, in trying to understand and come to some sort of position when I can offer an understanding - I am starting to feel entrapped. In trying to unravel I can only see frequent knots and a blurring of concepts, contexts and concerns. Emotionally I begin to sense the frustration again that I experienced at the initial phases of the research; that gatekeepers did not see the place of Children-as-Researchers as I did. Now though I am beginning to feel that maybe teachers in general do not see school based research as I do, let alone the place for children within that ideal. I need to respond to this some more to try to unpick how my Teacher-Respondents see their role in their schools, to see if I can find a place for research **within** that role, and to capture that space and prepare that space to be inhabited with inquiry.*

Without further consideration I am in danger of developing, out of frustration, destructive feelings about my own professional identity and roots. Without further searching I run the risk of distancing my professional self even more from colleagues in schools, through disillusion to disassociation. Recognising in myself that this

departure from my professional roots is not a welcome outcome, I start off again to re-examine, re-consider and re-assess my encounters with the Teacher-Respondents.

6.5.7.1 Afterthought.....

[.....and as an afterthought this chosen way forward is about the rise and fall of emotions which whilst not a separate event in itself, is recognised here to demonstrate and acknowledge how I am an integral part of the thesis].

6.5.8 Going off the beaten track.....Gatekeepers to PROFESSIONAL ROLES.

*The T-Rs tell me that they strongly believe research should not just be carried out by academics and Higher Education Institutions, they believe in it and have had experience of it, so it comes as a surprise then when so many indicate that they are not currently doing research, and few have undertaken research since studying. Potential barriers have been identified earlier, re-visiting the comments I am becoming curious about how teachers see their role. I look again at how they replied when asked: **‘What might encourage you to carry out research in early years settings or school?’***

This time it isn’t about TIME or constraints of the curriculum, it’s about how teachers see themselves or otherwise, a comment that provokes me states that:

***'I am happy for others to come in and do research but we haven't
done any ourselves'.***

I hear this T-R telling me that research is not the role of the teacher, it belongs to someone else.

As a minor comment, that may not have been acknowledged if one was taking a CHQ approach, this throwaway remark attracts me.

If initially teachers are saying they strongly believe that practitioners should be carrying out research but they don't do it, is this driven by a stronger subconscious belief that they do not see research as part of their role?

Revisiting that statement again I see for the first time links to emotions – the idea of being HAPPY in one's professional role.

A turn of phrase perhaps, but nevertheless an emotional response when other responses remain emotionless.

Happy for someone else – not me.

Happy with the idea of research but not for me, or indeed us to do it.

Happy in one's professional identity perhaps?

I sense in this comment a lack of confidence in getting involved in any research process, as well as an assertive statement that research is not the role of the teacher.

In trying to explain why that may be the case for this T-R, I am drawn to the influence of emotions and the lack of emotional buy in to research in relation to the teacher's role.

Being so aware of my own emotional responses to, what has become a very personal research journey, I become more aware of the T-Rs emotional responses here and consider again the subtleties of this phrase.

Professionally I see myself as an educator and an apprentice researcher, who is growing in confidence following an acceptance of the emotional impact of this research journey. Accepting my emotions and the integration of them into the research, entirely unable to separate myself from the data, the analysis and the writing, is all part of the realisation of my ontological stance.

I'm reminded of other emotions considered in relation to children/teachers/research, discussed previously – (trust, relationships, confidence, risk and resilience) - the

complexity of the research focus becomes apparent again. It remains impossible to consider these domains, the place of research in understanding children lives, Children-as-Researchers and teachers' roles in relation to these concepts, without acknowledging the internal experience of teachers, their emotional responses and how strong such emotions are in relation to professional identity, and roles and responsibilities.

I wonder if the lack of active research projects in the study is more about the T-Rs finding emotional fulfillment in other aspects of their role, and that the challenges identified so far become emotional barriers to research and not just organisational or pedagogical barriers. Furthermore, as the T-Rs are so risk-adverse, for the reasons discussed above, they are unlikely to see engaging in this sort of research as conducive to happiness in their role, rather doing so would inevitably be a source of anxiety and unhappiness.

Additionally, and as I am discovering there is always something else.... I wonder how the role of the teacher, what is expected and what is not, is decided at local level by the dominant discourses in the school and how much is defined by their pre-training and the standards and qualifications they achieve as their rite of passage to become a teacher?? A teasing line of flight appears, at this stage I'm not sure whether to follow or not?

The suggestion that carrying out research is not part of the teacher role is seen elsewhere in the T-Rs responses, with subtle uses of vocabulary, almost an explanation that *'I don't do research because I am not expected to'*.

Consider the comments here that say:

'I'm not studying at the moment'

and

***'Having completed my MA a couple of years ago I have finished
studying'***

*For these voices, (and I notice here that neither are class based teachers), there is a direct alignment of research with study, palpably reflecting their experience of it in their own educational careers. Moreover that study is not in the here and now. It **has** happened and is completed, presumably successfully, or it is something that **will** happen in the future. (Resonating here with Anne Sfard's AM rather than PM).*

*Therefore the implication is that **research** is not happening in the here and now either, it has been done or it may be done again but it is not part of the everyday role of the teacher at this point in time.*

Adding to this are the voices who identified that not being 'required to do research' was the barrier to doing research, I hear the insistent call to consider what place does

*research have in schools where it **is** happening? To try to discover that I know I need to explore the types of research that some T-Rs have offered to try to unpick the positioning of research in schools.*

*What is happening, what is being researched, what approaches are being taken, what sort of contemporary experiences of research do teachers in schools have, but more importantly than the **'what'** is the **'why'**.*

This becomes another illustration of the intersections between children – teachers – research, and at the moment it gently teases waiting to be examined in the final domain.

For now though, if T-Rs have identified that research is not a priority as they don't have to do it, or are not studying at the moment, I have a sense of needing to unpick this further, I'm provoked to see how my T-Rs view themselves as learners, is this just about studying or something else? A line of flight appears and beckons to be followed.

6.5.9 Going off the beaten track.....Gatekeepers to Research – KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING.

Unpicking the T-Rs roles in relation to research, and specifically in relation to Children-as-Researchers, enables me to consider their perceptions about personal learning more generally. I wonder then how do the T-Rs see learning in relation to themselves

as learners, and furthermore is there a learning community for teachers within schools? Clearly learning is at the heart of the work that the T-Rs are doing, but are they just leading the learning or are they learners themselves?

*I am drawn to a comment made in response to the question **‘Can children be researchers?’***

Amidst the responses that explain YES children can because they are competent, is one that ‘glows’ and ask me to notice, listen and interpret.

‘Their creativity and lack of political constraints/awareness can be very beneficial!!’

I notice the idea of creativity being offered. Influenced by Craft et al (2014), Cremin et al (2015) and Meyer and Eilifsen (2017), I am interpreting creativity to be linked to idea of originality and generation of new ideas, new solutions and new knowledge. I listen and interpret the idea of children’s creativity to be a positive one, beneficial to their learning and to themselves. Beneficial too I wonder, to the T-Rs and teachers in general?

Looking again though I am intrigued by the way this idea is expressed for example...

.....the use of the word 'Their' (possessive pronoun)

And I ask.....is creativity something that belongs to children and not teachers?

Do teachers have to perform to expectations whereby creativity is not valued or encouraged, a sort of conformity perhaps, conforming to leaders' expectations, OFSTED expectations, and parental expectations?

Is the data subliminally suggesting that teachers are not generating their own professional identity but that their identity is being generated for them, driven, developed and molded by something else – the external factors hinted at previously perhaps?

I notice and listen to the punctuation used within the sentence –

....the slash, the oblique slanting line that indicates 'OR' –

.....and as such a sense of exclusivity.

Either children have a lack of political 'constraints' OR 'awareness'.

There is a cautious use of / to soften the bold statement of political constraints –

...does this imply there is a perceived lack of freedom by teachers, and the innocence of the child means they can be oblivious of this – not being politically aware?

Looking at punctuation again.....

How do we interpret the exclamation mark! – in this case TWO of them !!

Used in writing (drama, literacy, rarely in formal academic writing.....(...or is it?!?!).

But why here?

To denote humor, or emphasise strong feelings?

Or to soften the blow of those strong feelings?

The fact that an exclamation mark is not used anywhere else by this T-R is important and begins to make me think more about the idea of political sensitivities in school communities and how carrying out research is understood in relation to them. I suggest this is an intersection with the idea of emotions and relationships peeking through.

And then as this thought prevails I see in the entanglement the intersection with the concept of RISK, discussed and explored in section 6.3.6 Going off the beaten track... Risky Play and again in section 6.5.7 WARNING.... Professional identity as RISK.

And so it is that RISK is encountered at each layer of the data produced, and my analysis. But the RISK here is subtly different and triggers a revisiting of the dominant perceptions of children that the teachers hold.

Research being risky for the T-Rs is evident but here we see the idea of creativity also being risky, although beneficial. Whilst creativity, and research as a creative process,

is risky for teachers, it is less risky for children because of their innocence and immaturity, demonstrating the dominant discourse of children that the T-Rs hold. If children have a lack of awareness of the political agenda (which denies or limits creativity) then it means that children can be excused for not toeing the party line – (to continue with the political analogy).

BUT –looking closer I notice another quietly spoken idea that would be ignored given a CHQ approach.

*In response to the question ‘**Would your setting promote the idea of children as researchers?’***

One participant comments:

‘Maybe, but our focus remains on attainment and this can limit innovation and creativity’.

A telling and, to acknowledge my emotions again, a sad binary, that there can be no creativity or innovation when focussing on attainment.

Only two T-Rs make the link between research and creativity throughout the survey, in both case there is a sense of regret, one covers this with humour, exclamation marks and alludes to the political agenda and children being innocent of that.

The second T-R is more open in the reason for a cautious level of commitment, indicating that the current agenda has a negative impact on creativity, alluding to the fact that Children-as-Researcher projects are both innovative and creative.

The use of BUT immediately implies reservation, apology and introduces the idea that innovation and creativity are a contrast to the focus on attainment. This contrast mirrors the position that research and Children-as-Researcher projects are not an integrated part of the curriculum in such a way that there is a sense of regret.

And there in the background I find a further overspill, the same sense of regret contained in a brief comment in reply to the question

‘What would encourage you to carry out research in early years settings or schools?’

The answer comes back:

‘A school which celebrated teachers as learners’.

*The key word here being **celebrated** – a longing here for recognition of learning for learning’s sake. A yearning for development, new knowledge and new learning to be welcomed, valued and honoured.*

Recognising the influence held by the leaders of schools (Head Teachers), the gatekeepers of knowledge and learning, it would seem here that this T-R holds a different, perhaps conflicting position to their leaders, in relation to personal development and the place of learning and research in teachers' lives.

Scrutinizing their response further I notice something I had overlooked before – this response comes from a participant who, whilst identifying themselves as having a leadership role in the school, although not a Head Teacher nor a classroom teacher, but has described themselves as 'CPD – Continuous Professional Development Coordinator'.

The use of this label presents a teacher who identifies themselves as a leader of learning not just for children but for colleagues, as someone who takes an active interest in the need to develop skills and new learning. From this position I notice someone who views research as an integrated part of the teaching and learning experience, for both children and teachers alike.

The lone voice here makes me reflect on how these identities are developed and how, for the most they would appear to be a coming together of dominant identities. Intrigued I feel a sense of curiosity and again, from an emotional perspective, confidence, that validates the digging deeper and unpeeling of layers that will follow

later as I explore this aspect, this line of flight, through analysis and discussion to come.

I am drawn to the very final, and comparatively lengthy, comment in answer to the question

‘What, if any, would be the barriers to children designing and carrying out their own research?’

This gives an insight into a teacher making a link between research and leaning, and the emancipatory elements of learning that are offered here.

‘Restrictions in the educational setting...never having the opportunity to develop the skills. The answers above [referring to previous level of confidence about research by children] depend on the school...is the school giving the skills needed to be researchers or restricting their freedom to learn?’

I am drawn to this comment, and its binary position, not least as it is the most detailed response that offers more than just the expected naming of time and curriculum as barriers. Here I see a reflective teacher who is considering the benefits of research and how this is gifted to children – with skills being GIVEN. There is an impression of research as being EMANCIPATORY as demonstrated by the link to freedom to learn.

Taking this with the other, albeit solo voices that provoke a reflection on teachers as learners I contemplate on the rhizomatic connections between knowledge, learning and freedom for teachers.

The Head Teachers are gatekeepers not only in terms of protecting their staff, and children, as vulnerable research participants, but protecting teachers as overworked vulnerable colleagues. I can see the shadow of a stance that also sees the vulnerability of a school's reputation if teachers are distracted from the delivery of the curriculum by undertaking Children-as-Researcher projects.

And there in the shadows I also see the forming of an idea that the Head Teachers are also gatekeepers to learning, not just in terms of the curriculum and pedagogical approaches, but of new learning that may in itself be seen as a threat to professional identity. The risk perceived by these gatekeepers may also be the risk of how to respond to new ideas, innovation and creativity, and the new knowledge gained, or as I prefer, revealed by research.

6.5.10 Checking the map – Crossroads Ahead.

Time to move on, no resting place yet, my deliberations tempt me in all directions. I remain however within the terrain of Children-as-Researchers, but this time I focus on how the Teacher-Respondents are viewing research itself, hinted at here in relation to their role, but now I move on to hold this adjacent facet to the light to attempt to understand the complexities of the relationship between research, children, and teachers.

6.6 Children-as-Researchers within the domain – Research-Children-Teachers

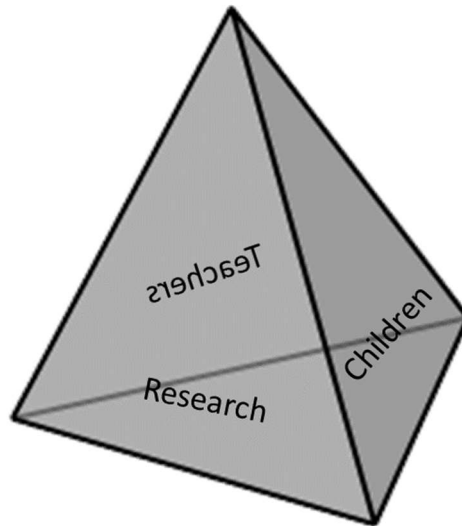


Figure 16 – Facet of Research within the domain of Research-Children-Teacher

Firstly this section will, through adopting a conventional humanist qualitative approach, draw upon the data produced by the survey to examine and analyse where and how research features within a teacher's professional life. Figure 16 illustrates that whilst research is the focus of this section, this can only be understood in relation to children and teachers. The initial questions in the survey sought to elicit the Teacher-Respondents' experience of conducting research, including approaches and methodologies adopted, as well as attitudes and values towards educational research. A combination of open and closed questions, along with scaled responses to given statements, helps indicate where the teachers in this survey see themselves in relation

to research, and importantly what their research ideas and future plans entail. As with the previous explorations of my identified domains, I will initially report giving the headlines that are embedded on the 'well-trodden routes' and then 'go off the beaten track' in order to search for the 'overspills'.

6.7 Well-travelled routes - Research – Teacher Attitudes.

Teacher-Respondents presented as having a very positive attitude towards research in general. In response to statements about the place of research within education 80% of Teacher-Respondents indicated that they thought educational research should be carried out by practitioners/teachers, with 18% strongly agreeing. Similarly 96% of Teacher-Respondents believed that Government Policy in education should be based on research, with no participant disagreeing /strongly disagreeing with this statement. The importance of research in relation to educational practice, as well as policy, was seen again when Teacher-Respondents were asked if what happens in school should also be based on research, with 75% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing. When considering who should be carrying out educational research 75% of Teacher-Respondents believed that it should not only be academics that carried out the research, and similarly 82% of Teacher-Respondents indicated that as professionals they should not just focus of children in schools, but should be also focusing on research.

This positive response would seem to mirror the findings of Newman and Mowbray 2012, Leat, Lofthouse and Reid (2014), Leat, Reid and Lofthouse (2015) as well as Fordham (2016) discussed in the review of literature. Although, as Leat et al (2015) acknowledge, there are few if any systematic reviews of teacher involvement in and with research, and they, as indeed am I, are dependent on teachers' voices captured in research that is generally focusing on other issues.

62% of Teacher-Respondents had previously carried out some form of educational research as part of their highest qualification and this can also help to understand high levels of confidence in their relationship with research. In relation to qualifications 68% of Teacher-Respondents identified as having postgraduate qualifications with the remaining having first degrees. 46% of teachers in the survey had studied Masters Degrees (MA, MEd, MPhil) with one Teacher-Respondent having achieved a Doctorate. Leat et al (2015) citing McLaughlin, Black-Hawkins and McIntyre (2004) identifies that there are three purposes in the teacher researcher tradition. The first being linked to personal inquiry, which they suggest takes the form of action research and professional reflection, the second being research for political reasons, for example concerns for democracy and transformation of society (school communities), and the third tradition being about school improvement.

Teacher-Respondents continue to demonstrate this positive attitude towards the place of research, and their relationship with it, as 58% of respondees indicate that they

would like to carry out research in their school or setting. Teacher-Respondents identify a range of future initiatives that demonstrate a range of interests, including intervention programmes, children's mental health and the impact of arts education on pupil confidence, all of which demonstrate each of the three purposes McLaughlin, Black-Hawkins and McIntyre (2004), in Leat et al (2015), identify.

When thinking about *Children-as-Researchers* the Teacher-Respondents are equally positive in response to the question '**Can children be researchers?**' whereby 82% answered yes with a further 18% responding maybe. This suggests not just a belief in children's capabilities but that the Teacher-Respondents know and understand enough about conducting research that they see children as being competent to also undertake research, even if they have not carried out research with children previously (65%).

Having seen how teachers view research in general, the survey then moved on to explore Teacher-Respondents' previous experience of carrying out research in educational settings.

6.7.1 Well-travelled routes -Research – Teacher Experience.

As expected Teacher-Respondents have had a variety of research experiences, mostly these were linked to studying and their most recent qualification, which for most

Teacher-Respondents was obtained over 5 years ago - 67%. For clarification, when considering Teacher-Respondents' experience of research my focus here was their relationship not just *with* research, i.e. keeping up to date with latest developments in subjects or the discipline of education, but rather their involvement in research as researchers whereby they are engaging in enquiry-orientated practice (BERA 2014b).

Only 25% of Teacher-Respondents had conducted research in schools, or early years settings, since they completed their highest qualification. As discussed previously, (6.5.1 - pg 232 ff and 6.5.2 pg 237 ff), barriers to carrying out research have been identified by the Teacher-Respondents, the most significant being time for research and the dominance of attainment and targets. In addition to this as noted in section *6.5.2 Well travelled routes – Teacher roles and Responsibilities Children and Research (IMPACT)*, that Teacher-Respondents' focus for their research was predominantly identified as research linked to impact. Fordham (2016) further suggests that there are two broad traditions of teacher research, one being a reflective approach, often linked to CPD, and a local impact study. This reflective research is strongly influenced by the idea of reflection and professionalism being interlinked (Schon 1983). The current era of accountability and performativity, as suggested by Ball (2001, 2003, 2008, and 2015) goes some way to explain how and why this sort of research dominates teacher research experience. A second approach, according to Fordham (2016) is one that focuses on pedagogical knowledge production that moves beyond local contexts to potentially have a wider influence on practice and policy.

Teacher-Respondents in my study disclosed that their research all fell into the first category.

When asked to give further information about research contexts Teacher-Respondents identified that they had undertaken their research in a variety of settings but for most Teacher-Respondents their research had been carried out in primary schools, whereby one Teacher-Respondent identified that this was within a 'Key Stage 2 Setting' and one other identified that their research had been based in a 'mixed-aged classroom'.

The survey asked Teacher-Respondents to identify who had participated in their research, again answers were varied but included, children, teachers, teaching assistants and parents, and with one saying they had involved other Head Teachers within the local authority.

When considering the methodology and methods Teacher-Respondents had adopted for their research again a range were commented on. Most frequently Teacher-Respondents reported they had used questionnaires and interviews, with four commenting on the use of observations. One commented that they had undertaken a 'Social Survey' and two Teacher-Respondents noted they had adopted 'Action Research' as an approach. Teacher-Respondents noted the use of various methods

adopted but only one commented specifically on methodological stances, saying that they had adopted *'Mixed methods -combined qualitative and quantitative methods'*.

Topics that Teacher-Respondents had researched varied tremendously, but all had very generic themes. Very little information was given about specific questions or indeed titles for research. Interestingly when reporting on research undertaken as part of their studies most topics were not directly related to specific curriculum subjects for example –

'Boys and Role Play'

'Children with Emotional and Behavioral difficulties'

'The Effects of Labeling Children'

'Race and Education'

'Feedback'

'Dyslexia'

This may be explained as Teacher-Respondents reported they had undertaken their highest qualifications more than five years previously, it could therefore be that the performativity and impact agenda that is so prevalent currently was not so embedded at that time, particularly within Primary School education. Alternatively it could be that the participants were not in positions of responsibility at that time and were therefore not looking for research to validate or to measure their practice, and outcomes, for the children they were responsible for. This would also make sense as the research they

reported on had been linked to study; so for example as trainee teachers or early career teachers they would not have had the same sort of responsibilities that they carry now as leaders and managers in schools and settings.

The idea of professional responsibility in schools influencing research decisions, and in particular that with further experience comes more responsibility, is also evident in the subtle shift in the noted methodology and methods that the Teacher-Respondents identified as being adopted in research conducted since studying for their highest qualification.

Teacher-Respondents noted they had now used:

‘Action Research’ (3)

‘Selected Case studies and measured progress against non-case studies’

‘Practical teaching and reflecting and measuring outcomes from strategies adopted.’

Although far fewer Teacher-Respondents stated they had carried out research since studying their highest qualifications (25%), the beginnings of the impact of the accountability and performativity agenda can be seen. This is clear when considering the range of topics that have been researched. For example teachers now start to offer the following:

‘Action Research measuring the impact of a new style of planning adopted.’

‘Impact of e-readers.’

‘Measuring early reading skills.’

‘The use of constructive conversation to raise standards.’

The predictable use of interviews and questionnaires were noted and all of the more recent research projects had been carried out in the Teacher-Respondents own schools. The traditional qualitative research methods still remained of interest to the teacher researcher, although alternative methods such as quantitative analysis of marks and grades are beginning to be evident. Interestingly although 35% of Teacher-Respondents noted that they had carried out research with children as active participants at some time, only two Teacher-Respondents identified that they had involved children as active participants in their most recent research undertaking.

6.7.2 Well-travelled routes – Research- Teachers as Researchers.

From the data already considered it is clear that very few Teacher-Respondents are currently research active. The reasons for this can be linked to professional identity, the current climate of performativity, and teachers’ perceived risk of conducting research. However the Teacher-Respondents indicated that they would like to

undertake some research and have emerging ideas in relation to this. When asked if they would like to carry out research in their setting nearly 60% of Teacher-Respondents expressed an interest in this. The topics identified suggests a bigger shift to measuring impact and are more tightly linked to curriculum and the implementation of various initiatives.

Methods identified still highlight the teachers' commitment to Action Research however no Teacher-Respondents identify the use of interviews or questionnaires as they had when considering previous research they had undertaken. This is may be linked to some professional uncertainty in carrying out research or indicative of the unrealistic expectation that teachers can be effective practitioners *and* effective researchers (Winch et al 2015).

When considering the inter-relationship between the skills sets of both teaching and research it is interesting to note that Teacher-Respondents perceive communication to be more important for practitioners then researchers. This could be understood when considering the role of a teacher and, once again, their professional identity. At the heart of the teachers' role is the idea of knowledge and learning; transference of knowledge and the persuasive nature of the relationship between teaching and learning, which may explain why they rate communication so highly when thinking about being an effective practitioner. Adding to this is the environment where that communication happens, and the complexities of it, whereby teachers are

communicating with children, parents and colleagues who would each have varying degrees of communication skills themselves, therefore to be effective in such an environment teachers need to have highly sophisticated communication skills. Ranking communication as being less important for effective researchers suggests that Teacher-Respondents perceive researchers to be less dependent on the persuasive nature of communication, and that for these Teacher-Respondents, research is a presentation of the facts that are conclusive. Similarly researchers are not, from the Teacher-Respondents' perspective, working with others who have a wide range of communication skills; a researcher is presenting research to likeminded researchers who already understand the language, nuances and communication strategies adopted within their environment.

Whilst good subject knowledge is, according to the Teacher-Respondents, important for both teachers and researchers, other skills such as analysis and reflection are deemed to be more important for researchers, (see Figure 17).

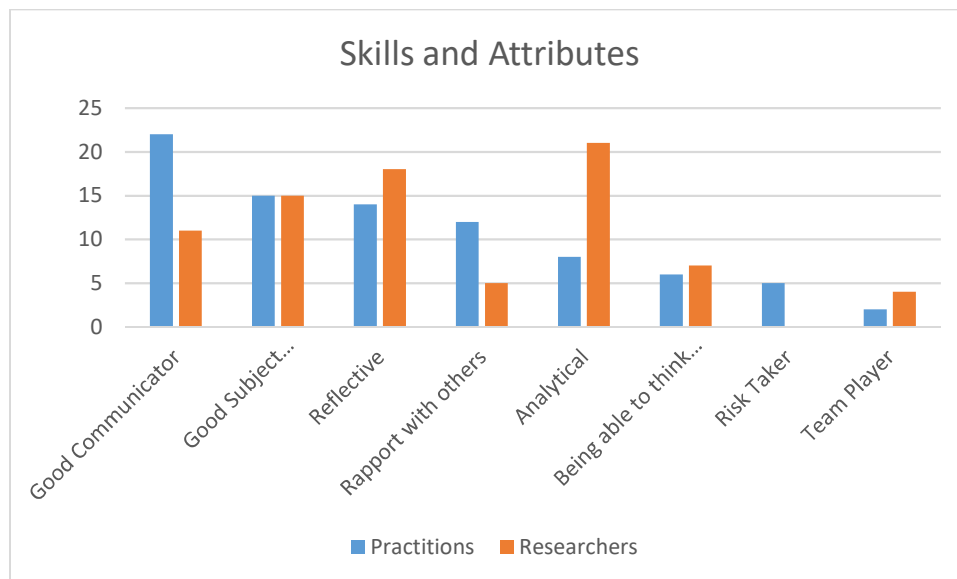


Figure 17 – Comparison of perceived skills/attributes needed for teachers and researchers

This perception of the difference between skills needed to be an effective teacher and researcher may indicate that despite having general confidence in research Teacher-Respondents do not see themselves as having the right skills and attributes to be effective researchers. This is despite plentiful previous experiences and opportunities to carry out research. This may in itself be an issue for teacher education programmes, and will be explored further in *Chapter 7: Check Points: Resting En route*.

When looking at key vocabulary used to describe and outline either current or previous research projects terms such as 'Impact', 'Evaluation' and 'Measuring' were used most frequently. This is not surprising given the dominance of neoliberal ideas that, as argued by Ball (2016) and discussed in section 6.3.2 *Well-travelled routes – Teacher Roles and Responsibilities... IMPACT*, underpin current policy and practice in schools.

Teacher-Respondents commented that they were confident in carrying out research and strongly agreed that this was an important aspect of education, with all Teacher-Respondents noting that both policy and practice, at local and national level, should be based on research. Furthermore Teacher-Respondents disagreed that research should only be carried out by academics, with just 2 participants agreeing with this statement. When asked if teachers should focus on children rather than research over 80 percent of Teacher-Respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

6.7.3 Trip Review – Summary.

To summarise then it is evident that the Teacher-Respondents in this study have a very positive perspective of research within their professional lives. They clearly see themselves as competent and interested in research and strongly believe that this is as important part of their role and responsibility. This would appear to contradict Olivero, John and Sutherland (2004) who suggested that educational research and practice present as two different cultures and worlds. Similarly to the research carried out by Stenhouse (1981), the Teacher-Respondents can see themselves as researchers who have a range of skills and opportunities for carrying out research, namely the environment for naturalistic observations, access to research participants and the essential skills as teachers to be able to conduct research, having previously been taught how to do this as part of studying at university.

6.7.3.1 *Finding the wood amongst the trees.*

Searching through these initial interpretations of the data and conclusions offered by adopting the CHQ approach brings about an emotive response that is now becoming more familiar to me. In the same way that I tune into the data, the glowing data that provokes and urges a response, I tune in to my own emotions, recognising that sense of incompleteness. However at this juncture I notice a shift in my emotional response, there is less frustration and more motivation. The motivation that comes from a troubling of the discourses that creates a desire, an urge to examine that 'something' which despite being partially hidden demands to be considered. I am reminded again of what Noah (age 8) said, way back during the first phase of this journey, when trying to express his emerging understanding of what is research, he told me that . '...research is looking again at something you hadn't really noticed in the first place'. I like Noah's matter of fact definition, from the mouth of babes certainly, but I know that this urge to look again is triggered by the troubling of the discourses that demand I look more closely because I don't understand. Reflecting on my emotional experience as part of this research journey, the sense of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, of confidence and doubt, I am drawn to the emotional responses that the teachers demonstrate through their responses to the questionnaire. In exploring these I hope to see the wood amongst the trees.

6.7.4 Going off the beaten track.....Fear of flying?

I had asked the Teacher-Respondents if they would 'like' to carry out research in schools, those that agreed that they would went onto explain what, how and where, and who would be involved in their future research plans. Now I wonder about the idea of 'liking' something, and in this case the 'like' meaning to have a preference or to enjoy; can I see here this enjoyment of, or preference to, research as an emotive term. For those that 'wouldn't like to' I ask if I can sense a dislike of research, or maybe more accurately an impartiality to research. The suggestions of impartiality I can sense again, linked to the emerging hesitancy hidden in the Teacher-Respondents' responses. My curiosity is provoked again when noticing that this group of teachers who previously have given full and confident answers as seen by the frequent use of 'strongly agree' to given statements are now becoming less self-assured. At this point voices are quietened again, with indicators of uncertainty though the use of:

'??',

'not sure'

'it depends'.

'Maybe??'

To listen to these non-responses is critical when trying to imagine the possibilities. The data here, (whilst easy to ignore), when noticed reveals an undercurrent of caution. Previous discussions have explored the encounter with risk; that the Teacher-

Respondents are risk-adverse in relation to the demands of the curriculum and children's progress towards targets, (6.3.7 Going off the beaten track.....Risky Play.), the participants, as gate-keepers, viewing research as risky to staff they have responsibility for (6.5.6 Going off the beaten track.....Gatekeepers to Research PARTICIPANTS.) and risk in relation to my own professional identity as I establish/re-establish myself as a researcher (6.5.7 WARNING.....professional identity at RISK.).

This time though I think the caution illustrated by the use of punctuation, brevity of responses, and silence itself, is not because of risk that is directly related to professional or institutional reputation, but rather this is linked to personal risk; personal, emotive risk, based on self-doubt and a lack of confidence. The impartiality or ambiguity could indicate or, as I prefer to say, is demonstrative of, the emotional caution and reluctance to make a definite commitment. This lack of commitment to research is despite being confident teachers, and leaders and managers in schools; carrying out research, with or without children, may be something that the Teacher-Respondents may fear they would not be successful at.

[This understanding of successful research and what that looks like for the teachers in the survey will be considered later].

For now though, disguised rather than hidden in the data, I am curious to see that the skills the Teacher-Respondents identify as being the most important to be successful

researchers are not so highly valued when they consider what skills are needed to be successful teachers.

I notice that the T-Rs who are Head Teachers, and the leaders of teachers, and as such are deemed to be competent teachers themselves, rate the ability to analyse as being most important for a researcher and rate this as one of the least important skills to be a teacher.

Does this begin to demonstrate an underlying, disguised, belief that teachers do not have the skills to be researchers as they hold a different skills set, which has other skills that are more important, and therefore more practiced and developed, in their role as a teacher?

Is this lack of self-belief in their skills responsible for deterring teachers from carrying out research?

I notice too an increase use of generic terms when the Teacher-Respondents are asked to give further information as to what they would like to research and especially how – I see the use of terms such as:

‘Standardized tests’,

‘Controlled study’

‘Quantitative and qualitative’.

The last response here is not clear about specific research methods or tools, and this was explicitly asked for in the question. Interpreting this response is complex, I notice the uncertainty in the response.

This uncertainty is presented furthermore by other voices who have been quietened by the question itself – fewer responses to the ‘what’ and ‘how’ question than the ‘would you like to’ question.

I consider this carefully and suggest that this is because the voices are of teachers who whilst able to commit to the general suggestion of carrying out research have, at this stage, not firmed up their ideas, and the question in itself is the first time the fullness of carrying out research has been considered.

Alternatively what is heard is a voice of doubt, beginning to imagine the risk and challenges of carrying out research in the school community.

6.7.5 Going off the beaten track..... Emotions – Motivation and Inspiration.

When asked what the benefits of carrying out research may be to children one Teacher-Respondent commented that:

'It might raise the aspiration of the children to work in science, children would have to measure accurately though'.

I am pulled up here straightaway. Firstly by the strength of association of research within a positivist paradigm which presents a new pathway for my thoughts that I acknowledge here. Secondly, and this is where I will pause and contemplate, by the stated benefits of participating in Children-as-Researcher projects in relation not only to motivation (a strong emotion), but as conveyed in the response, to aspirations - identified here as career paths.

I previously discussed the idea of TIME as a barrier to research (section 6.5.2 Well-travelled routes- Teachers Roles and Responsibilities...Children and Research TIME), here though I am drawn to TIME and research not as a barrier that prevents but as a bridge to future ambition and aspirations.

The benefits of research voiced in this response is not in the here and now, just as study was not in the here and now when considering why teachers don't undertake research. The projection of future outcomes feels far removed from the benefits to children (empowerment, having a voice, social skills) as expressed by the dominant voices and discussed previously (6.3.3 Well-travelled routes – Children as Competent (Age Related) Research Participants).

I respond to this lone voice and wonder initially if the pushing away from the here and now is about a distancing of the immediateness of the questions, and maybe the probing nature of those questions about research, and Children-as-Researchers.

At first I see this future-focus as a further marker that suggests the T-R's isolation from social research as part of their everyday practice and concerns. Reflecting further though I begin to view this as more of an indication of the value placed on research as a profession in itself, the idea of a RESEARCHER – (of natural rather than social science).

I expected responses here to continue to promote research that measures impact, given the current agenda and dominance of neoliberalism as discussed previously, (and here I notice not repetition but verification of inter/intra-action, another encounter).

What I had not expected to see was a response that makes a direct link to a positivist approach by drawing on the specific example of science as a career. To make sense of this I reflect on the journey of my relationship with research, from school pupil to undergraduate, post graduate and doctoral student and see my shift from positivist to interpretivist to the posts, and accept that it is the conviction of the converted that led to such a strong personal emotional response. Despite acknowledging the dominant Cartesian influences on research and the positivist paradigm the emotional impact of

seeing this in text challenges me as it reinforces that I see the world differently in a way that contradicts the norm; accepting this is unsettling.

The rationale for wanting to be a teacher is often somewhat naïvely communicated as wanting to make a difference to the lives of children, of having long term impact, not just mattering on a day to day basis. For this Teacher-Respondent the impact is not just about day to day outcomes measured by external bodies but the longer term impact on children's life chances, recognizing that education is not just about children as children but also about children as the adults they will become. The aspirations this Teacher-Respondent has for the children, resonates with me, indeed recognising this professional value softens the previously negative feelings about my profession I owned up to earlier (6.5.7). I recognise professional characteristics in this comment that mirror how I would describe my own professional identity as an educator, valuing education as the tool to create social justice. The idea of motivation and aspiration within the comment, in a cyclical way, aspires and motivates me.

Beyond, yet provoked by, my personal response, (remembering of course that my ontological stance accepts the personal inter/intra action with the data and presents me as an integral part of the research, and the thesis itself), I continue to be inquisitive about this comment.

I view this as another peek into the ontological position of Teacher-Respondents and their understanding, perhaps (mis) understanding, of social science and social research.

Provoked by this comment I take another pathway to look for the overspill in order to unpick how Teacher-Respondents understand research, not just whether it is within their professional role and responsibility but bigger issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology.

6.7.6 Going off the beaten track.....Emotions – Positively Positivist.

*Here then I wonder about omission and the 'not said'. I noticed, and have reported earlier that the Teacher-Respondents identified a range of research tools they had adopted in their previous research, these included observations, interviews and questionnaires. When asked about the methodologies adopted for research carried for research undertaken after studying for their highest qualification, there is just one tentative reference to methodologies. **'Qualitative and Quantitative Methods'**.*

This omission of a consideration of research methodologies rings a bell as I recall the challenges of teaching undergraduates to consider more than the tool they will use to gather data. To be clear I am not at this point suggesting that intellectually this group of professionals, all with degrees and most with post graduate qualifications, does not

understand the complexities of methodologies but that rather as their work remains in the practical world, and not the theoretical world, they are preferring to focus on practical examples rather than the underpinning philosophical positions that have influenced their research decisions. This may be because methodology is not something teachers are encouraged to think or act upon, and as such it is largely absent from their practice and the evaluation of that practice. One voice tells me:

‘Sorry, can’t remember, it was SUCH a long time ago’

At this comment I pause...

.....the not remembering troubles me, I see the importance placed on research by the Teacher-Respondents, the assertive, strongly agree responses to questions that ask if teachers should be doing research, and if education policy and practice should be based on research.

I see the adamant agreement that research is important. But I also see the absence of consideration of methodologies and the dominance of a Cartesian view of knowledge.

*Revisiting the responses I perceive a gentle, almost missed, shifting and swaying in terms of Teacher-Respondents understandings of research. The responses made to questions about research carried out **whilst studying**, for the most remain clear, with some acknowledgment of methodologies.*

In one case a specific title is given: 'Understanding the political and educational influences which impact upon learning the Early Years'.

*This position of confidence and clarity becomes more opaque, with less assertive use of theoretical vocabulary as Teacher-Respondents go on to outline research carried out **since** they last studied:*

'something about....',

'related to impact,

'an evaluation study'.

And then another movement further down on the scale of clarity and specifics when asked to think about potential future research

'not sure really',

'maybe something to do with.....',

'???'.

Further noticing sees the movement away from an interpretivist paradigm (evident in research carried out whilst studying in Higher Education) towards a positivist paradigm (evident in research carried out currently or proposed). This becomes most evident not just when considering future research but also when considering Children-as-Researchers projects.

When Teacher-Respondents offer their evaluation of the benefits of, and the barriers to, children carrying out their own research projects. There is talk of children:

'being more than able to test an hypothesis'

'[having] the skill set to mean they could measure, make graphs, ask and answer questions'.

'needing to be precise and organized in measurements'

'limited mathematical and literacy skills would be a barrier'

This also suggests that the Teacher-Respondents hold this broadly positivist position of research as their preferred paradigm, or even their most familiar paradigm.

Asking myself why I accept that the current dominance in UK schools of attainment, measuring progress, and data in response to that, may well explain why this is the case, and I start to wonder again about the implications then for initial teacher education. This provocation keeps returning and the temptation to follow this line of flight is becoming stronger.

Taking a step back then, the shift from university supervised research, to school-based research carried out some time ago, to proposed future research projects with children, shows a move away from a naturalist research paradigm to a positivist paradigm. (Is there no place for Posts..I wonder???)

I see more widely in current education policy and practice the impact of IMPACT and accountability so this is not be a surprising position to notice. Elizabeth St Pierre (2012) suggests that positivist Scientifically Based Research (SBR) has infiltrated the study of education despite that what is being researched is a complex social problem with no certainties –a tension between competing ontologies then?

What provokes me here though is the research journey of these Teacher-Respondents that start their research narrative by being embedded within the Conventional Humanist Qualitative tradition, whilst under the influence of the Higher Education Institution, and that there is an apparent shift away from this as their careers and professional identity develops.

I wonder here if the differing positions held by the teachers and Head Teachers I aimed to involve in my research in Phase 1 is the reason why so often I felt at cross purposes to them?

Not only was I /am I an emerging post-qualitative researcher, one who is questioning the Conventional Humanist Qualitative approach, which could be said to be not just one, but many steps away from the dominant positivist approach held by the head teachers. The distance then becoming more apparent throughout the journey of my research.

6.8 Twists and turns, a cultural whirlpool.

Here, I see an interesting confluence at play. The twists and intertwining nature of the social idea of Children-as-Researchers. Teachers are under scrutiny and are required to measure impact, this creates a culture of nervousness and tension. Within such a culture Teacher-Respondents become risk adverse. Research is seen as risky as it may well expose the 'underneath' of their practice which is not easily measured by adopting a positivist approach. Therefore the T-Rs remain within the perceived certainty of a positivist paradigm in an attempt to respond to the demands of accountability and impact data.

Being risk adverse limits the creative nature of teaching and in doing so children are seen as objects of research rather than creators of knowledge through research.

A culture of accountability that focuses so much on the effectiveness of teachers, whilst attempting to be an approach that supports the rights of children to have quality education, takes away other rights to have a voice and to have an opinion heard.

At the centre then of our schools is the effectiveness and role of the adult, the teacher in relation to the child. Schools are teacher-centred rather than being child-centred as is often argued.

These ponderings begin to form some sort of conclusion that says to understand Children-as-Researcher initiatives there is a need to explore what else drives and forms teachers, and to also think about how to support teachers in school in promoting and adopting Children-as-Researcher initiatives.

7 Check Points, Resting En route.

In which any thought of a final definitive conclusion is dismissed, and it becomes apparent that having explored Children-as-Researchers the multiple threads unpicked and the re-woven in this travelogue can offer alternative possibilities of Children-as-Researcher projects.



7.1 Final Destinations?

This chapter of the thesis, following on from the analysis and exploration of the survey, offers a rest point for my thinking and gives the opportunity to draw together the various threads that have become apparent when exploring the terrain of *Children-as-Researchers*. However, having rejected a CHQ approach as being incompatible with both my view of the world and with how I have interpreted and understood the interactions and entanglements revealed within this travelogue, the discussion here does not as such offer a conventional definitive conclusion. Rather, it needs to be understood more as a *dénouement* which draws together the strands of the research, and in response to the worrisome pinch points offered in Chapter 6: *Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track*, sets about to resolve the challenges of Children-as-Researcher projects as uncovered through this research.

The key outcome of this thesis is the revelation of the underlying complexities of *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives which demand further examination. This further examination is not just about the strategies adopted and the programmes of *Children-as-Researchers* projects but the knotted notions of children and childhood, the place of research in the classroom, and the place of research in relation to teachers' identities. In exploring how to actively involve children as co-researchers in investigating their educational lives, multiple threads have been unravelled throughout the thesis. Now in this chapter these threads are re-woven and as illustrated in Image 12, to show how each threads interconnects others and, when re-woven together, form

a stronger understanding of the complexities and inter-relatedness of *Children-as-Researchers*. Keeping the ends frayed is important as this illustrates that despite forming a stronger understanding there is still more to be unpicked later.

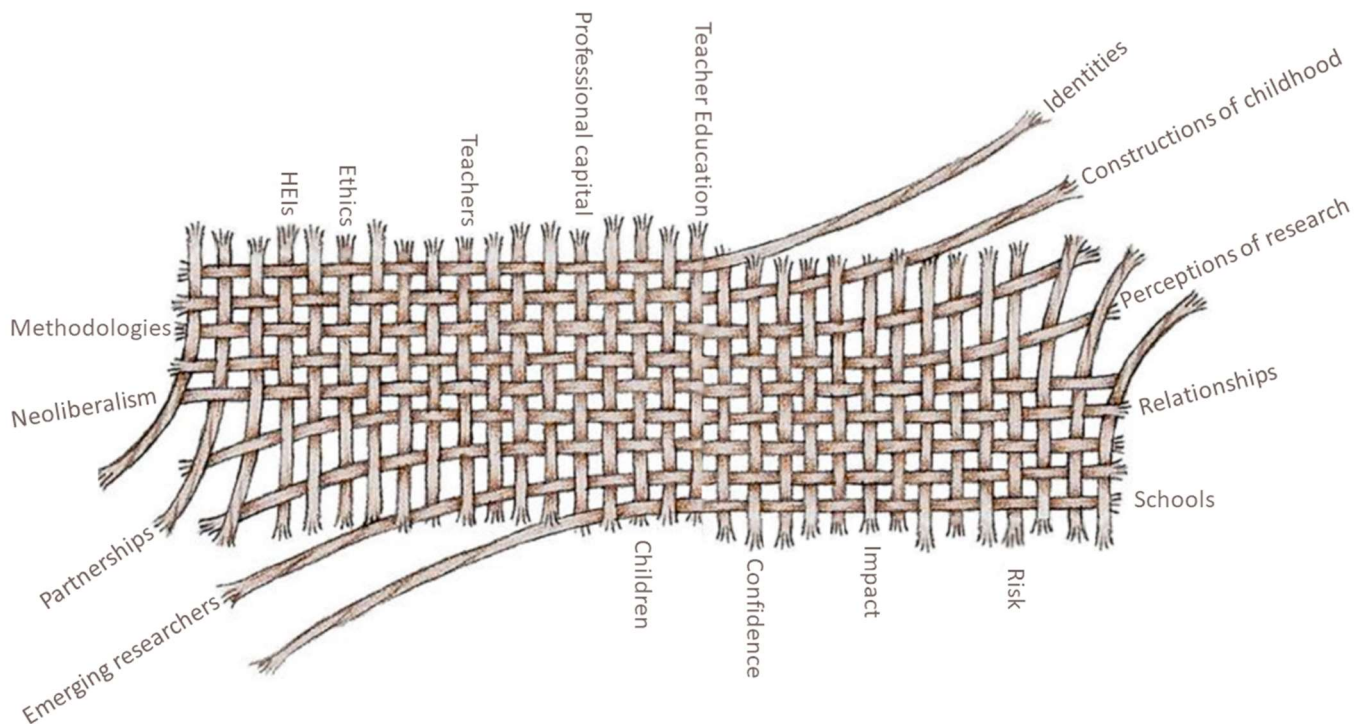


Image 12 - Woven Threads

7.2 A Resting Place.

In a conventional thesis the idea of introducing new literature to be considered as discussions are drawing to an end would be frowned upon, however throughout the thesis I have adopted a blurred methodology and rejected convention. Whilst in

dialogue with St Pierre (2019), who encourages post-qualitative researchers not to be constrained by the conventions of traditional empirical research, clarifying that in a post qualitative research there is nothing that *has* to be done and that each inquiry is 'different every time' (St Pierre 2019: 12) I will, where necessary, refer to literature that has not been considered previously.

This is not to follow new 'lines of flight' but to simply raise awareness of them. In the first part of this chapter I demonstrate that what, at first glance, appears to be a well-practiced and straight-forward child-centred research methodology demands further examination and consideration in order to respond more effectively to what has become a largely unchallenged and over simplified process for children's participation in research. The drawing together of threads at this point is completed by considering a re-positioning of teachers' identities, roles and responsibilities in relation to research before moving on to re-view Children as Research projects. The possibilities and utilities are offered in the second part of the chapter in an attempt to overcome the challenges of promoting *Children-as-Researchers* seen now in the light of the complex entanglements revealed by my research.

7.3 Re-placing (re-positioning) research as an integral part of teacher identity.

As discussed previously (6.3.7 Going off the beaten track.....Risky Play. and 6.5.7 WARNING.....professional identity at RISK.), the issue of RISK has been argued to

be key in understanding Teacher-Respondents' reluctance to undertake *Children-as-Researcher* projects. Similarly to French et al (2017), Bradbury-Jones & Taylor (2013), and Bucknall (2012), Teacher-Respondents in my study commented on the perceived benefits of *Children-as-Researcher* projects but in practice were not actively engaging with research nor with the concept of *Children-as-Researcher* projects. At this point in time, now/then, I am curious as to how teachers could be supported and encouraged to more actively promote research in schools, and indeed *Children-as-Researcher* projects. I can see how effective relationships between academics and teachers, and HEIs and schools would be one way of promoting research in schools and *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives.

7.2.1 Emotional Risk?

A thought here then, a caveat to rein in my emotive responses, whilst I find this challenging I have to recognise that my personal and philosophical commitment to Children-as-Researchers, and research in schools, sits within an academic environment of Higher Education, and whilst not an ivory tower I am separated from the environment of targets and accountability and the day to day working environment of schools. I need to offer a pragmatic, not an emotional, response to the T-Rs lack of engagement with the research process, I have to stand back and be solution focused. I hasten to add though that the possibilities of this are many, there is not one solution to be offered in a linear way – once again I take a rhizomatic approach to consider multiple solutions and potential paths to follow.

As a starting point I recognise that confidence in carrying out research of any kind has to be established. I see my own research journey narrated and recorded within this thesis and recognise the distance I have travelled. From tentative attempts to design and construct a piece of research I have reached the point whereby my confidence allows me, or rather nudges me, to challenge conventional thought and offer alternative ways of doing things. As I unpick how this has happened to me and the benefits to my own learning I recognise that in myself I seem to be thriving on risk, whilst not being reckless I benefit from the security of supportive networks.

If I am to be solution focussed and offer as one possibility the idea of developing and/or strengthening ‘partnership’, between schools and HEIs in order to re-place research I have to firstly understand how current working relationships between schools and HEIs have come about, and how these relationships have impacted on the place of research in schools. I take a further risk here in writing up my thesis by taking one step backwards to review literature and policy so I can then move forward again.

7.3 Re-placing research through partnership with HEIs.

Interestingly the recent BERA/RSA Report on Research and the Teaching Profession (2014:5) states from the outset that schools and the wider research community should not be working in ‘separate and sometimes competing universes’, and promotes the idea of partnership. The place of partnerships between, and within the research

community and schools, as potentially research rich environments, I would argue is key to teachers reclaiming research as an integral part of their identity.

BERA/RSA (2014) identifies that professional networks, such as those that enhance subject knowledge, is one way of establishing such partnerships, offering the idea of inter-institutional thematic research studies. A collegiate approach to thematic research studies would mirror the shared interest of researchers within the wider community and those teachers in schools developing subject knowledge. The use of digital technologies and social media is acknowledged by BERA/RSA (2014: 25) as pivotal, and could be adopted to promote not just interest in subject specific fields, but to also explore innovative ways of data gathering, collaboration and methodologies. The idea of partnerships is also seen through the development of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities; this recognises that for many teachers whilst research was a part of their initial training, it is less a part of their everyday working lives once immersed in the culture and everyday concerns of school life.

There is a link here between an active CPD agenda and the idea of networking to promote what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) propose in relation to their concept of *Professional Capital*. They argue that for schools to improve and for the schooling system to develop there is a need to promote effectiveness through the idea of building capital, not using a business model that promotes cutting costs to be more profitable but in a professional capacity that promotes investing in teachers to be more effective,

this includes investing in leadership and career development. The idea of professional capital is a combination of human capital, social capital and decisional capital, which draws together the talent of teachers (human capital) with the strength of a working group (social capital) and the ability to make judgments (decisional capital). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) claim that promoting professional capital is the way forward for schools to be more effective and better meet the needs of their students. Drawing on research by Leana (2011) they argue that schools are most effective when there is strong social capital and that this is more important than human capital; when the idea of decisional capital is added schools become even more effective.

Studies by Roland, Johnson, Jones and Boyer (2016), and Lee and Lee (2018), suggest that developing professional learning communities or communities of practice is a key way to promote professional capital and support the improvement and effectiveness of schools. Such communities of practice would, I suggest be able to promote professional capital as well as re-placing research into teacher identity.

For any effective partnership to flourish the concept of shared goals or vision is key. For effective partnerships between HEIs and Schools to flourish the shared vision may not initially be research focussed but rather the underpinning values and beliefs of both partners. In my study the Teacher-Respondents were clear that they understood their role to matter, they wanted to make a difference and to provide a positive learning experience for the young children in their schools; essentially they want to make a difference, and have impact. They use the frameworks of various matrices to assess and quantify that impact, however the philosophy of wanting to make a difference and

being committed to social justice and a determination to do 'good' is not underestimated and reduced by measuring impact, and remained at the centre of how Teacher-Respondents understood their purpose.

Similarly this notion of matrices to assess quality is now evident within the field of Higher Education (Olssen 2016). Peeling away the issues with regards to this, not least that these are often seen as the only measures of quality, the underpinning values that influence me as an educator, and indeed my colleagues, is not a desire to remain within that proverbial ivory tower but is firmly fixed within the desire to do good, to raise aspirations and to impact positively on the local community. My home institution recognises itself as the University *for* the Local Community rather than the university of, or within, the local community (Birmingham City University 2015). With this value at the heart of curriculum developments and teaching and learning experiences, it is clear that this commitment to social justice and social reform is where the paths of both educational institutions meet. Sometimes the value-driven and principled approach is stronger than interest in particular field of study. As a political force the idea of communities of both experts and learners is how, and where, both schools and HEIs can converge and work together.

Developing partnership networks to plan and deliver a range of CPD, to celebrate the research endeavours of teachers in schools and to harvest the research rich environment through which to build confidence and recognise existing capabilities,

could be one way of re-placing research to be at the heart of teacher identity, and as BERA/RSA (2014) identifies would result in an active self-improving education system. Additionally the idea of networks could contribute to the promotion of Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) notion of professional capital. What this may actually look like in practice will be discussed shortly when I move on to consider alternative ways to promote *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives.

I would argue that in order for teachers to reclaim their identity, as researchers, there needs to be a culture of confidence, a culture of wanting to be part of the self-improving education system that BERA/RSA promoted in 2014. In addition there needs to be a culture of trust which Cole and Gannon (2017) argue has been stripped away, suggesting that teachers' roles have become:

merged with the over-riding concerns of financial capitalism, which primarily works from the perspective of the profit motive, and that reduces all activity under its aegis to calculable values representable as numerical, parallel to the multitude of companies on the stock exchange (p78-79).

The fact that there seems to be little movement towards a vision of a self-improving education system I would argue is related to the absence of effective HEI/School partnerships as proffered above, and indeed the dominance of neoliberalism which I will return to later. However one way of supporting teachers to embrace research would be by seizing the accountability factor of neoliberalism and using this as a driver for practice led-research and evaluative studies.

7.3.1 From without to within.

I realise, and offer as a further outcome of my thesis, the recognition of the responsibilities of HEIs, and individuals within the field of education in HEIs to promote research as an integral part of developing partnerships between schools and HEIs. I need to position myself as a role model, and my institution needs to recognise, and celebrate, the research that is happening in a variety of ways, and importantly at various levels, whereby not everything deemed research related is a project that has gone through a tradition research design and produced outcomes. For example teachers may well be involved in developing literature reviews as part of individual MA study or as part of established communities of learning, whereby they are becoming familiar and are focusing on developing their knowledge of current issues; this is most likely to be related to subject interest or phase interest. This may then be built on and lead to peer-to-peer observation, designed specifically to share and evaluate practice. As BERA/RSA explores when demonstrating how such a framework of research development may appear, there is a gradual shift from being aware of and considering existing research, to how this may impact on practice, to then establishing small class or school based enquiries, to local or regional investigations, the model being from micro to macro. Naively my own evaluation of teacher involvement in research did not initially recognise that in the same way as I have undertaken such a journey, as related in this thesis, teachers too would undertake a journey. Building on the idea of partnerships, within and beyond the school community to include HEIs, my colleagues and I have the opportunity to initiate such journeys.

If there is a desire to reclaim teacher-researcher identity then these ways forward may go some way to achieving that, slowly, not without challenges, a professional revolution takes place. Starting with accepting the firmly fixed notion of accountability and using this to open minds and gain confidence, and then make changes within, rather than merely criticising from the outside.

7.4 Re-placing research through– Initial Teacher Training EDUCATION.

Having previously explored *Professional Identities* (3.9 pg. 98 ff) I return here to consider how the professional identity of pre-service teachers is formed. Bukor (2015) argues that student teachers' professional identity is formed even before they commence their initial programmes of study. Anecdotally many of the applicants for Teacher Education programmes that I interview talk of a role model they had as a pupil and how that person has inspired them to be a teacher. This is supported by recent research carried out by Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) (2015) which found that 38% of those entering the teacher education programmes did so as they were inspired by one of their own teachers. I would argue therefore that the professional identities of pre-service teachers are formed based on their own experiences of being a pupil and that if the inspiring role models that they hold on high do not demonstrate being an active member of a learning community, then this identity is replicated. If pupils see their teachers conducting research, and see within their school environment that there is commitment to adult learning and education for all, not just children, then those drawn to the profession are likely to replicate such

research-informed professional identities. Bukor (2015) suggests that teacher identity is influenced by, and constructed through, personal and emotional experiences, concluding that the personal experience of schooling contributes significantly to the professional identity that is created as pre-service teachers become teachers. In simple terms this demonstrates the concept of social learning theory, (Bandura 1977), and the significance of role models and their impact on behaviour learnt; consciously or unconsciously. Further consideration of how pre-service teachers generate their professional identity has been explored by Taylor (2017) and Beltman et al (2015), both of whom show the impact of the cyclical nature of identity formation. Beltman et al (2015) also offer an insight into what pre-service teachers perceive their role to be, demonstrating a teacher identity based on helping, care and nurturing, rather than the complexities of that teacher role.

I take the position then that if teachers are to reclaim their identity to include research, then this cycle of identity formation needs to be interrupted and reconfigured. The pedagogy-informed EDUCATION (not training) of pre-service teachers would be an opportunity for this to happen.

This thesis adds to the debate around the place of research within any pre-service programme, and argues this is key to teachers reclaiming their identity which would include the place of research as part of their everyday teaching lives rather than a perceived add-on to their professional roles and responsibilities. If pre-service

programmes are without an emphasis on research, learning communities and the need for a pedagogy-informed self-improving approach to teaching and learning, then the pattern of seeing research as separate from the roles and responsibilities of a classroom teacher is replicated.

In the same way that a 'communities of learning' approach could lead to increased confidence and opportunities for research, such a collegiate approach to learning for pre-service teachers would reap the same rewards. French et al (2017) report that teachers in their study benefitted professionally from working with research professionals, this has also been reported elsewhere for example Newman and Mowbray (2012), and Willemse et al (2016). This thesis, having identified the significance of positive relationships, and a nurturing environment, through which to conduct research adds weight to the argument that a 'communities of practice' approach would support the re-placing of research as an integral part of teacher identity.

Searching to understand why this may not already be the case I review the programme of study for pre-service teachers within my home institution. The programme of study is built around meeting the Teaching Standards (DfE 2014), and rigorous assessments provide pre-service teachers opportunities to demonstrate these standards. Whilst research features in one core module whereby the students are expected to complete a small scale piece of research this is done so individually.

Whilst the emphasis is on practice based learning, the individual approach of the module's indicative content and assessment tasks does not promote the concept of 'communities of learning'. I would argue that contemporary culture of individuality, linked to individual responsibility that dominates educational experiences both for children, and adults within the teaching profession, is indicative of the dominance of neoliberalism. Group responsibility and collective learning approaches do not synchronise with such a position. As such then the training programmes for pre-service teachers reflect this. This thesis argues for the need to re-claim research, practice-led, enquiry based research, as an integral part of communities of practice rather than an individualised approach to support pre-service and in-service teachers in reclaiming research as part of their identity.

I wonder at this point how as a HE institution that has responsibility for the development of pre-service teachers, and indeed post-qualified teachers, if there is more that can be done to not only promote communities of learning but to take responsibility for initiating communities of learning. A two pronged attack to establish communities of learning which included pre-service and in-service teachers would go some way to overcome this. Once again the idea of the HEI being the role model here becomes clearer to me.

I scrutinise the Teacher Standards further and notice that hidden away is the expectation that teachers should 'promote a love of learning' and 'promote the value

of scholarship’, (DfE 2014:11). Promoting research, and enquiry led initial teacher education, and reclaiming it as an integral part of the teacher role and responsibilities would enable teachers at all stages of their career to meet these standards.

The idea of research in schools being focussed on practice based inquiry is not new, others have explored and examined this concept identifying the benefits of improved practice, and subsequently improved outcomes, for both children and teachers (Brown et al 2014, Willemsse et al 2016, Newman and Mowbray 2012). Institutions that have responsibility for pre-service teachers I argue would be wise to consider not just ‘communities of practice’ but an integration of practice based research to its curriculum. Recognising of course that the changes to initial teacher training in the last decade places responsibility of that training, education, not just with HEIs but also with schools, the idea of communities of learning could, and I would argue in this problem solution mode, should, be developed for pre-service teachers AND their counterparts already working in schools. These ‘communities of practice’, led by HEIs, focussing on shared subject interests, or pedagogical approaches, with in-service teachers working alongside HE academics as part of module delivery, involving pre-service teachers as part of their self –evaluation of practice, could facilitate the re-claiming of teacher identity and the re-positioning of research within that identity to be established.

7.4.1 One step at a time.....

Warned by my previously tendency towards naivety I offer a caveat here. By establish of course I mean locally, very locally, within a partnership between one HEI and some of its partner schools, that may well conduct research to benefit and improve outcomes at their school, then share that knowledge within a local network, which may then impact more widely...and so it begins. A small revolution, starting with like-minded professionals who have the thinking space to take risks, who have the confidence to be able to share and encourage those around them.

This 'would-be' journey to reclaim teacher identity to include research is not a linear one but a messy one that is representative of the entanglement and evident complexity of the relationship between teachers and research, research and schools, and research within and beyond HEIs. Replacing research as an integral part of teacher identities could/would lay stronger foundations on which to build more effective Children-as-Research initiatives. I see the journey ahead as a developing one, that acknowledges different paces of progress, different be-comings, that are, at this stage unpredictable but nevertheless there, whilst not currently in full view.

7.5 Replacing (re-positioning) perceptions of childhood in relation to teacher roles and responsibilities.

At this rest point, whilst contemplating the need to reclaim teacher identity, I respond to my analysis that says to me, if we need to re-place (re-position) teacher identity in

order to promote *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives, do we need to also re-place (re-position) how we perceive children and the teacher's relationship with them?

In previous research I arrived, with colleagues, at the position whereby there is a need to rethink:

the traditionally hierarchical relationship between teachers and their pupils which tend towards a teacher dominated view of the school environment and pupil identities and experiences within it (French et al 2017: 12).

This hierarchical relationship bothers me. In my research with children, and in the initial stages of this doctoral study, by children, I aspired to carefully consider the role and responsibilities of/to children within the research process. I was committed, from the beginning, to be aware of hierarchies and the power differentials at play when involving children in research projects, both as participants and as researchers in their own right. With my professional roots in early childhood I see myself as being part of the voice that Moss (2017:12) describes as 'vibrant and vocal', not silenced by the dominance of a 'strongly positivist and regulatory discourse', but 'readily heard by those who listen'. A voice that says, through words, beliefs and actions that young children have rights and should be heard and valued as themselves, not just for who they may one day become, and that young children have competent ways of viewing the world, acknowledging that these may be different to adult views. Essentially that children are social actors in their own right (Prout 2002). This position informs my thinking, my research interests, this research design, methodology and tools adopted. Becoming more secure in the post-structuralist world, I see that indeed there are many truths and it is this growing awareness of the many that provokes me to sit up and reconsider

perceptions of childhood within school communities, and in doing so argue that there is a need to re-place (re-position) how children are perceived; initially as members of the school community in relation to teachers and then as research participants through the lens of ethics.

7.4.2 Remembering the to-ing and fro-ing

Remembering the nature of my research, the inevitable to-ing and fro-ing as I explore the terrain of Children-as-Researchers before thinking about re-placing childhood, re-positioning childhood I need to reflect on where childhood is placed currently within society and a school context. One step backwards...two steps forward.

7.4.3 Placing contemporary versions of childhood.

As discussed in Chapter 3: *Dealing with Wanderlust*, (pg. 72 ff.), childhood is socially constructed and it is the adults who have ordered society and established the generational groups of people within it (Leonard 2016). The idea of childhood being socially constructed, attributed to James et al (1998), brings forth the recognition that as childhood is fluid there are many versions of childhood, which are presented as discourses. Within Western culture the dominant discourse of childhood is said to be a romantic version of childhood, whereby children are innocent, to be nurtured and protected (Lowe 2012). This can also, for example, be seen throughout the child centric approaches to the prevailing practices, provision and policies within both

families and communities as well as wider social groups (Lowe 2012). The extensive use of children in advertising linked to domestic and cleaning products from *Pears* in the 19th Century to *Persil* in the 21st Century continue to reinforce the link between childhood and innocence (Lowe 2012, Burman 2011). Whilst the notion of a romantic discourse can be seen to be the dominant discourse in Western society, within the field of education there is a tension evident between this and the competing discourses of childhood. As previously discussed in Chapter 4: *'Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track'*, 'impact' and 'risk' were identified as key drivers of the decision making processes Teacher-Respondents undertook when considering whether or not to undertake *Children-as-Research* projects. As such these can be said to be indicators of the dominance of neoliberal ideas that underpin school policy (Ball 2016).

The thesis argues that not only is the school environment dominated by a neoliberal agenda, and that in itself impacts on teachers being risk adverse, but as part of this teachers are encouraged both by internal pressures, (e.g. leaders and managers), and external pressures, (e.g. OFSTED), to maintain a neoliberal discourse of childhood that views children as a commodity; in relation to numbers, data, and future employability and investment. Sims (2017) suggests that a curriculum that develops and supports individualised, critical thinkers is dangerous to maintain the dominant neoliberal view of the world which successive governments in the West adopt, illustrative of Foucault's notion of governmentality (2004). Accepting that education is indeed a 'driven political practice' (Moss et al 2016), it is not surprising then that within school communities the dominant version of childhood is a neo-liberal one.

Therefore one of the barriers to promoting *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives is the tension that lies in the conflicting discourses of childhood that teachers hold, the uncomfortableness that they feel, at an emotional level, as they grapple between a romantic discourse of childhood that emphasises the child's individuality, social qualities, and places the child's needs at the heart of social wellbeing, and a neoliberal discourse that views the child as a commodity for future employment and is associated with economic growth. Within a neoliberal classroom, where teachers adopt a neoliberal perspective of childhood, there is little room for *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives. This version of childhood can be seen to be influenced by externalised views of both education and childhood. The idea of children's voice and children's rights within such a view of education and childhood sees the child as subversive and challenging to the hegemonic nature of neoliberalism.

This thesis adds to the debate around *Children-as-Researcher* projects a need to re-place (re-position) childhood and challenge the neoliberal perspective that appears to be gaining momentum, with or without awareness of the adults who, we are reminded by Leonard (2016), order society. In continuing with a solution focussed approach, bearing in mind the multiplicities of those solutions, I offer next potential routes to follow in order to challenge not just neoliberalism in education, but the neoliberal perspective of childhood and in doing so create an educational environment more conducive to promoting *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives.

7.5 Re-placing (repositioning) childhood – challenging neoliberalism.

Sims (2017) demands, not anarchy, but ‘active resistance’ on behalf of children to challenge the onslaught on neoliberalism, arguing that children deserve to be in a world where democracy flourishes and every child has the right to participate. This view of the world, reminiscent of a romantic perspective of childhood, which Sims (2017) along with others e.g. Brown (2015), Burman (2011), Perez and Cannella (2011), and notably Giroux (2013, 2015) advocate, is at risk due to the dominance of neoliberalism. Whereas some would suggest that this is just how the world is changing, and adopt a compliant attitude, those who struggle with a neoliberal ideology, in particular in education where neoliberalism has resulted in knowledge and learning becoming a commodity, and by default children as also a commodity, are promoting resistance and advocating teachers and educators to be agents of change. Furthermore I would argue that this thesis is a part of that same struggle, and as it draws to an end, it aims to provoke the notion of teachers and educators ‘becoming’ agents of change.

My travelogue generates a surge of resistance to promote active change to an ideology that positions children as units to be measured, and as future investments, rather than individuals who are unique, all of whom have a valuable part to play in a society to which they can contribute, and which is grounded in social justice and democracy. Sims (2017: 6) calls for educational professionals (teachers and Early Years Practitioners) to take responsibility for change, suggesting that both

'courageous leaders' and 'courageous fellowship' is what is called for. She suggests that this lack of courage comes from an over tendency to look *inwards* rather than *outwards* and that this leads to merely a continuous reflection on quality that is predetermined by external factors. Consequently Early Years Practitioners and teachers, whether leaders of settings or not, reinforce the regulated and expected practices. As it is Early Years Practitioners and teachers who have the knowledge and intellectual capacity to think outwardly there should be a drive to continuously question and rethink existing normative practices, and then offer new ideas and ways of doing things, not simply replicating practice without thought and reflection. Giroux (2013) goes further, suggesting that there is a need to rethink what schools are for, to not only promote discussion about pedagogy, and critical reflection on pedagogy, but to also re-establish the teaching profession as 'public intellectuals' (Giroux 2013:5). The position taken by both Giroux (2013) and Sims (2017) suggests that rather than a professionalisation of the sector there is indeed a de-professionalisation, and an over dependency on the technical aspects of delivering curriculum, the 'how to do it' rather than the 'why we are doing it'. By adopting a technical approach, children and their learning are seen as units of outcome, having been serviced by technicians to improve performance. Promoting discussions, explorations and a deeper understanding of pedagogy is, I would argue one way for teachers to achieve this role as *public intellectuals*, who would be answerable to the public, not just in terms of being accountable for outcomes but for providing answers as to why, and how, pedagogical decisions came about. Sims (2017) advocates that currently there is lack of professional confidence, not in understanding how and why children learn and develop, but rather in discretionary decision making and that this is why, in her

research, Early Years practitioners are compliant. This thesis adds to this position by arguing that in order to develop more 'courageous leaders' and more 'courageous fellowship', when considering the development of ITE programmes, and Early Childhood Studies degree programmes there should be time and space in the design to explore, examine, understand and practice discretionary decision making. This idea also would advocate Hargreaves and Fullan's notion of professional capital (2012) as discussed previously (pg 303 ff.). In this scenario the role of the HEI would be to nurture and support a re-professionalisation of the teaching and Early Years practitioner workforce by focussing on these tacit skills alongside knowledge and understanding of pedagogy within degree programmes.

7.5.1 Overlapping constructions of children and teachers- Inter-relatedness.

At this point then I am noticing the overlap and the inter-sections between recommended ways to go about re-placing childhood, and previously noted recommendations for re-placing research as part of teacher identity. The emphasis placed on the professionalisation of teachers and educators rather than the technical elements of these important roles, the need to provide time and space for intellectual reflection and consideration and indeed the emotive aspect of confidence in relation to fulfilling these tasks would, I believe, each contribute to that re-placing of childhood in order for Children-as-Research initiatives to be more widely undertaken by teachers and Early Years Practitioners. I am recognising a re-visiting and re-emphasising of the

importance of confidence, a nurturing environment and the role that communities of practice could play, not just in re-placing research as an integral part of teacher identity but also as a route to travel that may well challenge the neoliberal child discourse and consequently re-place children at the centre of the schooling system. All of these I would argue would contribute to the promotion of Children-as-Researcher initiatives.

7.6 Re-placing (re-positioning) children in research – challenging ethics.

Continuing to offer outcomes of this thesis, in this section the need to re-place, re-position children in research, I move on now to problematise ethical approaches to Children-as-Research initiatives.

The purpose of an ethical approach to any research is not in any sense controversial, it is a given. The role of the ethics committee is to evaluate and approve research proposals ensuring that; the fundamental principle of 'do no harm' is adhered to, researchers protect participants' autonomy and act with integrity, and that there are benefits to the research. Parsons et al (2015) however outline concerns about the role of university ethics committees and their function, noting that their over bureaucratic approach which is often inflexible, has led to them becoming too powerful. Whilst the role of the ethics committee is to protect vulnerable participants the formal approach for seeking consent that is required by university ethics committees does more to silence the voice of children and young people. Most universities in Parson et al's

(2015) research automatically raised any research proposal that included children or young people to a higher level of scrutiny, deeming all children and young people as vulnerable, they argue that for most ethics committees research with children and young people is deemed to be too risky. Subsequently any researcher who involves children and young people in research would undergo greater scrutiny. According to Parsons et al (2015) this additional scrutiny suggests a lack of trust in the researchers. However, they note an irony here as no universities in their study offered guidance as to *how* to engage ethically with children and young people in research, and ultimately the decisions about how to achieve this was left up to the researchers, indicating that the ethics committee is content to trust the researchers to know what to do. Where limited guidance was given it focussed on the use of text based information sheets using child appropriate language and written leaflets with pictures to aid understanding. Indeed this was the approach I took at the initial phase of my research outlined in the Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller* (pg. 39 ff.).

Interestingly the research carried out by Parsons et al (2015) involved UK Russell group universities, this was justified by the research team as these universities are recognised to be the most research intensive universities in the UK. Meanwhile elsewhere in academia, and in the field of Early Childhood Research, the debate about ethical approaches to children as research participants continues, focussing on the issue of consent, assent and dissent (Harcourt et al 2011, Waller and Bitou 2011, Harcourt and Einarsdóttir 2011, Dockett et al 2012, Dockett and Perry 2011).

The debate about consent, assent and indeed the apparent special consideration that is given to projects whereby children are participants, and of late the growing trend for children as research participants has resulted in careful consideration of ethical principles in relation to children's participation. Much of this of course, as has been previously discussed in Chapter 3: *Dealing with Wanderlust* (pg 72 ff.), has been strongly influenced by UNCRC article 12 and 13 that has led to a pedagogy of listening (Rinaldi 2006).

At this point in my thesis I add to the debate by recommending to question not the values that underpin approaches taken but the apparent normalising of the processes whereby young children have given consent. There is evidence aplenty of innovative ways in which researchers have sought consent, through children signing consent letters, (Gallagher et al 2010), identifying the emoji that best represents how they feel about taking part in the research activity, (Conroy and Harcourt 2009) and, for the youngest children, donning a hat or badge that says 'I'm happy to be taking part' and then removing it when they are no longer content to participate (Lowe 2012). A key outcome begins to question how the trend of children as social researchers that has evolved, and gathered momentum in the 21st century, and has become a normalised approach without, I would argue, an unpicking of the layers that come before such an approach. The organic nature of this thesis is built on the journey from where *Children-as-Researchers* was normalised, to a moment of discovery that identified the need to respond to the interrelatedness of teacher identity, the place and purpose of research in schools, as well as the relationships between teachers and children, in order to

attempt to understand the notion of *Children-as-Researchers* more fully. This problematising of the concept of *Children-as-Researchers*, within the thesis prompts me to also problematise the nature, notion and practice of ethical approaches to children as research participants per se. Not only in the before, but importantly in the afters.

7.6.1 Crossing boundaries – appropriate steps?

So this then is where things get messy, my professional position remains confident of the purpose and the benefits of Children-as-Research projects. However I have to acknowledge now an emerging feeling of dis-quietness, not just in relation to the effectiveness,.....(is this the right word...it feels positivist and quantifiable and key only in response to the dominant neoliberalist discourse),..... of the research tools that I, and many others, have used in projects that have children as research participants, but also in the approaches taken to attempt to be ethical.

I have at each step of the way taken an adult concept, something that originates in an adult world and tried to then mould and reshape this to make it fit in a child's world. I have taken a developmental understanding of children and modified research tools, used regularly and with confidence by researchers in their attempts to make sense of the world. I have considered the benefits and challenges of using observations, interviews, surveys and questionnaires and applied these same evaluations to the modified, age appropriate, research tools created for use with children when they

participate in my research. Admittedly the creative approaches I have adopted have gone further than the universities criticised in Parsons et al (2015) study who only recommended text based approaches to seeking consent from young participants. That said I have still provided merely a watered down version of research tools and methods for seeking consent that would be instantly recognisable to any qualitative researcher and indeed any adult participant in research.

I ask now, in relation to ways we seek consent, that if for example we repeatedly ask young children to write their name on their painting, their work etc and reinforce name writing as a key skill to be learnt, how do we know that children are not just following through the 'name writing' to denote ownership when they 'sign' their consent to take part in our research. Do they understand the adult purpose of name writing/signing which is to denote agreement (adults don't tend to have name tags on clothing, bags etc as children do) – so is there confusion here?

I think about other methods used for children to indicate consent....If we are asking children to wear badges and hats and they are removed is this because they don't want to wear a hat or that they have changed their mind about participating?

If we say children can tell us if they don't want to be involved anymore and that's OK, do children have the confidence to be able to do this, given the patterns of normalised power differentials enacted in schools and nurseries?

I wonder too if the ability of adults to tune into young children's feelings is enough to be able to interpret when a child is wishing to withdraw, or is it dependent on the effectiveness of communication skills both in giving and receiving messages?

I recall the anecdote told within The Story of Pilot Study 2 – Research Club (pg.60 ff.) and the troublesome incident of when the child appeared to express his right to withdraw and the parental intervention that interpreted that this was not the case. At this point in the phase 2 pilot-study I was totally dependent on other adults who knew and understood the children better, to read and interpret their behaviour; I had to trust their interpretation. Lewis (2010) emphasises the need to draw on key persons to be able to understand silence from children who are not able, developmentally, to give opinions, but this was something different. It wasn't that the child was unable to give his opinion but that he presented with an opinion that was contradictory to his parent. As adults we take responsibility for doing what sometimes we know to be best for children, if then as researchers we are depending on the consent/assent/dissent of children can we say, with confidence, we are providing an ethical approach or is this a further example that we are simply offering a watered down version of adult engagement with research. This to me needs further exploration and consideration, not to suggest that we revoke any attempts to apply ethical standards to research with, or by, children but rather that we recognise that this approach is different to an adult experience, not less but certainly not the same.

I wonder too about the right to withdraw both involvement, and data, from research. When the concept of the right to withdraw is considered it usually means for the duration of the project, but do we need to reconsider this for research when children are participants or active researchers? Consenting adults would, following a clear communication from the researcher understand what involvement in research means, there would even be an emotional perspective to consent that would indicate an interest in the research question, as well as an awareness/evaluation of the integrity, professionalism and trustworthiness of the researcher and research, all of which would, consciously or subconsciously, facilitate an adult in making a decision about participation. Children quite simply do not have the same amount of experiences, because they are children, hence the usual condition is to seek consent from parents and assent from children. Can researchers be confident that years later, albeit when the research is finished, these children who are now older continue to give their assent/consent? The comparative newness of the idea of children as research participants has not as yet raised the situation of those children who are now adults withdrawing consent to have images of themselves as children, or reported words that they said aged three to still be shared now they are adults of 23?

Offering solutions to problems that I now see, is there a need to not just apply a child's version of an adult approach to research, but a child's approach to research, with different ethical considerations, accepting that whilst as adult researchers we can attempt to support children to understand what we are trying to achieve, there may be different reasons to giving assent and even dissent that even the most skilled researcher may not be able to interpret effectively. For me these challenges have not,

at this moment in time, been considered fully in the eagerness of researchers, myself included, to make sense of children's involvement in social research. This thesis whilst not offering definitive conclusion, provokes and challenges different ways of viewing normalised approaches to Children-as-Researchers.

7.6.1.1 Crossing Boundaries – Invaders or Settlers?

Pondering this further I am reminded of an experience some years ago when as a Nursery Head Teacher, continuing to adopt what some may call a risky approach I offer briefly this anecdote as a further illustration of the questions that need to be asked and explored in relation to adults crossing boundaries in to Children's worlds, for genuine reasons but reasons that may need to be considered more fully.

I attended a conference which was focussing on developing and improving outcomes for children and young people in the region. Having listening to various teams report on their developments and evaluation of services, a group of young people were invited to present their evaluation of children services, which they did by performing a Rap – Hip-Hop style. This was greeted with enthusiastic applause; our workshop continued when we were then asked to work as a multidisciplinary team to create an action-plan that was then to be presented in the style of a Rap – we were to be supported in the design of this with some of the young people who had presented earlier on. My question at the time was would we as adults, by adopting Rap to

communicate, be moving into the world that is not our world? Were we seen as visitors, or invaders, to those young people as we entered their world?

My unease is similar now. Whilst so many researchers advocate the involvement of children and young people in the research world are we as adults inviting them into our world or are we enticing them in order for us to feel better about our misunderstandings and uncertainties of their world? Previous research, with colleagues, about children participating as researchers in primary schools asked the question 'What's in it for the teachers?' (French et al 2017). Now I am asking what's in it for the children and how do we know?

At this Check point I am now less certain in how I implemented my initial Children-as-Researcher project. Having identified, as an outcome of this thesis, the need to reclaim teacher identity, and thereafter the need to re-examine perceptions of children through both my exploration of versions of childhood in the classroom, and ethical approaches to research, both with and by children, I now move on to review Children-as-Researchers projects in the light of re-placing children, teachers and research.

7.7 Reviewing Children-as-Researchers projects in response to re-placed versions of children, teachers and research.

At the start of this journey ...all things keep returning to that point, partly I think because I am so very aware of how far I have travelled..... I accepted the challenge of developing a *Children-as-Researchers* project in an attempt to understand more about children's educational lives. I rejected the idea of research *on* children and the development of that research *with* children; tempted and intrigued by the idea of research *by* children. Motivated by the work of Kellett (2005, 2010), I sought to develop ways of teaching young children research skills to enable them to carry out social research into their lived lives so that adults, academics, teachers, and decision makers might better understand their world and better interact, teach, and plan for children's learning and wellbeing. The motivation was child-centred in that the outcome would be beneficial to children primarily and that the process of carrying out research would not only empower children but demonstrate the competencies of children to those who questioned the contribution young children could make towards adults having a better understanding of the child's world.

I come to this place now where I am acutely aware of the fact that others who were very vocal about *Children-as-Researcher* projects are now much quieter and some appear to have moved on to other fields of enquiry. Nevertheless, the detailed approach to teaching young children to be researchers (Kellett 2010, Bucknall 2012) offered a model for good practice. Along the way this model was acknowledged to take

a longitudinal approach, over a school term in most cases, and was developed as part of curriculum time. My interpretation in this thesis of this model, and critique of it, favoured a similar time period but, as outlined in the Chapter 2: *The Weary Traveller*, preferred to adopt the idea of the ‘Research Club’ approach, which promoted the concept of children electing to take part, rather than ‘special children’ being chosen to take part. Reflecting on my approach and indeed the questionnaire responses that were presented and analysed in the Chapter 6: *Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track*, I note that neither myself, nor Teacher-Respondents, adopted a holistic, nor a distinct child-like approach to *Children-as-Researcher* projects. In my case the approach I took was to offer a watered down version of a typical undergraduate research methods module within a social science degree programme. Similarly both Kellett (2010) and Bucknall (2012) present in their model a linear design that is summarised below and, as can be seen in Table vi, resonates with units from a research module delivered at my home intuition for beginning researchers at level 6.

Table vi – Summary of research methodology content Bucknall (2012) and BCU (2016)

Children as Researchers in Primary Schools (Bucknall 2012)	Researching Professional Practice in Early Childhood (BCU 2016)
Getting ready to start	Introduction – Module launch and assessment
Introducing children to social research	What do we mean by research? Introduction to research paradigms Exploring methodologies
Considering ethics	A questions of Ethics?

Children as Researchers in Primary Schools (Bucknall 2012)	Researching Professional Practice in Early Childhood (BCU 2016)
	Exploring the research of others- Preparing for a Literature Review
Asking questions- Preparing questionnaires & interviews	A question of questions? Forming research questions
	Horses for Courses – choosing the right research tool
Generating data	Challenges of data gathering (Review Ethics, review methodologies)
Making sense of data	Analysis of data – how to interpret data
Sharing research findings	Presenting findings and writing reports
Sharing the work of young researchers	
Looking back and looking forward	Forming conclusions

For teachers who questioned the amount of time available, the capabilities of children and their engagement in research this linear approach offered a logical method to children to enable them to learn the necessary skills to do the research ‘properly’. This systematic approach, presented by Kellett (2010) and Bucknall (2012), and adopted by myself, reinforced the idea that children completing research projects would be working in the same way as adult researchers, rather than adopting a holistic, child-centric approach to conducting research. Significantly too in this method there is only one way of carrying out research, the dominant paradigm in this one way being a conventional humanist qualitative approach.

7.7 Emerging researchers.

As an educator with background in Early Years I am taken back to the time when the concept of emergent writing was gathering momentum, often attributed to the work of Marie Clay in the late 1980s and 1990s. It took a strong voice, and a commitment to promoting the value of young children's early attempts at writing, to convince those who only recognised conventional writing and rejected mark-making as evidence of emerging writing. I see now the need to review Children-as-Researcher projects and focus on 'emergent researchers' rather than children who are mirroring the adult researcher. In offering this notion now, I see the thread that links this to earlier discussions about children doing research 'properly' which at the time were not fully formed (6.3.7 pg.218 ff.).

I reflect upon the way that I have developed as a researcher as part of this doctoral journey, which has enriched my thinking and understanding of the world, not just in relation to my original aim, which was to explore how to actively involve children as co-researchers in investigating their participation in their educational lives, but so much more than that. The ontological journey I have taken revealed in my methodological shifts from conventional humanist qualitative approach to a post-qualitative position, for me, demonstrates how I have emerged as a researcher and continue to be an emergent researcher.

For Children-as-Researchers projects then I argue that there needs to be an acceptance that the children who participate in such projects are 'emerging researchers', not fully formed conventional researchers.

If as educators there is a commitment to Children-as-Researcher initiatives then what this looks like needs to be reconsidered. Children's writing does not look like adults' writing, children's questions are not like adults' questions, children view the world differently to adults as they continue to explore and make sense of it through the many interactions with both the natural world and society. For this reason then this thesis (which is essentially me!) argues that, in the same way as I have journeyed through the idea of research- why, how and what, within a secure and nurturing environment, then children also need a nurturing environment to promote the same exploration of ideas, questions, and skills, that can be acquired in a developmentally appropriate way.

Rather than taking a linear approach, that replicates a traditional undergraduate research methods module as outlined above, I argue now within this thesis that a more playful, developmental approach could be adopted. In itself this would not solve the concerns discussed previously in this chapter but, alongside a re-placed version of children, teachers and research, a re-viewed approach to Children-as-Researchers would go some way to relaunching this concept within children's educational lives and experiences.

Remembering of course the layers of inter/intra-action, reviewing Children-as-Researcher projects would also be an opportunity to re-place research within teacher identity and to re-place a version of childhood which is limited by the dominance of neoliberalism in schools.

The multiplicities of how to view children, teachers and research and the interrelatedness of these domains has been a common thread, some would say the golden thread, running through the thesis. Whilst not wanting to offer a linear response to this re-view of Children-as-Researchers, through different lenses, whilst recognising their interrelatedness, the second half of this 'concluding' chapter presents alternative ways of viewing Children-as-Researcher initiatives. I draw again on a familiar image through which I can illustrate the positioning of each viewpoint and the interrelatedness of the other facets that need to be acknowledged, (see Figure 18).

Health warning....I am loathe to offer a sequential exploration of how to modify adult research methods instruction programmes, or modules. The provocations/models offered here relate to underpinning approaches rather than simply a series of strategies or sequence of lessons/experiences. They can be viewed as layers that cross-over and over lap, and could be viewed singularly or collectively.

7.8 Children-as-Researchers – Apprenticeship Model.

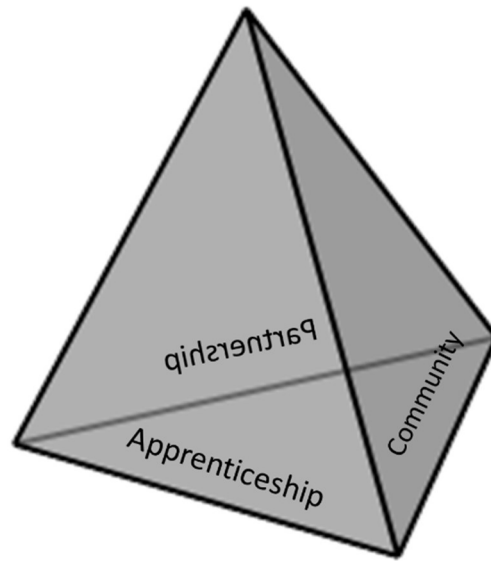


Figure 18 – Models of Children-as-Researcher Projects –Apprenticeship Facet

This first model offered by this thesis is an ‘Apprenticeship Model’. It accepts the complexities of what it means to become a researcher, as well as accepting that children will be at different levels and stages of development and learning at different times, and that progress may some times be slow and barely noticeable, whilst for others it will be rapid and self-evident. This model understands the research process in a holistic way rather than a linear approach. For this reason *play* features heavily as it is through this tool for learning that children develop skills as well as attitudes and values that will support them as researchers, all the while learning from more experienced others, which may well be their teachers as researchers as well as other *Children-as-Researchers*.

Adopting a playful approach to *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives can be seen as one way to move away from only involving older, more literate children in *Children –as-Researcher* initiatives. Play, being the basis for nurturing inquisitiveness and curiosity, through the generation of learning environments that promote social values of justice, democracy and tolerance of opinions, resonates with my preferred approach to enquiry and problem solving as seen in this thesis.

The image presented in Figure 19, suggesting a holistic rather than a linear, sequential model, adopts a version of childhood that sees children as individuals, as social actors in their own right, rather than mini-adults driven by a neoliberal ideology.

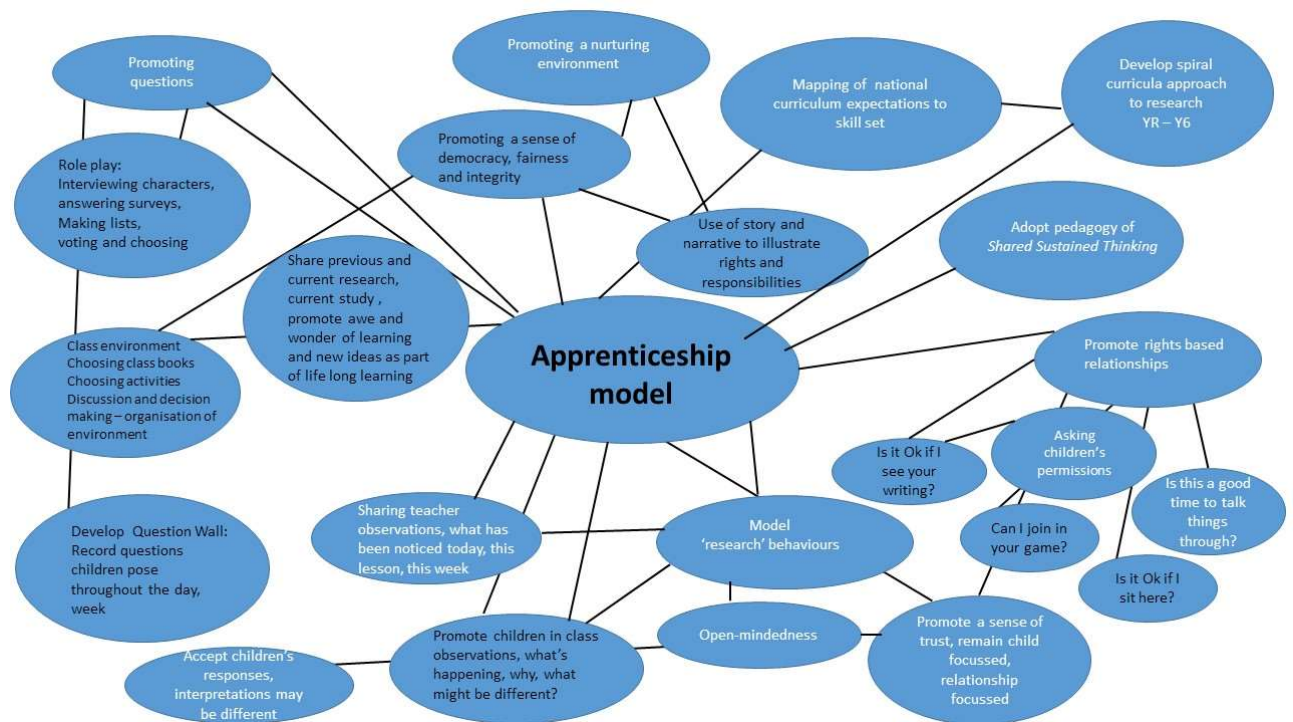


Figure 19 – Apprenticeship Model – Children-as-Researcher Projects

Recognising that although in this thesis and elsewhere, e.g. Ball (2016), there may be a call to arms against the dominance of neoliberalism, at the moment the link between performance and outcomes, and judgements of quality, are governed by the neoliberal matrices (Ball 2016). For those teachers, and schools, with the confidence and determination to challenge the neoliberal dominance a strategic approach to mapping the expected curriculum against learning as part of research initiatives in schools would give both a sense of control and empowerment in that teachers were regaining control of the curriculum, but would also stave off any criticism of poor attainment. This is exactly the sort of approach to challenging neoliberalism in education that Sims (2017:6) advocates, adopting the idea of ‘courageous leaders’. In adopting this feature of an ‘Apprenticeship Model’, teachers would also be challenging neoliberalism and being ‘courageous leaders’ and indeed part of a ‘courageous fellowship’. By adopting an ‘Apprenticeship Model’ of *Children-as-Researchers* teachers would also be challenging a neoliberal version of childhood by remaining focused on social justice, democracy, whereby children have the right to participate (Brown 2015, Burman 2011), and notably Giroux (2013, 2015). Within the ‘Apprenticeship Model’ the emphasis is on rights and responsibilities. Giroux (2015) and Sims (2017) suggest such a value driven approach to learning is what is essentially missing from current pedagogies. In reclaiming this through the ‘Apprenticeship Model’ teachers would be in a position to deliver the child –centred curriculum of which they often speak.

Similarly the ‘Apprenticeship Model’ gives space and time for children to develop at their individual pace, within a nurturing environment, rather than being seen as

commodities where their value is based on potential future employment. Pedagogically the emphasis being on playful interactions re-positions children as children, and not simply as mini-adults who are replicating adult behaviour. For younger children this may well be encouraging the asking of questions and recording these, interviewing characters in role-play situations, voting and gathering opinions about what class books to read, what activities to do next. For older children this may include gathering information about what their peers think about in relation to implementation of new strategies and aspects of organisation, both in imagined worlds or in the real world. For some schools this may even be in relation to what children are learning and activities to support the agreed learning outcomes.

This model acknowledges the journey to be taken when considering research, in the same way that children take a journey of discovery when learning to read and write in order to make sense of the word and share their understanding of it. The journey of the apprentice is a long one, not completed in a term or even following a series of planned events but through nurturing and tentative exploration at the side of a master who is able to model and draw on their experience, in this case of research activity. For this reason I argue that teachers need to be open and honest about their own research and share and celebrate this with the children and wider community.

7.9 Children-as-Researchers – Community Model.

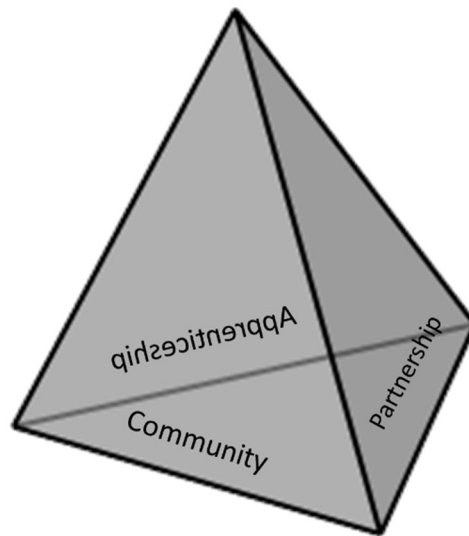


Figure 20 - Models of Children-as-Researcher Projects –Community Facet

This thesis offers a second approach to developing *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives, identified as a 'Community Model', (Figure 21), however this is not offered as a straight forward alternative. Whilst there may be an individually preferred route to be adopted by schools wishing to develop *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives in the light of this thesis, overlaying the ideas and provocations offered in the 'Community Model' here with all, or some of, the 'Apprenticeship Model' is just one, of many possibilities.

I am mindful to restate that the thesis, and recommendations offered in this part of my 'Check point' is not limited by a one size fits all approach. This idea of multiplicities is key in understanding my ontological view of the world. The drive here is to consider how working as part of a community can provide a route into *Children-as-Researcher* projects.

In many ways this view has been triggered by my reflections on ethical approaches to children as research participants and how the dilemma of who has a greater awareness of the needs and individuality of children when they are research participants. I reflected in *Crossing boundaries – appropriate steps?* (7.6.1 pg 325 ff.) on the involvement of a parent in the research activity and how her tacit knowledge of her child enabled a greater understanding of his needs and his way of communicating them. In that episode I depended on parental involvement to navigate through an ethical dilemma. That episode has prompted the idea of an approach that is more community grounded in order to adopt what this thesis argues to be a more ethical approach to *Children-as-Researcher* projects, both as participants and as researchers in their own right. The 'Community Model' which would involve parents and other family members could potentially overcome some of the ethical challenges faced, and promote some of the possibilities offered previously when considering re-placing research as an integral part of teacher identity. Adopting such a model would not only re-place research within teacher identity but would also go some way to re-placing children in a different version of childhood.

Teachers becoming actively involved in their community provides a way to reclaim their identity and, as Giroux (2013) advocates, for teachers to be seen as 'Public Intellectuals'. This re-placing of teachers as part of a re-professionalisation may be another way of challenging the technical positioning of teachers that Giroux (2015) would argue is another indicator of the dominance of neoliberalism. Adopting a 'Community Model' to *Children-as-Researchers* initiatives establishes a direct

challenge both to neoliberalism in education and to the neoliberal versions of childhood that sees children as a commodity and reduced to numbers and outcomes. Similarly taking the focus of the research away from school and placing it in the community provides both space and time for consideration of democratic values, social justice and responsibilities – all of which lie at the heart of teacher values according to Willemse et al (2016).

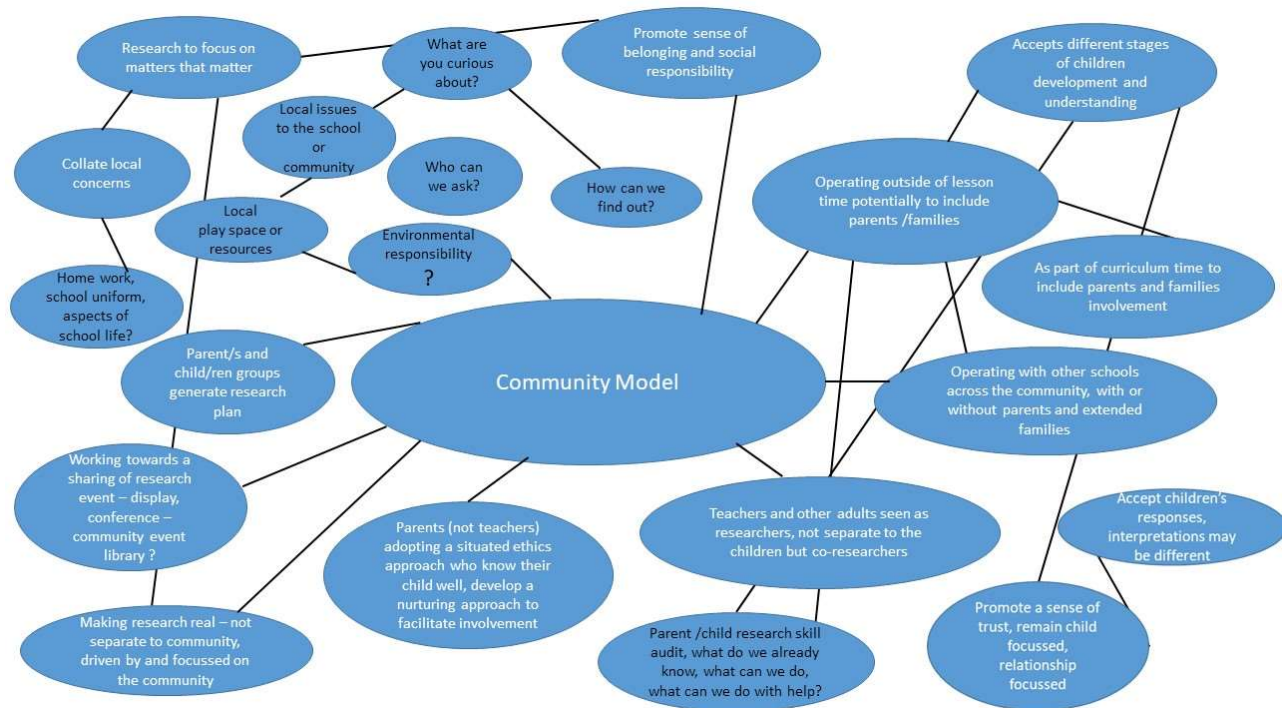


Figure 21 – Community Model – Children-as-Researcher Projects

Whilst this model suggests adopting a co-researcher approach to designing and carrying out the research, and may for some challenge the fundamentals of *Children-*

as-Researchers in their own right, for me this becomes less of an issue when considering my own research experience that was/is often more collegiate, co-operative and collaborative than it is individualised. Added to this, the emotional and nurturing benefits of collaboration and children as co-researchers, who can have their existing skills acknowledged and be supported to develop further by more knowledgeable others, does nothing to diminish the premise of *Children-as-Researchers*. In this way the 'Community Model' is overlaid on the 'Apprenticeship Model', rather than being seen separately as an alternative.

Consideration of the idea of learning communities Willemse et al (2016), and Vangrieken et al (2017), identified that when teachers were part of 'Communities of Inquiry' they reported increased levels of confidence and participation, and the research they undertook as part of professional development was more likely to be completed and to be successful. Establishing a 'Community Model' for children, teachers and other adults, as researchers may well be successful in the same way. The idea of shared responsibility and shared interests has likewise been acknowledged by BERA/RSA (2014) as a key driver to successful teacher research. The possibilities within a 'Community Model' could be argued to be beneficial to children, teacher and adult researchers alike. This is not to say that I am suggesting a watered down version of adult research communities in which children can be researchers, this approach is underpinned by a clear pedagogical position that recognises the advantages of the nature of group-working for children, as understood by social learning theory and social constructivism.

And so to remember here that this model is not an alternative but another facet that comes in to focus as Children-as-Researcher initiatives are reviewed, having replaced children, research and teachers. And so to re-view further, I move now to re-consider how the idea of partnerships can present yet another possibility.

7.10 Children-as-Researchers – Partnerships Model.

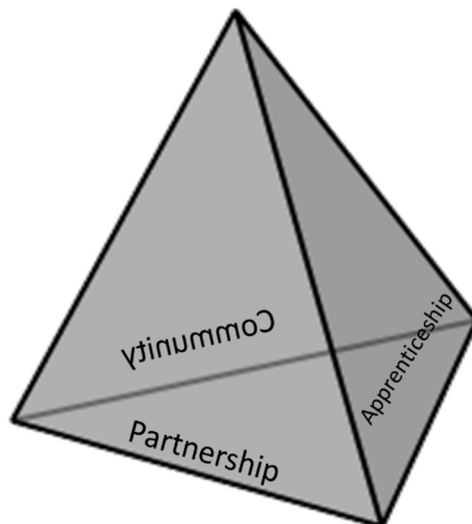


Figure 22 - Models of Children-as-Researcher Projects –Partnership Facet

A turn brings into focus the idea of partnerships and how the possibilities of partnership between Schools and Higher Education Institutions may well enable a rethinking about *Children-as-Research* projects, (Figure 22). Previous research, (French et al 2017), identified that teachers reported increased confidence in undertaking research having

participated in *Children-as-Researcher* projects with a partner HEI. To be able to achieve this more fully in the sector a greater investment in the relationship between HEIs and schools needs to be nurtured. The changing nature of Initial Teacher Education has driven a wedge between schools and universities. Through establishing effective research, or CPD, based partnerships between education professionals who profess to hold the same values of social justice and democracy at their heart, there is a further opportunity for those who wish to set about challenging the dominance of neoliberalism, and provides openings to become 'courageous leaders' who generate 'courageous fellowships' (Sims 2017). Whilst there is evidence of a movement towards a more neoliberal ideology within Higher Education, (Mahony & Weiner 2017) currently there is still, just, (Ball 2016) more flexibility and educational freedom within HEIs than in the compulsory education sector.

Consequently I would suggest, as one of many possibilities, that the responsibility for developing such research partnerships lies with HEIs colleagues, and it is they who must seize this before any more educational freedom is taken away. It is schools who now take the lead in regards to practice elements and the technical training elements of teacher education, however it is HEIs who have the expertise and experience in research (BERA/RSA 2014). Developing a 'Partnership Model' promotes and facilitates a shared interest in *Children-as-Research* projects and, I argue, would go some way towards re-viewing different ways of implementing *Children-as-Researcher* projects, (see Figure 23).

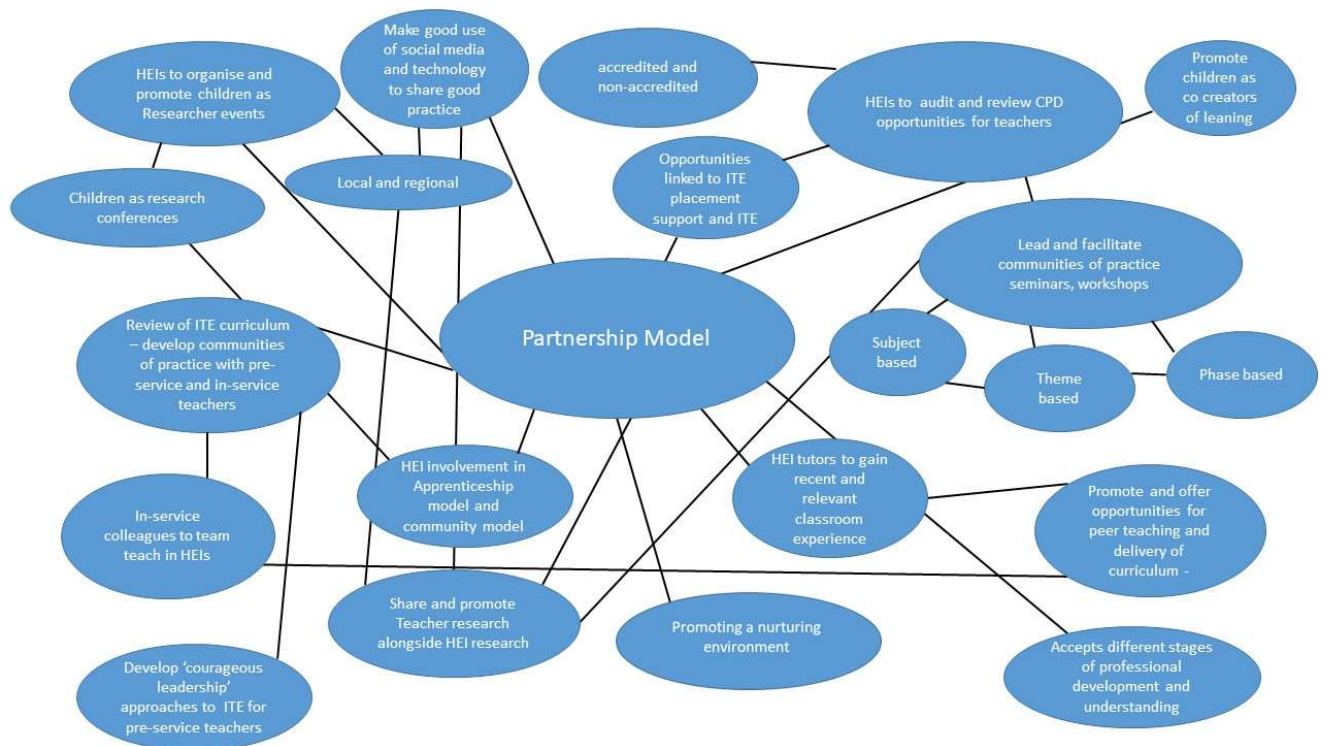


Figure 23 - Community Model – Children-as-Researcher Projects

Not to be seen as an alternative model in a singular way, the possibilities of a 'Partnership Model' could/would be adopted alongside, within, partly or wholly, the other models already considered. An overlapping of key messages are evident within each possible model that go beyond simple repetition. This illustrates my ontological view of the world of inter-relatedness and multiple versions and possibilities.

The multiple possibilities within this 'Partnership Model' allow a serendipitous approach that is not just a way to re-view *Children-as-Researcher* initiatives but collectively affords for research to be re-placed within teacher identity, and for children

to be re-placed in other versions of childhood. Within this model teachers have further possibilities to become 'public intellectuals', (Giroux 2013), through a nurturing environment in which to critique the curriculum and pedagogical approaches adopted within their community of practice. When teachers re-claim research they also reclaim their professionalism, becoming less like technicians. (Giroux 2013, 2015). Further possibilities within this model are revealed when considering how pre-service teachers develop their professional identity. As noted previously, (pg. 309 ff), Beltman et al (2015) suggested that pre-service teachers base their ideals and values of what it is to be a teacher upon their personal, and emotional, experiences of teachers. Within a 'Partnership Model' which facilitates pre-service teachers, alongside in-service teachers, carrying out research within communities of practice, the possibilities of re-placing research as an integral part of teacher identity are apparent. The relationship between pre-service and in-service teachers who take on an active role within a research community is key, with in-service teachers modelling to pre-service teachers that research is indeed an integral part of their identities. Whilst BERA/RSA (2014) suggest this is all about establishing a self-improving education system, this thesis argues that this is also about re-establishing an environment whereby *Children-as-Researchers* initiatives can be immersed within children's experience of education.

The process of re-viewing approaches to *Children-as-Researcher* projects has come about as a result of the thesis arguing for a need to re-place research, teachers and children. These three domains, as has been acknowledged both here and within the

Chapter 6: *Well-trodden trails and off the beaten track*, are not just linked but overlap, react and inter/intra-act. Each cannot be contemplated and considered in isolation.

7.11 Final, for now, thoughts.

This journey of discovery for which I have mapped a route has strayed far away from original simplistic questions to which I thought I would be finding answers. My starting point of asking: *'How might young children be active participants in researching their own educational lives?'*, and *'How is children's participation, within the field of education, understood by children and other stakeholders?'* became less clear and less achievable as my view of the world developed.

The nomadic experience of this research has meant that I shifted my thoughts triggered by lines of flight to consider:

- What place does research play in teachers lives and what do they believe is the relationship between research and their practice?
- How do teachers understand and promote the rights of the child to conduct their own research?
- How does professional identity impact on teachers seeing themselves as researchers?
- What prevents or encourages teachers to carry out research in their classrooms?

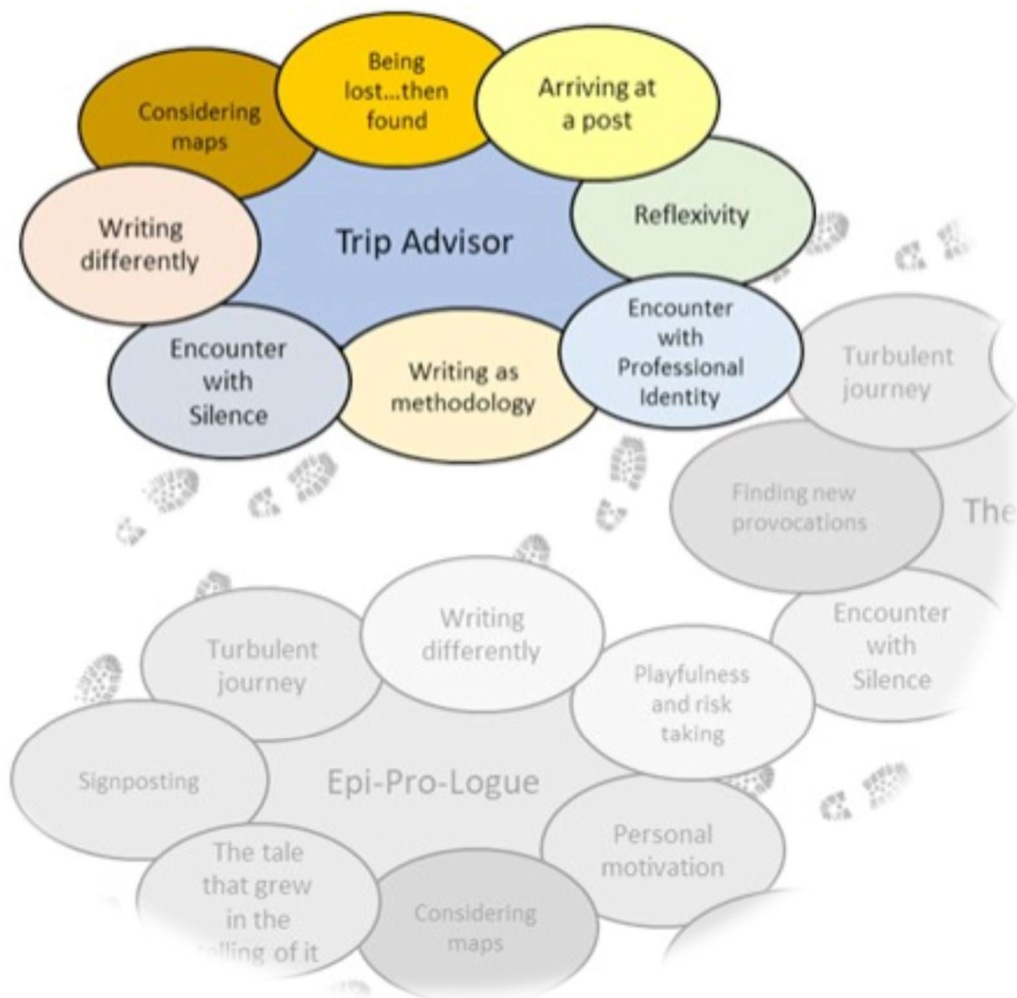
- How do teachers value the voice of children and how are they responding to opportunities for children to become researchers?
- Why is it so challenging for adult gatekeepers to consent to access and involvement with research?

And having adopted a critical diffractive analysis I am left at the rest point here, not a final destination but a *Check Point* to problematise the notion of research, teachers and versions of childhood. Whilst I do not apologise for not answering my initial questions in a conventional humanist qualitative manner I accept that, through the entanglements experienced, that I leave this point with more questions asked than answered.

I move now to my final chapter which will attempt to summarise my learning as an integral part of this research apprenticeship. In doing so I reflect on the souvenirs collected on the way that represent my lived experience on this research journey, and show how these can souvenirs can make a contribution to others in the field who wish to journey these, or similar paths.

8 Trip Advisor

In which the reader is given souvenirs to take away from the journey shared in this travelogue and parting gifts of potential travel opportunities are offered to those who continue to be curious about Children-as-Researcher initiatives.



8.1 Souvenirs from a Post-Qualitative Journey.

In this final chapter of the thesis I am collecting together, and recollecting, the significant points arising out of this research journey in order to highlight the distance, and route, I have travelled. That distance is not just a measurement of the route taken, which has already been presented, but the distance travelled from then to now in my confidence as a researcher, my in-depth thinking, and significantly my ontological view of the world. Thereby I show my journey from a conventional humanist qualitative approach to the post-qualitative. Continuing with the metaphor of journeys, trips and cartographies I adopt the term *souvenirs* to communicate the purpose and place of these salient concepts. These souvenirs are not just proffered as a nostalgic reminder of where I have been, but as triggers to enable potential future trips to be planned. Reflecting on these souvenirs I also aim to offer advice to prospective future travellers who, prompted by my research may wish to pick up where I have, for the moment, left off.

Additionally, these souvenirs are also offered here as gifts to those who have not travelled this route themselves but hope to understand more of my travel experiences. On a recent trip overseas I was introduced to the idea of *omiyage*, the Japanese cultural tradition of giving a small gift to others when you have travelled away. The purpose of *omiyage* is to show appreciation to family and friends that they have managed in your absence. In many ways then the souvenirs discussed are also, small but not insignificant gifts, offered to those who have not taken this journey with me and

also to those who have managed without me whilst I have been immersed in my doctoral studies. These gifts are also offered as my knowledge contribution to the wider education research community.

8.2 Developing Academic Literacies – Alternative ways of doing.

When thinking about my doctoral journey and which aspect of this has impacted on me most of all, my immediate thoughts turn to my writing, even as I place this text upon this page, choosing the right word, the expression, and the order of phrases through which to communicate and share my research. The development of a more sophisticated appreciation of academic literacy/ies, then is my first souvenir.

As I reach the final chapter in thesis, recognising that at some point I do have to stop, my approach to my writing now is different to the earlier chapters. As part of the editing process I revisit and rethink, and retune my writing, however the danger of this becomes evident as I realise that in doing so I am driven to offer a polished/finished article and the journey of discovery and emerging confidence of thought, and writing is lost. Earlier versions showing emerging ideas and competencies are rubbed out, erased and eliminated: emphasising that the outcome, the product, is the measure of success rather than the processes that led/leads to this moment. In discovering a new found confidence of creativity in my writing I remember and re-present the idea that

the aspiration, and indeed the challenges of post-qualitative researchers is to 'produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently' (Lather 2006:52).

The realisation that not only my approach to writing, but my writing style, has changed and evolved throughout the doctoral process is a direct response to the recognition that this process has given me academic freedom and confidence to develop alternative ways of thinking and, importantly with regards to my academic literacy, to present these ideas and communicate in ways that respond to that new found creativity.

Honan and Bright (2016) in their discussion around writing a thesis differently lament the reductionist approach to conventional support and guidance to doctoral students, warning of a 'textual maze' (p732) that students need to traverse. As Honan and Bright (2016) advocate I have not attempted to write 'according to what is expected', but 'to create- to bring something to life' (p733).

French (2016: 114), in her exploration of post/graduate academic writing practices identifies from the outset that research 'always constructs an identity for the researcher', naïvely, perhaps, I had not accounted for this as part of the research experience. Whilst stating confidently early on in *The Weary Traveller* (pg.39 ff.) that my approach would be a reflexive one, it is not until this stage of the journey looking back, and looking forward, that I recognise the complexities of reflexivity and understand these more, in many ways like Attia and Edge (2017) who make the link

between reflexivity and human development. They refer to previous work (Edge 2011) to suggest that reflexivity is best understood in terms of *prospective* and *retrospective* elements (Attia and Edge 2017:35), whereby 'prospective reflexivity' centres on the impact of the researcher on the research whilst 'retrospective reflexivity' concerns itself with the impact of the research on the researcher. It is this latter element that I take away from this research experience as a perceptible souvenir.

Considering who I am, who I have become, and am becoming, I see a different researcher definitely but also a different educator and, I would argue, a different partner, parent and family member. Like Attia and Edge (2017), for me it is the recognition of the interrelatedness between these states of being that I take away from my research journey. It seems like a cliché to say that this research journey has changed me, however Sandywell (1996) cited in Attia and Edge (2017:35) suggests that 'a reflexive practice never returns the self to the point of origin'. This idea of the formation of a new-self is also referred to by Forbes (2008) who, in exploring the place of reflexivity in doctoral study, suggests the journey of study enables the doctoral student to shift identities. Like me, Forbes is influenced by Foucault, likening the interrelatedness and nexus of reflexive learning to a Foucauldian knot, and it is this knotted path of changing identities that has taken me into a new self. Forbes (2008) suggests that it is the process of writing reflexively that reveals this new self.

In the same way that I have tried to capture and communicate the fluxes around teachers, children and research, within the concept of *Children-as-Researchers*, and explored/ am exploring these as unstable, I reach for this souvenir of my research journey that depicts my identity and see it too as unstable, permeable and open to change. This is shown within the to-ing and fro-ing of my reflexive writings as Forbes (2008) suggests. This constructing/deconstructing/reconstructing of self is a risky business, there is uncertainty and risk going into the new, never seen spaces, as I followed and responded to lines of flight. It is these new spaces that were revealed through my reflexive writings that I offer to others who are also intrigued by the notion of *Children-as-Researchers*

My playful approach to writing, whilst not quite the same as Watson (2015) who advocated the use of humour as an integral part of research in the social sciences, both as a tool for analysis and presentation, is simply fun, a different way to think about research, not to be too serious but to be enjoyed. For me this approach attempted to explore at various points in the thesis different ways to present and to illustrate both my changing identity and the changing epistemological positions. Adopting a more playful approach to research contributes a refreshed research experience that challenges conformity and convention. The reflexive approach had/has elements of narrative weaving throughout, this allowed/allows me to be placed with/in and alongside the research story to be told, not in an egocentric way but to demonstrate the interrelatedness of the research and researcher. In doing so I found my voice, particularly in the asides that I now know was/is an approach adopted by St Pierre and

Pillow (2000) as they examined 'doing' reflexive writing. The writing itself has been a transformative process and I have been able to think differently through my writing which I would agree with Fox and Allan (2013) has been a bumpy ride.

8.2.1 Trip Advisor: Alternative ways of doing

And here then, in playful manner, with some humour, I offer a review, based on the familiar Trip Advisor style (Graphotomontage 5). Playfully I summarise my learning and offer support for potential choices of future travellers; please note all views are entirely based on my own experience.



"Writing is a methodology and part of the process not the end product."

"Be aware you will change."

"It's a bumpy ride."



Thanks for the advice!

Graphotomontage 5 – Trip Advisor: Alternative ways of doing

8.3 The Sound of Silence – Alternative ways of listening.

My first souvenir, developing academic literacies, revealed through my reflexive approach, enabled my individuality to come alive through the research process and, significantly for me, to be established through the writing process. The irony of course is that the process of completing this thesis, and the journey mapped throughout, is how my voice was/is found, and yet this second souvenir to be gifted focuses on the silences, quietnesses and emptinesses within that research experience.

Early on in the research experience I was driven by the determination to empower children through *Children-as-Research* projects and to enable their 'voice' to be heard. This was a focus of the initial stages of designing the project and discussed within

Dealing with Wanderlust that examined literature related to Children's Voice. (pg.84 ff.), where I reviewed the development of the movement to promote this ideology founded in UNCRC (1989). Later, following my ontological turn I moved to examine the place of silence (3.10 pg.110 ff.) At this point I return to that silence, not that I am reverting to a binary view of the world, that considers 'voice' and 'silence' as opposites, but rather I want to emphasise the place of the empty set and the presence of nothingness, as a souvenir and gift for others so that it is not missed, overlooked or ignored by future travellers along this path.

Within a conventional humanist qualitative approach silences in interviews and data are seen to be annoyances, perhaps indicative of the lack of skills or empathy of the interviewer. I would argue that this should not be the case and that silences require to be listened to and acknowledged. I hear the significant of silences for example, within music; the pause, the rest, which adds to- not takes away from, the rhythm and soul of the composition. I think again about the patterns and intricacies of filigree, latticework and lacework and see how the whole is only understood in the presence of absence. Mazzei (2007) supports me here as she promotes thinking with Deleuze, which I have attempted to adopt throughout the thesis, and draws attention to Deleuze's concept of 're-imagining of voice' (1983, 1985). This re-imagining of voice within my research context, apart from a prompt to review how I perceive data, has challenged me to move to a different plane (following a line of flight?), whereby voice becomes not just that which is spoken, but that which is not spoken, a holistic recognition of the context of communication. Mazzei (2007) suggests that there is a

need to rethink the idea of 'voice' but not only in relation to those who are perceived to be powerless and marginalised and for whom voice may be dangerous or not trusted. She raises concerns about the limited use of silence in qualitative data (Mazzei 2007, Mazzei and Jackson 2012) and again emphasises the need to view voice differently within context and not just in a conventional way that hears 'voice' as a form of truth that reveals the self. It is within the context of qualitative data that the 'other' can be heard, in the pauses, the silences and, for me, the stillness in absence, which is what I have attempt to do and offer as my contribution to the debate started by Mazzei and Jackson (2012).

My curiosity, and subsequent exploration of how to reinterpret 'voice' throughout the thesis has come about through my reflexive approach. I acknowledge and hear the voices of the Teacher-Respondents, and my own voice, within the data produced by the survey, along with the voices of theorists and others who have written and expressed views, interpretations and analyses before me. All of these voices form the data set to which I respond. In this way the multiplicity of voices, which I liken to a choir performing a choral piece, demonstrates the texture, dynamics, harmony, melody, rhythm, form and text that create a collective experience of the concept that is *Children-as-Researchers*. If I am thinking with theory, in my case thinking with Deleuze and Guatarri (1987), I respond to the assemblage, the process of fitting these voices together, making connections and 'seeing" voice (Deleuze 1986/1989).

I am aware of the need to recognise how, within the context of schools, children and research, and, certainly as part of the initial stages of this doctoral study, 'voice' is

seen as empowering and 'silence' is perceived to be disempowering. This is the cultural, and binary, context within which I began my research journey, recognising that here I am referring to the first step on this particular leg of my research journey and not the '*beginning*'.

The approach to schooling, the organisations of schools and learning communities, and my own professional identity, as a teacher and an academic, are governed and created by the social context and cultural constructions that influence and form them. In the same way, how communication is understood, and how the term and concept of 'voice' is understood, are similarly constructed within a cultural context. Within the Western tradition the idea of having 'voice' is seen as positive, empowering, and linked to the concepts of freedom, whereas silence is understood to be indicative of being downtrodden and subservient.

I discover that this is not the case within other cultures, for example in Japanese culture (Kawabata and Gastaldo 2015) and again in the nomadic culture of Australian Aboriginal people (Mushin and Gardner 2009). In both these studies the place of silence within conversations and interactions is understood to have meaning and relevance. Sometimes the silences are placed to allow time for reflections and processing, a time for a deeper understanding to take place, (Mushin and Gardner 2009). At other times silences provides subtle meanings that are sensitive in a culture that maintains a wish not to offend, and is interpreted as, 'no more' without having to

deny or quieten the questioner (Kawabata and Gastaldo 2015). However in both Japanese and Australian Aboriginal culture the use of silence is linked to a greater connectivity with both those ancestors who have gone before, and the wider social community; and in doing so acknowledges the idea that self and individuality is not a priority as individuals are each seen as being part of a cultural heritage and social collective.

For me then the recognition of silence as data, of the present absence, is indicative of the intra and interrelatedness of key concepts being explored. When thinking with theory, these cannot be ignored or viewed as anomalies to be placed to one side and forgotten about. I have found, through my research journey, that I was only able to do this when taking a slower, calmer approach to producing data and when viewing, reviewing and re-viewing, and then presenting, representing and re-presenting the communications and conversations that emerged from the survey. The slowing down of my analyses allowed/allows time for a reflexive approach that generated not just a percolation of ideas but for a response to the silence and the present absence.

At times I found myself responding to my conventional humanist roots worrying if I had enough data. Now/then with confidence in my new researcher identity created for myself, following my hyper-reflexive approach, I see that less is more. Taking a slower more considered attitude has allowed me to be fully immersed in the research that has

taken me along a 'line of flight' that accepts and values silence, and acknowledges the interrelatedness of silence and voice, of absence and presence.

Moving forward I urge other travellers to consider their interactions with participants and to move beyond 'listening' whereby they believe themselves to be 'enabling voices to be heard' and counsel an approach that adopts 'seeing' voice and responding to the complexities of that in order to respond to the bigger picture.

8.3.1 Trip Advisor: Alternative ways of listening

Ever so slowly ...and quietly...listening carefully.....

...celebrating the silences that say so very much, and this is summarised here in Graphotomontage 6.



"Travel slowly, or you'll miss something."

"Respond to silences, they speak volumes."

"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts."



Thanks for the advice!

Graphotomontage 6 – Trip Advisor: Alternative ways of listening

8.4 Cartographic Images – New ways of seeing.

When selecting my third and final souvenir from this trip, it comes as no surprise that I draw upon the same reflexive approach that has impacted throughout the doctoral study. The inter/intra related nature of my research is evident here as I gaze along the potential mementoes on offer. Finally I chose something that is part of my new 'self', the researcher- educator I have become as part of this journey, and which would not have been an aspect of the previous versions of my researcher self. The reflexive approach has prompted a new wave of creativity through which emerges something that previously would have been very alien in my thinking and organisation of ideas. I offer this souvenir that is indicative of the liminal space that is old-self and new-self. The analogy of traveling, of my journey and the terrain encountered has come out of a new playfulness and creative approach to writing. Building on this new found creativity as part of this 'Trip Review' I move now to re-present the cartographic, and playful, interpretation of my research journey, Image 13.

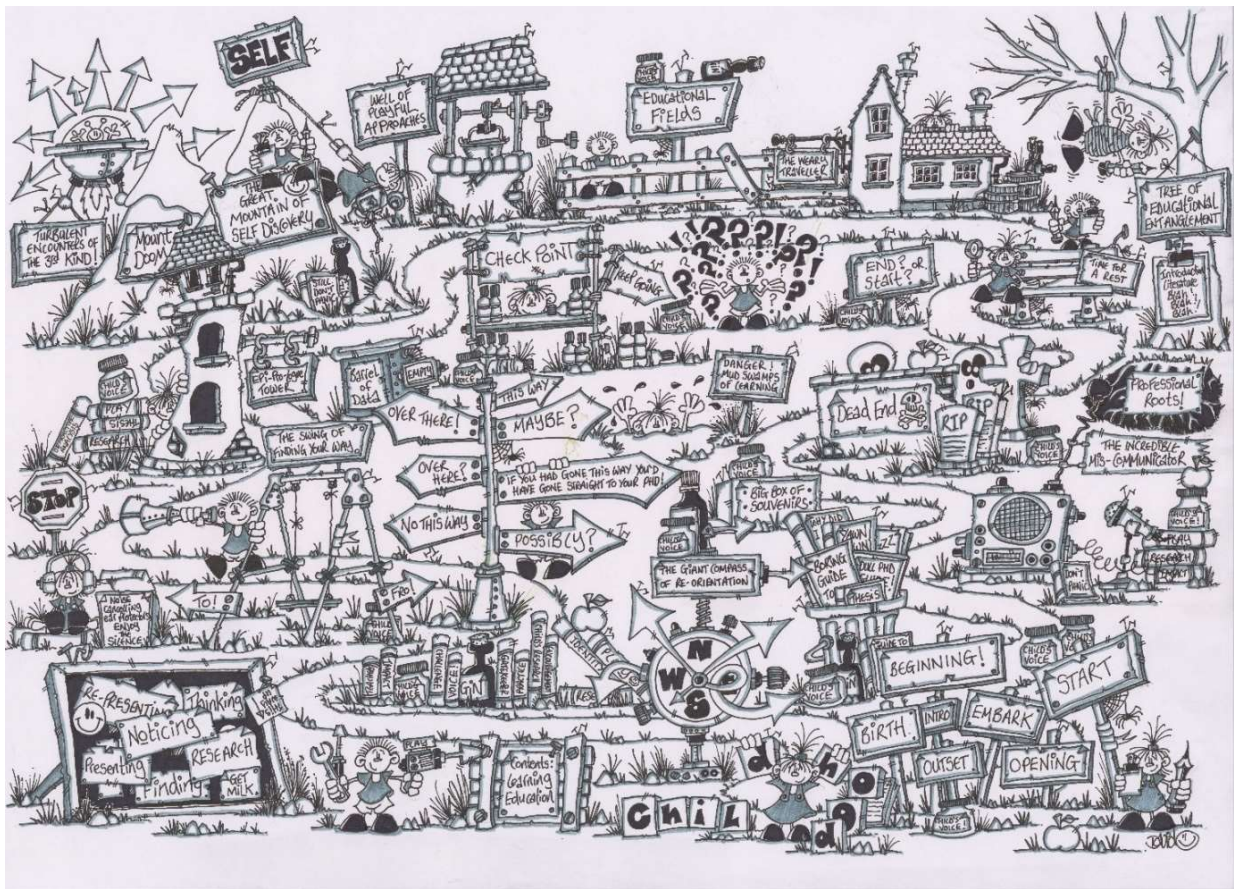


Image 13 – Cartographic representations

According to Pink (2013) and Spencer (2010) the use of visual methods within social research is dependent on adopting a reflexive approach, so it is perhaps not a surprising addition to this chapter that I draw upon visual methods in order to communicate the journey taken. The aim of the cartographic image, offered as an outcome of the thesis, is to illuminate the journey taken, in a playful manner, showing the interconnected elements of the journey and the nomadic features as the

topography and terrain of *Children-as-Researchers* was/is explored. I see this mapping to be interpreted as both a holistic overview and simultaneously to be viewed alongside the narrative and reflexive asides seen throughout this thesis (St Pierre and Pillow 2000). As such this visual method mirrors the 'layered textural (structural and visual) analyses' proffered by Covert and Koro-Ljunberg (2015:316) who used a layered approach in order to analyse images, which they refer to as 'photo –elicitation'.

In my study this layering is a further reflection of the inter-connectivity of my research, drawing upon the idea of the cartographic image, together with the text, and narratives, working together to deliver the research encounter. This shift to visual research, as an analytical tool, potentially, and as data to be analysed is a new direction that I would suggest could become a new venture moving forward...and so continuing the journey presented here. This in itself is representative of the blurring of methodologies I adopted and has led to a new way of thinking about methodologies and nonconventional approaches.

My wanderings through this '*Cartography of Practices in Research with Young Children*' represented as a nomadic wandering, sometimes being lost then found, is akin to psycho-geography which in its playful way attempts to explore urban environments and their impact on the psyche. When attempting to define psycho-geography Coverley (2018) acknowledges that the term is always shifting and whilst from a contemporary perspective it now incorporates art, film, political strategies and

philosophy, the key elements that remain are the wanderer, and walking. This is the golden thread as seen through the metaphor of travels adopted throughout my research which assumes the idea of walking and journeying and can be said to consider the impact of the landscape (territory) of this research process on my psyche. Furthermore, Coverley (2018) links not only playfulness but provocation and trickery as being part of the spirit of psycho-geography, which was identified as my approach at the beginning/end in my epi-prologue (pg. 17 ff.) and resonates throughout my travelogue. Richardson (2017) develops these ideas of a walking based exploration of urban space some more and re-invents the notion of psycho-geography, developing it into what she terms 'schitzocartography', which she uses to explain the layering and multiplicities of interpretation of the urban landscape. In her discussion Richardson (2017), acknowledges the influences of Guattari, and promotes a flexibility in interpretation that recognises the multiplicities of encounters with buildings and urban environments. Similarly for me my final souvenir draws these ideas together in a playful and engaging manner with a presentation of my map, Image 13 – Cartographic representations. This is yet another reminder of how my research encounter has found the, initially hidden, spaces and interactions besides, between, in front of and behind children, research, and teachers.

8.4.1 Trip Advisor: new ways of seeing.

Risky play.....creative approaches and hints at future creative possibilities, being open to alternatives reveals the 'other' that may well be the catalyst for new learning...it was/is for me.

Within the playful approach and opportunity to take on risk, there remains a fraction of nervousness as seen in the 4.5 rated review (Graphotomontage 7).



“Don’t be afraid to have fun, play is a powerful tool for learning.”

“Try new ideas and be creative.”

“Find alternative ways to present your ideas, experiment with paper, texture and colour as alternative dimensions to your communication.”



Thanks for the advice!

Graphotomontage 7 – Trip Advisor: New Ways of seeing

8.5 Post Script

The souvenirs offered as gifts to my readers promote further thinking and deliberations and, as I have suggested in 7.11 *Final, for now, thoughts*, provide food for thought for future travellers. I identify the key messages within this thesis to be the bridge from what is already known and understood about *Children-as-Researchers* to the new spaces within that concept. To clarify these messages and indeed what this thesis contributes I return to the idea of multiples and layers taking my proposed audiences singularly to offer how and where this thesis impacts.

For those researchers wishing to explore, consider or engage with post-qualitative approaches to research the thesis shares a personal narrative that offers my experiences, advice and encouragement. The dominance of a Scientific Based Research lies heavily in contemporary education research (St Pierre 2012). I argue that my travelogue matters to those who identify their leanings towards an ontology of becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1991), perhaps like me, as a result of feeling out of sync with the conventional qualitative approach to researching the social world, particularly in education and within children's worlds of education. The travelogue I share here matters to those who are commencing that journey to the post and 'new beginnings' (Koro-Ljunberg 2016) and want to tentatively explore new ways of producing new knowledge differently (St Pierre 1997).

For those teachers wishing to explore, consider, or engage with different ways of adopting and enacting *Children-as-Researchers* projects, the thesis provides multiple alternatives of doing this, challenging the dominance of the previous linear approaches. These approaches offered in *7.7 Reviewing Children-as-Researchers (pg 322 ff.)* present different models for developing school and or community based projects but are all influenced by the underpinning idea of *Children as Emergent Researchers*. This new concept is key as it promotes the idea of children as researchers, not just replicating adult behaviour but being valued and recognised for who they are now as well as the idea of them *becoming*, again the rejection of binaries is key here. Linked to my own journey of discovering the posts this thesis

matters to all those curious about *Children-as Researchers* as it demands a pausing and slowing down of these initiatives to ask why, as well as how.

For those teacher educators wishing to explore, consider or engage with different ways of training teachers and be more responsive and more questioning of the place of research in teachers professional lives this thesis matters as it demands the opening up of a conversation about the place of research in initial teacher education, about teacher identity and about new ways of training teachers as reflexive, thinking professionals rather than technicians of education. The thesis matters as it demands a re-thinking and re-positioning of initial teacher training programmes to respond to the new spaces revealed *in between* children-research-teachers.

In short the thesis matters at different layers to multiple audiences, and this is influenced by the complexity and the interrelatedness of both the concepts of *Children-as-Researchers* and the experiences of my research journey represented in the thesis.

What started as an exploration of ways to actively involve children as co-researchers in investigating their educational lives has resulted in new knowledge of previously unnoticed spaces in which to explore the notion of *Children-as-Researchers*. I say unnoticed as they were always there but have been revealed and mapped as an outcome of a blurred methodological approach which allowed a fermenting of the

conventional stable lines of methodological attack. This blurred methodological approach, which Koro-Ljunberg (2017: 79) would describe as 'fluid diverse and constantly changing' revealed these new spaces and their surprises within. The spaces that were deemed barren have, with a blurred methodological approach, been found to be fruitful. Those spaces that were conventionally silent have opened up to reveal their voices. The idea of identifying what a blurred methodology looks like is challenging, it remains an approach, a confidence and a determination. The blurring of methodologies narrated here are not the one way, but the energy of my experience is hoped to be the provocation for a new experience for other educational researchers. The souvenirs discussed in this chapter are not just for me but are offered to the community of educational researchers as new ways of thinking, particularly about the notion of *Children-as-Researchers*.

Journeying is tiring, and demands rests, some short breaks to catch your breath, others for longer periods of time, which is where I stand now. I have taken away a multitude of experiences and encounters that remain with me, the key souvenirs offered and discussed here are treasured and continue to provoke me to consider where next, and are also offered as provocations for others who wish to take up this path. For my next journey, which may be some time away yet, I have a new post-structuralist tool kit developed as part of this research encounter and it provides enough fuel to challenge me to consider:

Alternative ways to present my ideas and findings, communicating beyond what is constrained by printed text on paper.

Making more sense of silence as a data set

Further explorations of children's values and beliefs about the world.

This final chapter in the thesis is the end point, for the moment, and at this point I am not so sure if I have answered questions initially posed or simply found new questions for others to answer. In doing so, I return to the beginning, or maybe the middle, in search of a new ending, or new beginning as did Frodo in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings epic.

'This tale grew in the telling of it', the opening lines of the foreword of one of the greatest epic tales of travel, journey and discovery, (JRR Tolkien The Lord of the Rings 1954) perhaps encapsulates the essence of this thesis. Through the writing, and reading, of this thesis the research presented has become dependent on what came before, alongside, and will inevitably come after.

9 References.

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10APPENDIX - The Survey

Please note this survey included in this appendix is in a text format. The Bristol Online Survey version is formatted differently, however the questions noted here are the same questions as the online version.

Research in Educational Settings

Page 1: Research in Educational Settings

Welcome

Thank you for showing interest in my PhD thesis, which is about research in education and children's involvement in research.

I am now exploring the values, perceptions and beliefs about research held by teachers and practitioners in early years settings and schools. The data gathered from this survey will contribute to my findings.

The survey should take no more than 30 - 40 minutes to complete. Responses will be anonymous, however if you would be happy to be contacted and be interviewed to explore these themes further, please include your name and email address in response to the final questions.

rosemarie.lowe@bcu.ac.uk

Page 2 - Section 1: About You

1. How would you best describe your current role in education?
2. What is your highest level of qualification?
3. When did you gain this qualification?
4. Do you have a management role of any kind? If yes please specify.
5. Considering your highest qualification did you carry out research in education? If yes please confirm the following:

Please provide an overview	
Topic – What?	
Methodology & Methods – How?	
Context- Where?	
Participants – Who?	

6. When thinking about the attributes and skills that make an effective practitioner/teacher, rank the following in order of importance. 1 being the most important, 8 being the least important.

Good communicator, risk taker, reflective, analytical, being able to think outside of the box, good subject knowledge, rapport with people, good team player.

Page 3: Section 2 – About Research in Education.

This section focusses on your views on research in education as well as information about research you have done or may like to do.

7. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements about research in education?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My setting/school carries out research regularly					
Education research should be carried out by practitioners/teachers					
Government Policy in education should be based on research					
Practitioners/Teachers in settings/schools should focus only on children and not research					
Educational research should be carried out only by academics					
What happens in settings/schools should be based on research					

8. Have you carried out any research in early years settings or schools since you completed your highest qualification? If yes please confirm the following.

Please provide an overview	
Topic – What?	
Methodology & Methods – How?	
Context- Where?	
Participants – Who?	

9. What might discourage you from carrying out research in early years settings/schools. Please tick all that apply.

Time	External factors .e. OFSTED	Lack of support from managers
Lack of confidence	Not required to do research	Focus on targets and attainment
Pace and challenge of current practice	Not studying presently	Lack of resources

Any other reasons?

10. What might encourage you to carry out research in early years settings/schools?

11. Would you like to carry out some research in early years settings/schools?

If yes what would you like to do?

Please outline your ideas	
Topic – What?	
Methodology & Methods – How?	
Context- Where?	
Participants – Who?	

12. When thinking about attributes and skills that make an effective researcher, rank the following in order of importance, 1 being the most important, 8 being the least important.

Good communicator, risk taker, reflective, analytical, being able to think outside of the box, good subject knowledge, rapport with people, good team player.

Page 4: Section 3 – About Involving Children in Research.

This section focusses on your views about children and research.

13. Can children be researchers?

Yes/No/Maybe

13a. Please explain your answer.

14. Have you ever included children in your research?

If yes please confirm the following.

Please provide an overview	
Topic – What?	
Methodology & Methods – How?	
Context- Where?	
Participants – Who?	

14a. What did the children do?

14b. How old were the children?

15. Please consider children you are currently working with, or have previously worked with if not currently class based. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements about children's involvement in research.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Practitioners carry out research on children regularly e.g. data analysis of levels and attainment					
Research on children enables practitioners to plan effective learning experiences					
Children would be able to gather data for themselves for a research project i.e. carry out interviews, write and distribute questionnaires					
Children can be active research participants e.g. they could be interviewed to elicit their opinions and beliefs					
Children's views and beliefs about their learning enable educators to create a more effective learning experience					
Most children in KS2 (7 – 11 yrs old) have the skills to be able to devise their own research questions and investigate them					
Most children in KS1 (5 – 7 yrs old) have the skills to be able to devise their own research questions and investigate them					
Most children in Early Years (3 – 5 yrs old) have the skills to be able to devise their own research questions and investigate them					

16. Consider the following ways of involving children in research, how confident would you be with regards to:

	Very Confident	Reasonably Confident	Neutral	Not very confident	Unconfident	I wouldn't do this
Research on children i.e. observing children, analysing levels of attainment,						

	Very Confident	Reasonably Confident	Neutral	Not very confident	Unconfident	I wouldn't do this
measuring impact of curriculum initiatives						
Research with children – i.e. eliciting children's views and beliefs about the curriculum, teaching approaches, the learning environment						
Research by children – i.e. children leading and designing their own research questions, interviewing peers, and adults, gathering and analysing data, presenting findings.						

17. What, if any, would be the barriers to children designing and carrying out their own research?

18. What skills do you think children would need to be effective researchers?

19. Would your setting/school/institution promote the idea of children as researchers? Please explain your answer.

20. How, if at all, might your practice benefit from children carrying out research?

Page 5: Contact Details (Optional)

If you are happy to be contacted to potentially be interviewed as part of the research project then please add your name and email contact details below.