

**Developing an online learning community of practices
with ten-year-old pupils**

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Submitted to the University of Hertfordshire in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Hertfordshire

July 2009

Statement

This is to confirm that the research, underpinning this thesis, undertaken by Gillian Porthouse, was carried out with the consent of the University of Hertfordshire ethics committee,

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Abstract

This submission sets out a narrative of how a practitioner in the field of education identified and implemented the changes required, both in research methodology and in practice, in order to answer the question ‘how do I improve my practice?’ (Whitehead and McNiff, 2004) while remaining true to a personal value system by not teaching or researching in ‘a living contradiction’ (Ibid: 5) where a value system and a practice are not working in harmony.

This submission chronicles a self-study journey to improve practice by identifying and reflecting on the changes required to improve that practice when ‘teaching’ ten-year-old pupils historical enquiry online. The narrative demonstrates how a practice can be reconceptualised and illustrates the outcomes of that re-conceptualisation. The particular practice in question was set within the context of technological advances in the Internet over the last half decade: in the early research the pupils used the Internet as an online encyclopaedia while in the later stages of the research they used the Internet as a means to access online authoring sites on the read-write resource Web 2.0.

The journey of change follows the practitioner from teaching historical enquiry within a classroom setting to that of teaching historical enquiry within an online authoring site, called a *wiki*. To achieve those changes many key concepts (that had informed teaching practices at the beginning of the research journey) had to be deconstructed and subsequently restructured using an alternative design. The learning process was one of the key concepts teased apart and reconstructed using Wenger’s ‘communities of practice’ approach as a template for designing a small community of practices. It was the emerging small community of practices on the *wiki* that developed into a new perspective on how to promote the learning process most effectively in an online context.

The submission also narrates the ontological dimension to the journey where the practitioner’s key personal values were used in the change process to create a living theory. This value driven methodology created living standards of judgement.

The submission identifies, then critically reflects on, the two voices representing the significance of the developing perspectives of the writer as researcher and as practitioner. It then uses journal entries, articles and interviews to follow the practitioner journey from perspective point one to perspective point two. It reflects critically on the change process being experienced and the growing confidence that emerged as the practitioner and researcher voices began, in combination, to challenge accepted practice and develop a new single voice that impacts upon both the professional context and the field of educational theory. It leads to the acceptance of some of Wenger's assertions that underpin his notion that meaning is negotiated in communities of practice and examines the changes in thinking that eventually led to this model being interpreted as a reference point only and to the suggestion of a new perspective on the learning process.

The contribution to knowledge is, then, to be found in this new perspective of what is meant by a community of practices and the learning processes it generates with reference to teaching historical enquiry skills to ten-year-old pupils on an online authoring site called a *wiki*.

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Acknowledgements

I acknowledge, with gratitude, the role that the University of Hertfordshire has had in reigniting my joy of learning and giving me the courage to embark on this exciting adventure.

I would especially like to thank my brilliant supervisors; Stuart Powell and Roger Levy who have been a source of constant inspiration, encouragement and through their endless patience have enabled me to gain the knowledge, skill, and courage to complete my long journey.

I am also grateful for my colleagues, especially Loraine and Beverley for being my critical friends and having faith in my vision and my Year 6 pupils who over the years have made my research exciting and relevant.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family, especially my long-suffering husband David who always believed in my ability to complete my research.

Chapter 1



My journey of change: an introduction

Table 1.0
Preliminary Research: June 2002 – March 2006
Main research: April 2006 – April 2008
In this chapter, I explain briefly the narrative structure of my submission. As a starting point, I introduce and discuss the metaphor of a tree, which enables me to visualise my growth, as a practitioner and a researcher, as an organic process as I journey towards my ultimate goal of developing an online community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils to conduct historical enquiries. In order for the reader to gain an insight into my journey of change, I summarise each of my chapters. In the last section of this chapter, I identify and briefly explain the key themes that guided me through my six years of research and changing practice.

1.0 A living theory metaphor

This submission chronicles my six-year self-study action research journey (and outlined in Table 1.0) to develop an online community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils to initiate and develop historical enquiries, by critically reflecting on the changes in my practice I make to achieve this goal. This journey of transformation then becomes my living theory on the nature of change (both personal and professional) and the story of how I come to theorise those changes in my practice. The metaphor, which perhaps best encapsulates my journey of change and transformation, is that of a growing tree, as illustrated in Diagram 1.0 (see page 2) with each stage of the trees growth becoming my visual reference for each key stage in my research. The roots system represents the early stages of my research between 2002 and 2006, a time when I am searching for an answer to the question ‘How do I improve my practice?’ but still ‘in the dark’ about the way forward. The trunk represents a consolidating time of growth when I am re-evaluating my

research and my practice through comparing the way I am using the Internet in 2005 and using it in 2008 when conducting an historical enquiry. Lastly, the branches represent a period of rapid growth and flowering in the later stages of my research when I am seeing all the possibilities my research is opening up for me, as my ten-year-old pupils and I explore in Web 2.0 domain from our wiki community of practices.

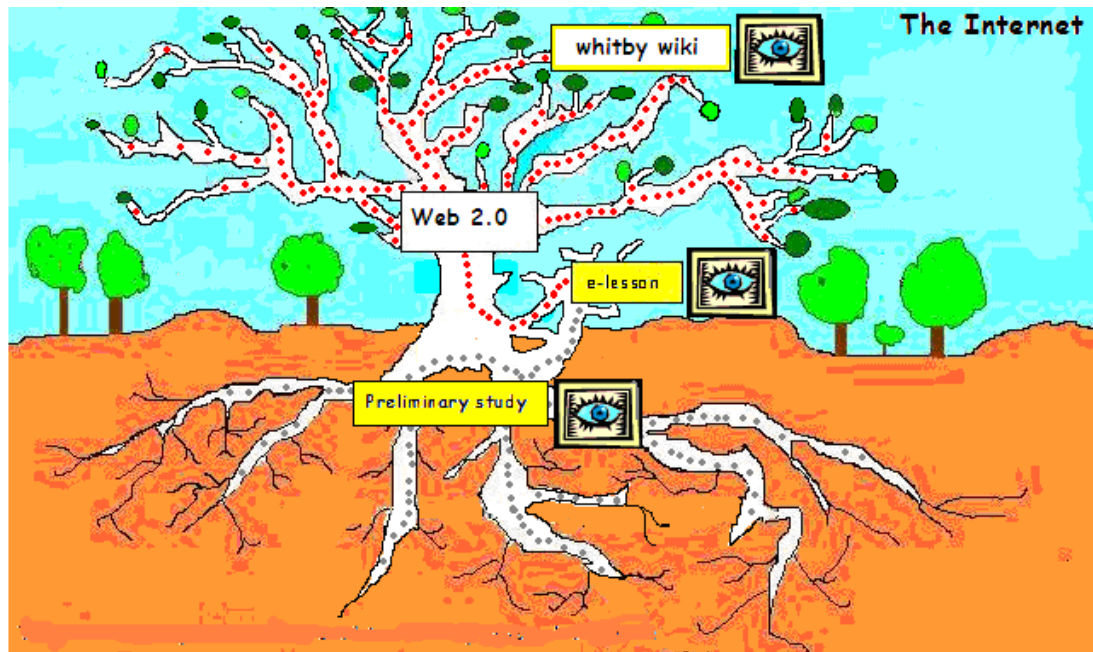


Diagram 1.0: The growth of a living theory

In choosing a tree metaphor to describe my research journey I am acknowledging Whitehead and McNiff's (2006), Duffy and Cunningham's (1996), Keiny's (2004) and Rayner's (2004) influences on my thinking to convey the, '*dynamic fluidity*', of my research experience. In visualising my research, as a growing tree, I am able to see the changes in my research and practice as the growth mechanism enabling the spreading and forming of a strong root system. A root system that reflects the organic nature of my choices, decisions and actions through a, '*labyrinthine network of channels*' (Rayner, 2004:1) '*develop[ing] a rhizome¹-like action where*

¹ **Rhizome** in this context comes from Duffy and Cunningham's (1996), model of a 'Mind as Rhizome'. The metaphor of rhizome is visualising 'minds as distributed in social, cultural, historical, and institutional context' (Ibid: 8) as a horizontal-spreading root system.

[they] *spread and metamorphose into extended rootsgenerating new growth*' (Keiny 2004: 30) (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:114). This new growth is energising, consolidating and directing future growth towards a unique ecosystem: my tree, my changing practice and my living theory.

To reinforce this element of, '*dynamic fluidity*' I am writing my research story in the present tense. In making this decision I am, through my narrator's voice, conveying the organic nature of my choices, decisions and actions, as they, '*spread and metamorphose into extended rootsgenerating new growth*' as my practice changes.

My tree metaphor gives me a useful internal construct for my thinking and this visualisation aids me, by, in a sense, validating my living theory by connecting my ontological², epistemological³, methodological and pedagogical⁴ journeys into a single image. This submission is the narrative of my journey of change in my research and practice over a six-year period: 2002 – 2008 encompassing these four interconnected journeys. Through my ontological journey, I am able to identify, and then explain, how my core value system influences why I am changing, by exploring the significance of these changes in my practice and my research. Through my methodological journey, I am examining why, after deeply reflecting on my early research in 2006, I adopt a living theory approach to undertake my research. Through my pedagogical journey I am re-evaluating my teaching practice as my research progresses and finally through my epistemological journey, I become more discerning when reviewing the theories of knowledge informing my thinking and actions as a practitioner and researcher.

² **Ontology/ontological** refers to the theory of being which influences how we perceive ourselves in relation to our environment (Whitehead and McNiff 2006: 22)

³ **Epistemological** refers to the theory of knowledge which involves two parts: the theory of knowledge.

(what is known) and the theory of knowledge acquisition (how it comes to be known)

⁴ **Pedagogical refers** to the principles and practice of teaching.

The new insight I gain from visualising these four seemingly separate journeys as a single journey enables me to create my living theory promoting a new perspective on the process of knowledge production in a Web 2.0⁵ environment through developing a community of the practices with my ten-year-old pupils. I am submitting my living theory of change, with my new perspective on my meaning of a community of practices and the learning process it generates, with reference to teaching historical enquiry skills to ten-year-old pupils on a wiki⁶, as my original contribution to knowledge in the field of education.

1.1 Structure of the chapter

In organising this chapter into three sections, I am summarising my narrative, identifying and describing the central themes and the organisation of my submission.

A. My central themes

- 2.0 My self-study action research
- 3.0 My emerging praxis
- 4.0 My reflective spiral
- 5.0 My core values
- 6.0 My epistemological journey
- 7.0 My issues of validity and values

B. My narrative

- 8.0 My journey of change

C. My submission

- 9.0 The potential significance of my study
- 10.0 My claim to knowledge
- 11.0 The aim of my submission
- 12.0 The organisation of my submission

⁵ **Web 2.0** refers to a perceived second generation of web-based communities and hosted service such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs and podcasts which aim to facilitate creativity, collaboration, and sharing between users.

⁶ A **wiki** is an online authoring site.

A. My central themes

2.0 My self-study action research

My choice of self-study action research, as a means to explore practice, represents a form of enquiry committed to improving my practice and grounded in my understanding of the questions I am asking myself at the beginning of my research:

‘Why am I unhappy with my practice? and How do I improve it?’

When reflecting on these questions, I make the decision to embark on a journey of change placing me at the centre of my educational research to discover the answer.

My practice at the beginning of my research, I now accept, is a ‘living contradiction’⁷ (Whitehead, 1989: 42). It is with the introduction of the Internet and my use of this tool, when teaching history online to ten-year-old pupils, that I begin to have causes for concern about my practice. I know I am not teaching history on the Internet effectively because I lack the skills to use this online tool properly; it will be a few years, and development of Web 2.0 technology, before I understand the real potential value of online ‘teaching’. At the beginning of my research, I am simply dissatisfied with my practice when using the Internet and want to know how to improve it. My ‘living contradiction’, I discover later, originates in the core values of equality, individuality and responsibility not informing my practice (I explore the nature of these values later in the submission. One thing I learn addressing my ‘living contradiction’ in my practice, is that it is a process not as straightforward as I believe when I start my journey).

In 2002, I simply want equality of opportunity for both the pupils and myself when exploring the Internet, but we are denied this opportunity through the many constraints that are keeping the teacher and pupil apart. I sense, even in those early days, it will require a team approach to truly understanding this new tool. I want to promote individuality, so that my pupils and I work can within the parameters of

⁷ **Living contradiction** refers to a experience of concern when your educational values are denied in your practice (Whitehead, 1985)

our own learning styles, but a national assessment system keeps a tight control on where the curriculum goes and how it is taught. I had, through my own practice, come to realise my pupils are not given enough opportunities to be responsible for their own decision making and therefore were denied a sense of ownership of the learning process of which they are supposed to be the key component.

In acknowledging the lack of ownership of the learning process, I start to question my responsibility as a teacher to promote the values of equality and individuality, values I unpack in Section 5.0. At the beginning of my research, I feel locked into the well-trying and tested practices of my classroom that I use to teach a narrowly prescriptive curriculum. I feel isolated, both from my pupils and the wider community believing that once my classroom door shuts I am alone in a, '*state of isolation masquerading as autonomy*' (Bullough, 1987), and because of this splendid isolation I am relying on experts to inform my educational aims. I know I am accepting the knowledge, cascading from the experts, '*unquestioned and unchallenged*' (Sparkes, 1991) but the thought of challenging that knowledge and change always appears to be such a tiring process. My descriptions of the changes in my practice in Chapter 6 supports this belief when I describe the energy I require when breaking free from the state of inertia years of well established teaching routines have imposed on my practice and subsequently my perception of myself as a 'good teacher'. This state of inertia has its origin in my assumption that these well-established and tested routines are celebrating my individuality, but I now, in retrospect, accept this is an illusion of individuality and a constraint on practice.

With the advent of the Internet into the school I see new horizons, new possibilities for my pupils and begin questioning and challenging the *status quo* informing my practice. The status quo, in my context, describes my perception of my practice of twenty-five years. Through my interest in the Internet, I identify causes for concern in my practice and I realise that if I want to change those causes for concern I have to challenge my own practice. When starting my research journey I see the

connection between Internet technology and my practice as the way to improving my practice.

I ground this submission in the actions I take to discover the connection between the Internet and my practice. I discover this connection through the process of improving my practice by incorporating the affordances⁸ of Web 2.0 into structuring my online community enabling both the pupils and myself to work as equals, in the learning process, by developing their individuality in a safe community of practices (Wenger, 1998). This process of initiating innovative changes becomes the grounds for developing a pedagogy seeking to empower my ten-year-old pupils, enabling them to work safely, independently and creatively online. Our online teaching space then becomes our learning community where the developing practices create personalised knowledge bases making us informed members of the [new] worldwide learning community.

3.0 Emerging praxis

This submission therefore becomes an account of my emerging praxis: informed and committed action, a vehicle for improving my practice and providing a powerful informed voice to the pupils I teach. It also charts my personal struggle at the beginning of my research through reflecting on the route my research journey should take. The narrative emerging through the chapters identifies my growing realisation that in order to understand how the Internet works I had to become part of the Internet: in the words of O'Reilly who coined the phrase Web 2.0, 'the machine is us/ing us' (O'Reilly, 2005). I knew that by getting into the machine I would know how to use it; to understand the web I had to become part of the web. To achieve this I begin actively to take more risks outside my comfort zone. I become empowered and revitalised with the whole process of getting to 'know' and 'master' the 'new'; the energy from this process that keeps focusing my mind through my research.

⁸ **Affordance:** a potential for action. It is a design feature that is generic and gives individual different opportunities to use it in personalised ways.

4.0 My reflective spiral

The process of getting to 'know' and 'master' the 'new' I achieve by engaging in a cyclical process of reflective thinking and action. I visualise my growth, as a practitioner and a researcher, as organic and it is through the tree metaphor, illustrated in Diagram 1.0, I encapsulate my personal metamorphosis. However, it is through my reflective spiral, representing the dynamic flow, that I start visualising my actual growth process. I split the main narrative spiral into three main reflective spirals to describe and explain my research between April 2006 and April 2007. The three main spirals: exploratory, transitional and consolidating, representing the three stages of the emerging narratives shaping me as a researcher and a practitioner; the individual spiral representing significant stages in my research narratives, where I am drawing together my ontological and epistemological narratives, through my voice as the researcher and practitioner.

I address the duality of the role of my research as the researcher and practitioner through a capillary styles communication tube or, '*flow-form network's*' (Tesson, 2005: 3) where the flow of influence, '*operates via a kinds of capillary action*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006:116) with free flow action between the, '*interconnected tubes*' (Ibid: 115). It is important that, in identifying the influence of me as the researcher and me as the practitioner, I am able to articulate how my narrative is emerging into the living space becoming my living theory.

I also address the need to identify my core values of equality, responsibility and individuality informing my choices, decisions and actions at a local level by constructing small thread like local reflective spirals. In Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 I describe my journey through the exploratory, transitional and consolidating stages of my research through these local reflective spirals. This spiral within a spiral becomes the finely tuned reflective tool by which I am describing the changes in my research and my practice.

5.0 My core values

The methodology underpinning my research is rooted in the work of McNiff and Whitehead (2006), where I, the practitioner, am moving to the centre stage of my research by using my key values as the living standards of judgments validating and legitimising the knowledge claims I am making. In Chapter 4, through explaining how my actions as a researcher influence, and continue to influence, my choices and decisions, I discover who I am and how my identity is rooted in my values. This scrutiny of my values, as grounds for my practice, enables me to justify this living theory approach as my choice of a research methodology.

My choice of a self-study, action research methodology comes after reflecting deeply on the findings of my preliminary study. I discuss this study in Chapter 4. This is a time in my research when I now realise that I am not being true to my core value system. In Chapter 4 my narrative explores the background to the decision making process leading me to the realisation that it is not my pupils, who need to provide me with the evidence to improve my practice, it is me who holds the answer through exploring and using my value system to inform my practice. This submission narrates the journey I make to bring my values into my 'living practice' (Roach, 2007), transforming them into action and ultimately changing my practice.

How do I incorporate my values into my every day practice? One of the key threads in my submission is my linguistic journey: a journey where many of the key words defining my practice change their meaning. Words such as control, equality, voice, meaning, responsibility, community, individuality, classroom, collaborative and authorship require me to challenge, re-define, re-evaluate creating new meanings so I am true to my value system. My value system has the key words of equality, responsibility and individuality at its centre; words I have to reconceptualise if they are to be living standards of judgments informing my practice and research. Chapter 8 describes this journey (that was in part, linguistic) where I, through the process of writing articles, conducting workshops and delivering presentations, about my experiences of my changing practice, to

different audiences, enables me to finally gain an understanding of how my three values influence my practice.

5.1 Equality

Equality is an important value to me, both personally and as a practitioner. In the classroom, the concept of equality is clouded by the assumption that pupils are in a transitory space called childhood where they are training to be adults. This assumption denies the pupil the role of, '*social agent who receives and participates in the educational process as pupils*' (James and James, 2004: 120), and therefore are, '*social agents who themselves influence the shaping of childhood*' (Ibid: 69). The inequality I see in my classroom is the inability of the pupils and teacher to work as equals in the learning process in shaping together the experiences representing their life at school. In my research, I am looking for a place to explore a new learning partnership. I love the egalitarian atmosphere I find in Web 2.0; the sense that we are a vast community of individuals with an equal say in the creation of meaning and knowledge, a view I believe that is in line with my value system (or at least with what I perceive to be my intended values). In my submission, through descriptions of my experiences, I claim that equality has a more complex definition than I initially believed when being used in the context of an online community: equality of opportunity, equality of access to knowledge, equality of voice and equality of control of what to learn, or how it is learnt. This list is not exhaustive but illustrates the many ways I am interpreting and reconceptualising this value throughout my journey, as I tease the word 'equality' apart, as my practice changes with each new insight.

5.2 Responsibility

For me my personal responsibility is, I believe, all about taking control of my life: understanding that my choice, my decisions and my actions have consequences. Responsibility is a value I want my pupils to incorporate into their practice and therefore I see as my responsibility. As a practitioner I aim to make the online space, I am researching, a safe learning environment empowering the pupils to

move responsibly between offline and the online communities by making decisions for themselves (independent of me) and understanding their consequences. Responsibility is an important value that weaves its way through my narrative, causing me, on several occasions, to reflect critically on my actions when one part of my value system is in conflict with another part. My responsibility, as researcher on the one hand and as practitioner on the other, does not always work in harmony. I return to unpick this disharmony later in the submission when I describe how I have to re-evaluate my value of responsibility when I challenge my understanding of the word control.

5.3 Individuality

Individuality, in my practice, reflects my deep respect for different opinions, religious affiliations and my ability to listen to different voices no matter what age, gender or culture. I believe deeply that my pupils should grow as an individual and have that individuality celebrated. Instead, I believe, we have an education system that has become, *'the tool to be employed to eradicate differences between children'* (Ibid: 122). Different learning styles, intelligences and personalities require different individual approaches by the practitioner to promote effective learning. In my research journey, I come to realise that to have a practice that is underpinned by my value of individuality I have to reassess my concept of my own individuality and my relationship with a class of individuals.

5.4 Moral accountability

When describing my value system as being central to my thinking in my research and practice, I am asserting that I am morally accountable for the actions I take within my research and practice. To achieve moral accountability I explain, through my narrative, the reasons and purposes for my actions using examples of how my value system of equality, responsibility and individuality validate and legitimise my research. To work towards this moral accountability, I test the validity of my claims by asking myself questions throughout my research journey. The questions

give my values an arena to exist while I debate how they can be absorbed in to my actions, for example,

- Do my pupils feel safe when working in an online authoring site?
- Is my need to be in control of my teaching at odds with my core value of equality?
- Do I teach my pupils in a way that promotes the feeling that they are a community of practice when working online?
- Do my pupils know how to be safe when working on the Internet?
- Do I give my pupils enough opportunities to be individuals online?
- Are we, as a community, sharing our experience in order to create an emergent knowledge base?
- Have I communicated the values and how they inform my actions weaving through, my story to the wider educational community?
- Has my research influenced my institution?

In my first person research, the practitioner and the researcher may have different perspectives about the questions that I ask, indeed, I return to these same questions in Chapter 9 of this submission and consider afresh the meaning behind the questions. The researcher and practitioner have different functions on my journey and it is important that I recognise and acknowledge any internal debate between these two roles as an important part of my reflective thinking process. This process of viewing my practice and my research from different perspectives gives me a deeper insight creating a new perspective on both my research and my practice. This process therefore means my living theory is both an explanation of my practice and an explanation of how I am introducing my values, through a reflective dialogue process, into my practice

6.0 My epistemological journey

My epistemological journey is interesting for me and in this submission; I explain how I gain a new understanding about the nature of knowledge creation. At the beginning of my research I am still under the influence of the writings of Piaget; I

learnt to teach using Piaget's constructivist theories of hands-on, self-directed activities orientated towards design and discovery, with children building their own mental structures when interacting with the environment. Over time, experience has taught me that the creation of meaning is a far more complex process and not subject to any one theory. In the later stages research journey, and after reading my theories, I acknowledge I am more in tune with Wenger's view that *'learning and teaching are not inherently linked [because] much learning takes place without teaching and indeed much teaching takes place without learning'* (Wenger, 2004: 228). My journey to Wenger, and his 'communities of practice', begins with Daniel's excellent and accessible book on Vygotsky (Daniel, 2003) and Bruner's, *The Culture of Education* (Bruner, 1996). Vygotsky's and Bruner's views on culture, human actions, the nature of knowledge, knowing and the 'knower', are closer to what I am experiencing in my practice and it is through being influenced by these authors, I become more informed and empowered with my own thinking process. Their theories shape my belief that learning involves being an active participant in the practices of social communities in order to create meaning. I realise, as a member of many communities of practice, I am involved in many *'negotiations of meaning'* [where] *'learning happens, design and no design'* (Wenger, 1998: 225) and accept and that, *'learning is an emergent process, on going process which may use teaching as one of its many structures'* (Ibid: 267). I also accept school as being just one 'community of practice' of which pupil and I are members, with most of our learning therefore taking place outside the school environment.

Wenger, with his model of 'communities of practice', provides me with a theoretical framework in which to inform my research. A framework I re-shape with my own epistemological ideas in order to identify and assimilate the emergent learning taking place in my small community of practices when working online. This submission charts my epistemological journey. I start the research in awe of the theories that guide my professional life but as my journey progresses I gain a deeper, more critical insight into the process of meaning-making, ultimately giving

me the courage to develop and practice my own epistemological values forming the basis for my contribution to knowledge.

7.0 Issues of validity and values

At the beginning of my journey, I view the reflective process central to my research as a very personal process and I am initially reluctant to be critical or judged critically by anyone. This reluctance to engage with the world, I now see, is a lack of confidence on my part, as a practitioner about to set out on a journey, not only changing her own practice, but that of a much wider educational community.

I chose a self-study action research methodology because I believe it gives me an opportunity to move from the teacher as the ‘reflective practitioner’ (Schön, 1983) into the teacher as the ‘reflective researcher’ (Stenhouse, 1975) and ultimately into the ‘teacher as theorist’ (McNiff and Whitehead, 2005). I am responsive to the idea that I am capable of generating theories that have value in the wider educational community. This ability to validate my practice, using my values I believe is an integral part of a living theory that gives meaning to a lifetime of reflecting on my practice (albeit at a less deep level than I believe I later achieve). It also gives an opportunity for me to add to the growing body of educational knowledge that empowers teachers to have their voice heard and noted.

In my narrative my values of equality, responsibility, individuality and my growing epistemological insight are the signposts that keep me on what I intend to demonstrate is an appropriate pathway. My values are just words unless accepted as the framework around which my living theory has evolved. In this submission, I seek to demonstrate how I deconstruct then reconstruct the meaning behind the words: equality, responsibility and individuality and then embed them anew in my practice to give me a deeper insight and validity for my actions. My research gives meaning to those words for me by transforming the abstract linguistic articulations of what I assert to be ‘my values’ into my critical living standards of judgment (Roche, 2007). This understanding that my values become my practice gives a

validity that assesses the quality of my work and will ‘judge the authenticity of my claim to knowledge and my ontological and social integrity’ (McNiff and Whitehead, 2005:1). I test my claims against the existing views in the literature of education and educational research with my peers and the wider community, through good practice, workshops, training, articles and conferences (Porthouse, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, and 2008e).

The significance of my emerging living theory, to the wider academic community, may be judged and validated on the evidence I present through my narrative that critically reflects on: the changes in my practice and the methodology and the epistemological rigour underpinning my research.

B. My narrative

8.0 My journey of change

I have split the narrative of this submission into separate stories – each dealing with in a separate chapter following this current, first, chapter. A summary of each of these chapters (Table 1.1 – Table 1.8) acts as a map, for my journey of change, by describing the landscape the reader encounters, as my narrative unfolds.

Table 1.1	Chapter 2: summary
The nature of change, narratives and reflective tools : 2005- 2008	
<p>In Chapter 2, I explore my thinking on the nature of change, my transformative narrative, and the reflective tool that enables me to identify and critically examine the influences informing my choices, decisions, and actions as my research and practice changes. To address the issue of communication, between my role as a practitioner and my role as a researcher, I show how I finely tune my reflective spiral to include a capillary action to ensure that I am reflecting upon and informing my choices, decisions, and actions, as a researcher and a practitioner, at a local level. My three key reflective spirals: the exploratory spiral, the transitional spiral, and the consolidating spiral; represent three key stages in my research narrative. Within the structure of each of these three key spirals is a fine network of local reflective spirals with capability to identify my core values, informing my individual choices, decisions, and actions. The narrative emerging from these spirals consolidates my research enabling me to theorise my practice. In constructing my spiral within a spiral reflective tool, I am showing in this chapter how my ontological and epistemological narratives inform my research and practice.</p>	

Table 1.2	Chapter 3: summary
Identifying and addressing my causes for concern through a reflective conversation with the literature: 2002- 2008	
<p>In Chapter 3, I explain my transformation, as the research-practitioner, through a reflective conversation, reviewing the literature influencing me on my journey. I use questions, encapsulating my causes for concern, when reviewing the literature, with the answers showing how the literature influences my choices, decisions and actions by becoming instrumental in transforming my research and practice. In addressing these causes for concern, through my reflective conversation, I am acknowledging that my practice and research is transforming, by drawing on my pedagogical content knowledge and creating new perspectives on accepted knowledge. The narrative of my epistemological journey becomes another thread in my story of transformation as I gain the knowledge and skill when articulating and theorising the changes taking place in my teaching context.</p>	

Table 1.3	Chapter 4 : summary
My research perspective 1: Preliminary research summary extracts: 2005	
My research perspective 2: Narration of my researcher’s story: 2008	
<p>In Chapter 4, I explore my reasons for embarking on my journey of enlightenment by identifying the key issues influencing my research through two points in my research: 2005 and 2008. I achieve my insights into these two perspectives on my research journey by critically examining my 2005 preliminary research summary, a document summarising my research between 2002 and 2005. The narrative examines the two perspectives by identifying the origin of my core values: equality, individuality and responsibility underpinning and validating the changes in my practice in order to answer the question ‘How do I improve my practice?’</p>	

Table 1.4	Chapter 5: summary
Perspective 1 in my practitioner story : 2005	
Perspective 2 in my practitioner story: 2008	
<p>In Chapter 5, I describe my journey of change as the practitioner between two points within my practice: these two points represent two different approaches to conducting a historical enquiry on the Internet. The first perspective, in 2005, is an e-lesson using the Internet as an online tool to aid deeper understanding. The second perspective, in 2008, is examining historical enquiries taking place in a wiki space, using the Internet as a ‘living experience’ and a meeting place for my ten-year-old pupils as we develop our community of practices. My transformational journey of change between these two points creates the narrative for chapters 6, 7, and 8.</p>	

Table 1.5	Chapter 6: summary
Exploratory reflective spiral : April 2006 – July 2006	
<i>Transitional reflective spiral: July 2006 – August 2007</i>	
<i>Consolidating reflective spiral: September 2006 – Spring 2008</i>	
<p>In Chapter 6, I tell the story of my exploratory reflective spiral by describing, through nine local reflective spirals, the way my research and my practice changes through the summer term 2006. This summer term is an exhilarating time when I am reassessing all my assumptions about my research and practice. In this chapter, I am identifying the connections between my: choices, decisions, actions, and core values and how this knowledge is transforming my thinking about my research and practice.</p>	

Table 1.6	Chapter 7: summary
<i>Exploratory reflective spiral : April 2006 – July 2006</i>	
Transitional reflective spiral: July 2006 – August 2006	
<i>Consolidating reflective spiral: September 2006 – Spring 2008</i>	
<p>In Chapter 7, I reflect on my transitional reflective spiral through the summer break 2006 when I am planning the structure of the next stage of my research. By reflecting on two different types of journal entries (local spirals), describing my summer term research, I am able to set out a timetable of actions for the autumn term 2006. The first entry represents the last of my personal journals with the next journal entry being uploaded onto my blog and available to a wider audience. This transitional reflective spiral is a time when I am making sense of my summer term experience through my key words framework and planning the next phase of my research. It is also a time when I am beginning to be more confident about my research by connecting to a wider audience.</p>	

Table 1.7	Chapter 8 : summary
<i>Exploratory reflective spiral : April 2006 – July 2006</i>	
<i>Transitional reflective spiral: July 2006 – August 2007</i>	
Consolidating reflective spiral: September 2006 – April 2008	
<p>In Chapter 8, I narrate my story from September 2006 to April 2008, through describing in different types of media, how my research is becoming my practice and my practice is becoming my research. In connecting with a wider audience, I am now articulating how the changes in my practices transform my perception of my learning process from a tacit experience to one that is explicit through my experience of developing a community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils.</p>	

Table 1.8	Chapter 9 : summary
My Living Theory	
<p>In Chapter 9, I critically examine how in reconceptualising the explanatory principle and living standards, by which I judge my practice, I provide a new perspective on knowledge and validate my living theory on change in an educational practice. My contribution to knowledge is found in this new perspective of what is meant by a community of practices and the learning processes it generates with reference to teaching historical enquiry skills to ten year old pupils in an online authoring site called a <i>wiki</i>.</p>	

C. My submission

9.0 The potential significance of my study

I believe that the online authoring sites called a *wiki* is a powerful teaching space with the potential to provide an online learning experience for pupils in a small safe community reflecting but protecting them from the more confusing and potentially dangerous Internet community; a community of which they may already be members or will be in the future. My submissions charts the changes in my practice leading me to this online wiki space that empowers and enables both the pupils and myself to begin the process where we create a knowledge base, demystify the technology and gain the skills to be safe and informed when working on the Internet.

The primary aim of my research is to become more effective when teaching history using the Internet; to achieve this I recognise that I have to change. The first change is to move my teaching from a physical classroom into a virtual classroom, although I do come to question my use of the word ‘classroom’ in Chapter 8. It is, perhaps, hard for anyone outside the teaching profession to appreciate the importance of the classroom for teacher and pupil. It represents a space that has been fashioned to promote learning. Changing classrooms in the physical world is time consuming and moving into an online space is just as challenging because all the familiar design features, or affordances, that aid and promote the learning

process are unfamiliar in this new location. My wiki online authoring site proves to be an ideal location for me to assimilate the best of the physical classroom with what I find to be the exciting affordances of the online classroom. My big challenge is to make the wiki into a space allowing a community to develop and practices to emerge knitting the members of that community together. The significance of my research to the wider teaching community is the insight into the process of change a teacher must experience in order to create an online classroom space, as it becomes a community of practices. It is the insight into me, the practitioner, who, by placing herself at the centre of educational research, develops a living theory that has relevance to teachers having to make similar journeys in their practice.

10.0 My claim to knowledge

This submission presents my claim to knowledge in terms of my contribution by way of developing new educational practices and new educational theory. My living theory is provisional as it represents a moment in time and I understand that the emergent practice is a direct result of my research, which is still evolving in many different ways. Other practitioners will add to, and enrich the theory and strengthen it, even if I cannot lay claim to its final state.

In my submission, through my narrative, I critically examine and reflect upon how my living theory of change in my practice creates a learning community of practices grounded in a value system that gives pupils opportunities to create their own personalised knowledge base in a safe online environment. My living theory therefore has potential significance for other practitioners as it represents an authenticated account of the potential and impact of change when transferring my teaching of historical enquiry to ten-year-olds from a physical classroom to an online location and the process of decision making and actions it involves.

In the domain of educational theory, I demonstrate, through my critical review of the literature, the significance of my living theory of the practice of change when I

applied to Wenger's communities of practice in order to produce my own community of practices for ten-year-old pupils.

11.0 The aim of my submission

This submission narrates the transformational story of my research journey by-

- narrating the story of how I mastered and creatively adapted the technology to develop a community of practices for ten-year-olds to conduct historical enquiry on the Internet;
- critically assessing the process of change which was required in my thinking and my practice in order to set up my online community of practice;
- identifying and then illustrating the way in which I incorporate my values of equality, responsibility and individuality into my practice and my research journey;
- charting my journey to epistemological understanding in order to create and validate my new knowledge which is rooted in my practice;
- reflecting on the methodological process that gave me the skills, knowledge and understanding to produce my living theory on the nature of change in my practice.

12.0 Organisation of this submission

This submission is been organised into four sections.

Section 1: The journey to change my practice – setting the scene.

Section 2: Two perspectives on my journey: researcher and the practitioner 2005-2008.

Section 3: My three reflective spirals: exploratory, transitional and consolidating.

Section 4: My journey ends- my living theory on the nature of change in my practice.

Section 1



The journey to change my practice – setting the scene

Chapter 2



The nature of change, narratives and my reflective tools.

Table: 2.0
The nature of change, narratives and my reflective tools : 2005- 2008
In this chapter, I explore my thinking on the nature of change, my transformative narrative, and the reflective tool that enables me to identify and critically examine the influences informing my choices, decisions, and actions as my research and practice changes. To address the issue of communication, between my role as a practitioner and my role as a researcher, I show how I finely tune my reflective spiral to include a capillary action to ensure that I am reflecting upon and informing my choices, decisions, and actions, as a researcher and a practitioner, at a local level. My three key reflective spirals: the exploratory spiral, the transitional spiral, and the consolidating spiral; represent three key stages in my research narrative. Within the structure of each of these three key spirals is a fine network of local reflective spirals with capability to identify my core values, informing my individual choices, decisions, and actions. The narrative emerging from these spirals consolidates my research enabling me to theorise my practice. In constructing my spiral within a spiral reflective tool, I am showing in this chapter how my ontological and epistemological narratives inform my research and practice.

1.0 Introduction

This chapter (and outlined in Table 2.0) explores my thinking between the years of 2005 – 2008, as I develop a reflective tool enabling me to gain a deeper insight into the changes I make in my practice. In making the decision to develop a living theory based on these changes I know my reflective tool has to be capable of identifying and analysing, at a local level, the influences informing my choices, decisions and actions when changing my practice. To construct a reflective tool that can analyse the dynamic and transformative nature of the changes in my practice I examine, in this chapter, the nature of change and explore the structure of my narrative.

2.0 The nature of change

In the initial stages of constructing my reflective tool, critically examining the change in my practice, I am drawn to Wenger's view *'that the world is in flux and conditions always change, any practice must be constantly reinvented,, even as it remains the same practice'* (Wenger, 2004: 94). The phrase *'practice must be constantly reinvented'* describes what I am doing in my practice in the years 2005 – 2008. In accepting this view I am acknowledging that the process of analysing the dynamic and transformative nature of my changes will be challenging because *'constant change is so much part of day to day engagement in practice that it largely goes unnoticed'* (Ibid: 94), and accept that making these tacit changes explicit and open to scrutiny is a demanding process. I am aware, in this phase of my journey, of my own perceived lack of awareness in the process of change. I acknowledge this when agreeing with Whitehead and McNiff (2006) when they observe that *'all too often change is communicated in the dominant literature as something done to someone else'* (Whitehead and McNiff: 2006: 116) and *'spreads like a disease'* (Ibid: 116) suggesting the whole process of change is outside my control. Again I agree with Whitehead and McNiff, when citing Habermas (1975) that practitioners *'cannot not learn'* (Ibid: 116) and that this perception of lacking control over the change process is just an illusion. In believing I have the power to *'choose whether to learn and what to learn even if [I am] not aware of it'* (Ibid: 116) I realise that the control mechanism for my choosing *'whether to learn and what to learn'* is embedded in my tacit knowledge that has yet to be made external and explicit. The reflective tool I construct, and describe in this chapter, enables me to gain access to a reflective process that makes external and explicit my tacit knowledge of change in my practice. I acknowledge Polanyi's (1983) influence when accepting I possess a vast repertoire of tacit experiential knowledge and I am therefore the *'ultimate instrument of [my] external knowledge'* (Ibid: 15), and that knowledge is informing my choices and decisions when deciding on changes in my practice. I agree with Polanyi that it is, my lack of awareness of my tacit knowledge that leads me to the perception that change is being imposed on me rather than being chosen by me. In making the tacit knowledge informing the changes I make, as a practitioner and researcher, explicit, I am then in a position to improve my practice.

In writing this submission, I aim to influence practitioners by describing and explaining my experiences of improving my practice through making explicit my tacit knowledge of the nature of the changes I make to achieve this aim. In my experience, as a practitioner, describing the changes transforming my practice does not naturally lead to transformative changes in another practitioner's practice. Schön (1983) teases out this issue when observing that *'people who do things well often give what appears to be good descriptions of their procedures which others cannot follow'* (Schön, 1983: 276). Therefore, *'experienced practitioners cannot convey the art of [their] practice to a novice merely by describing [their] procedures, rules, and theories, nor can [they] enable a novice to think like a seasoned practitioner merely by describing or even demonstrating [their] ways of thinking'*. (Ibid: 271) The reason for this difficulty, Schön argues, is the way an *'individual develops [their] own way of framing [their] role'* (Ibid: 274). In this submission, I describe **my** journey to change **my** practice. My practice, I accept, has many elements in common with other practitioners' practices: the age of the pupils I teach, the type of school, the subjects taught, the curriculum followed, my age my gender and my responsibilities but my interaction with these elements within my practice have evolved differently over my professional career to that of other practitioners. There have been a diverse set of factors influencing my choices, decisions and actions, through my teaching career, transforming a generic teaching practice into my personal practice reflecting my individuality. This suggests that each practice is individual to the practitioner and I agree with that observation. My practice is individual to me but I acknowledge that in making it accessible to a wider audience I have to include the, *'intuitive knowing'* (Ibid: 276) and tacit knowledge which identifies the influences which shape my practice through the changes I make.

This individuality of my context, it can be argued, ties the changes I make to my practice only. To avoid this lack of transferability of my changes I decide to open up my experiences to influence a wider audience, by examining the change process in a way that makes my perception of how those changes occur, accessible and transferrable to all practitioners. I accept that my practice is individual to me because it represents the accumulation of all the changes I have

made through the years I have taught. I also accept that descriptions of changes in my practice may not connect with the experiences of other practitioners who all have equally individual practices. I understand that *'learning does not happen only because one person gives another a template'* (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 116) and this suggests that my unique teaching template, which frames my changes, will not automatically result in other practitioners learning from my experiences.

The changes in my practice come in a plethora of kinds and sizes and none of these changes are made in isolation; even the smallest change involves a multitude of minor choices and decisions influenced by personal, professional, family, and cultural factors. For example, I am a female, married and have two children and these factors in my life will influence how I shape my practice. My practice is still influenced by my desire to give my pupils, through the years, the educational experience I wanted my children to have if I had taught them. Change in my practice is a very personal process of discovery involving the identification of a problem or issue that requires finding a resolution. Schön highlights the point that personal nature of change links to tacit knowledge when explaining that *'the practitioner reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment, which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation.'* (Schön, 1983: 68). Schön's description reflects my view that the *'change in the situation'* is a personal experience and the template evolving from my change process is unique to my practice; the changes I make to improve my practice do not necessarily improve another practitioner's practice. For example in Chapter 8, I describe how I set up my wiki space to help me improve my practice when teaching historical enquiry online to my ten-year-old pupils. These changes in my practice may not transfer to a practitioner who does not value the emerging technologies or understand the affordances of the Web 2.0 environment when teaching history.

I accept that practitioners *'cannot, not learn'* and this perception of a lack of control that a practitioner has over the change process, is just an illusion. What is important, according to Whitehead and McNiff (2006: 116) is what we select to learn from what is available; this then becomes the central issue. It is what I

chose to focus on through the summer term 2006, and I describe in detail in chapter 6 how that is important, narrowing the parameters of my research so I am able to identify all the choices available to me when I begin working in a Web 2.0 environment. These experiences of the summer 2006 become the vast repertoire of tacit experiential knowledge where my decisions, directing my choices, become part of that experience. I do not ‘not learn’ from my summer 2006 investigation, but by choosing what experiences, I am making explicit from the vast repertoire of tacit experiential knowledge. In using my three core values: equality, individuality and responsibility as a reference point I am able to draw out ‘what to learn’ and then I can begin to answer the question, ‘How do I improve my practice?’ How I choose and what I choose now become indicators of my way of learning at a personal level and this is interacting with my professional persona and the requirements of the research in which I engage.

My experiences in the summer 2006 make explicit my tacit knowledge that the learning that influences other learning is the most important learning and that, *‘happens through free-flow interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships which respects other’s capacity for choice in whether or not to be influenced, and to use the learning in the ways that are right for them’* (Ibid: 116). This description of influential learning acknowledges that each practitioner makes informed choices and decisions, to learn from another, in order to change their practice in a way that reflects and reinforces their individuality. In my case this is manifest in reading Richardson’s *Blogs Wikis and Podcast* (2006), it is through this book I gain access to the Web 2.0 environment for the first time. It through the act of reading the experiences of practitioner working on Web 2.0 that I influenced and start the last phase of transforming my practice. It is the stories of practitioner using blogs, podcast, and wikis that influence my choice of what I learn and how those choices feed into my value system. I describe this process of influence, through the experiences of other practitioners, in section two of this submission.

This submission does not offer a template on how to improve practice in general and hence will not claim to do so. However, by the transformational nature of

my narrative, it seeks to influence practitioners towards a deeper insight about the nature of change in a practice.

3.0 Nature of my transformational narrative

The nature of my narrative is central to my submission and therefore its structure requires a deeper understanding. The story, describing my research journey, is set within a narrative transforming and theorising my practice by describing and explaining the choices and decisions I make to initiate and implement change in my practice. My tree metaphor visualises appropriately the image of my narrative as organic growing and evolving, but it is my interpretation of Bruner's (1996) 'universal realities' and Chase's (2005) 'multiple lenses' approaches that influence how I can visualise the structure of my narrative. Bruner and Chase offer me two different views on the nature of a narrative providing me with a framework of key words and phrases that structure my experience and influence my thinking when narrating the changes in my practice and because of their importance to the way, I express my narrative, I outline their contribution below.

3.1 Bruner's 'universal realities'

Bruner believes we are all narrators of our life stories and it is '*through our own narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world*' (Bruner, 1996: xiv). In this submission, I am constructing a version of myself within my research that influences and offers the possibility of transforming other practitioners. Bruner argues that all narratives have 'realities' making them transformational. To be transformational my narrative is grounded in time and by actions, a process involving the use of different genres: text, images, diaries, podcasts, online authoring sites, and diagrams. Chapter 8, for example, describes my use of different genre through my use of blogs, PowerPoint presentations and published articles to narrate my story. These genres weave different perspectives into my narratives giving it, I believe, cultural significance within educational and online communities. For example, through my description of working in my Form 6 wiki space: *whitby*, in Chapter 5 I weave the perspectives of (i) a practitioner facilitating an historical enquiry through a tightly structured

lesson plan and (ii) a practitioner confidently working within a wiki space using the Web 2.0 technology. My intention in doing this is to describe my experiences of teaching an history enquiry in a Web 2.0 environment to practitioners who may feel threatened by the technology or do not perceive the value of teaching in such a location. I acknowledge, in Chapter 5, that different audiences will be reached through different genres and in Chapter 8 I explore my decisions to choose different genre to describe my experiences to the wider audience I may influence.

Bruner also believes narratives are motivated by beliefs, desires, theories, and values as well as implied intentional states. In Chapter 1 I accept that my decisions, when making changes in my practice, are influenced by my three core values. At the beginning of my journey I am unable to articulate how these values influence me and it is the process of making the tacit influence of these three values of equality, responsibility, and individuality explicit that forms one of the central themes in my narrative, as I journey to answer to the primary question, ‘How do I improve my practice?’

My narrative is not a single story of a researcher and practitioner changing a practice, and in agreeing with Bruner that the hermeneutic nature of narratives implies that no story has a single unique construal, I weave into my narrative the many stories influencing my choices and decisions. For example, I describe:

- how I came to realise that my initial research is flawed because I believe that my research story is a ‘single construal’, (see Chapter 4)
- how, as my journey continues, I begin to understand that, in fact, there are differing constructs at play – most notable perhaps was my acknowledgement of the pupils’ voices and stories when transcribing the pupils’ interviews for my preliminary research, (see Chapter 4)
- the inclusion of a colleague to be part of my research (see Chapter 6 section 5) and
- how, in accepting that I was addressing my research to a different audiences, I was acknowledging other stories that will influence my construct (see Chapter 8)

This shift in my understanding brings me to a position where I find myself agreeing with Bruner's belief when I claim that my narrative is open to as many interpretations as there are readers reading it and that, '*every narrator has a point of view and we [the readers] have an inalienable right to question it*' (Ibid: 138). This right of the reader to question my story allows me to see my narrative as transformational, rather than an interesting description of one practitioner's experiences using Web 2.0. Ultimately, I am connecting to and transforming the stories of the audiences I am addressing. From this it is clear that my narration can, therefore, only influence as I have been influenced.

Bruner also believes that, to be worth telling, a narrative should run counter to expectancy by breaking '*canonical script*' (Ibid: 139), creating an adventure that keeps the interest of the reader. I feel this is an essential part of my narrative because I start out with a sense of wanting to transform my practice and wanting to convey this change to others. I now recognize that my zeal, in part, obscures some of the complexities of what I was about to engage in. It is clear to me now that I would not have embarked on my long six year research adventure without a sense of excitement and anticipation as I sought to transform my practice and influence other practitioners. Bruner suggests that narratives should always be open to some question, pivot on breached norms and be inherently negotiable. My narrative, I believe, creates questions about the problems inherent in the change process when they apply to teaching history online to ten-year-old pupils; for example, in Chapter 5, when discussing the issues of copyright, acknowledging source material and developing web etiquette with my small learning community we negotiate and set up our own wiki rules while accepting the wider rules of the Internet when conducting an enquiry. This example opens up the question 'Who sets the boundaries?' with the norm being breached in this case the assumption that the teacher is in charge of setting boundaries. The 'inherent negotiability', in this example, is evidenced by the link on the wiki page 'wiki rules' and 'what we learnt while working on the wiki pages', which open all rules to discussion by all members of the learning community. I accept that during the process of my research I am only able to influence people, even my pupils, and I acknowledge my interpretation of my experiences is open to negotiation.

Bruner influences my perception of what is meant by a narrative and this influences my understanding and subsequent interpretation of my emerging narrative as I unpack my summer term 2006 research, and describe in Chapter 6.

3.2 Chase's 'five analytic lenses'

Bruner's descriptions of his universal realities have influenced my understanding of the structure of my narrative but it is Chase's 'five analytic lenses' (Chase 2005: 656) that introduce me to the idea that my narrative can be viewed as a piece of empirical research material to be analysed. It is through the influence of Chase I am able to examine my narrative through five lenses giving me another way to make explicit the tacit messages in my narrative. Through the first analytical lens, I am able to view my narrative as a distinct form of discourse. I achieve this by '*shaping and ordering [my] past experiences [as] a way of understanding [my] and other's actions, of organising events and objects into a meaningful whole and of connecting and seeing the consequence of actions and events over time*' (Chase, 2005: 656). This first lens enables me to view my narrative as a process by which I can order my experiences in my practice by making connections. Through reflecting on those connections, I am able to understand the consequences of those actions. This influences my thinking as I tease out my research story from my life story. For example, in Chapter 7 through my descriptions, the reader can follow my reflective thinking process as I review my choices, decisions, and actions in the summer term 2006. The reader can also make connections between my thoughts and how the decisions I arrive at, at the end of this transitional period of reflection, become the actions enabling me to move into the final stage of my research in the autumn 2006 and spring 2007 which I describe in Chapter 8.

Through Chase's second lens my narrative can be described as a form of verbal action by '*explaining, entertaining, informing, defending, confirming or challenging the status quo*' (Ibid: 567). My personal selection of these different verbal actions gives my narrator's voice a distinct character by empowering it with enough linguistic dexterity to ensure a balanced and intellectual authorship. For example, in Chapter 6, I am explaining and defending my choices, decisions and actions in my local spirals as I make sense of my experience of the summer

2006 research programme and it is through these verbal actions, my narrator's voice gains a distinct character and my perception of those experiences. My narrator's voice gains strength and its character evolves as I reflect upon it in Chapter 7 and defend it through different media to a wider audience in Chapter 8, validating it as a living theory in Chapter 9.

Chase's third analytical lens clarifies Schön's view that narratives are unique but in claiming that my story is unique, I have to ensure, as the narrator, to tell my story by '*attending to similarities and differences across the narratives*' (Ibid: 657). To achieve this 'uniqueness'; my narrative has to lift my story out of my local context and make it, I believe, meaningful to a wider audience. For example, by writing my experiences of setting up a wiki to, different journals, I am opening up my experiences to a wider more critical audience and through this process of engagement; I am then able to influence practitioners. This lens draws on the importance of influential learning which '[uses] *learning in the ways that are right for [the individual]*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 116) thus accepting the individuality of the wider audience. This lens acknowledges the importance of '*free-flow interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships which respects other's capacity for choice*' (Ibid: 116) in order to make change possible within that wider audience. The wider audience has the choice to be influenced by my narrative. For example, my intention, when using Bruner's concept of '*intersubjectivity*' (1996: 161) is to ensure the reader will be able to better understand their own teaching when faced with a situation that involves knowing what '*others have in their mind*' (Ibid: 161). I describe my experiences, of intersubjectivity and the value of this ability to know the minds of others, in Chapter 6 section 5 when I discuss the working relationship with the member of staff who becomes my co-researcher. My experience of '*intersubjectivity*' may or may not influence the reader; it is their choice to, be influenced.

Through Chase's fourth lens I accept my narrative as '*a joint production of narrator and listener*' (Chase, 2005: 657) becoming '*socially situated interactive performance*' because when I am writing my narrative I keep my mind's eye on the wider audience for whom I am producing my research story.

For example, when I am writing about my experiences when setting up a wiki space in my articles, (Porthouse, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, and 2008e) I recognise that the readers want to know about the many trials and tribulations that accompany my experiences of setting up a wiki space in order to understand my particular motivations and intentions. For example, in the autumn 2006, I intend that my online teaching platform be set in a blog site but that action proves to be problematic because the technology I require to make it work is very new to me and I was finding the process of mastering proving to be challenging. In Chapter 8, section 3, I analyse my choices, decisions, and actions as I develop strategies to overcome those initial difficulties. My considered hope is that my personal journey to improve my practice gives a wider audience access to my experiences and through that accessibility I am able to connect to and ‘work with’ that audience. Though clearly the ‘working with’ is limited as I cannot negotiate the audiences learning other than through what I have written and what remains on the page. Any further negotiation must remain with the readers themselves. It is perhaps worth noting here in this submission that that level of removal would not be necessary where text is available electronically and where reader and author are able to interact with each other through that text. I address this level of removal by putting my PowerPoint presentations and wiki resources, which I used at workshops, training sessions, and lectures, online and open to comments. My written articles all have my email address and the opportunity to discuss my experiences is open to all who have read my story.

In narrating my story in the first person I am not only acknowledging Chase’s influence through his fifth lens but also that of Whitehead (1989), Whitehead, Lomax, and McNiff’s (2003) living ‘I’. In presenting my story in the first person, I am establishing ownership of my narrative action. Through the living ‘I’ I am ‘*understanding the world from my point of view*’ (Whitehead, 1989: 45) and ‘I’ take ‘*responsibility for my own actions*’ (Whitehead and McNiff, 2003: 20). In acknowledging the ownership and responsibility of my story, it becomes a powerful incentive to produce my transformative narrative that, I believe, will influence a wider audience and inform their choices and decisions when making changes in their practices.

Through the influence of Bruner's 'realities' and Chase's, analytical lenses' my research story becomes a unique transformational narrative. I believe that this understanding into the origin of my narrative framework gives me a deeper insight into my narrative. It empowers me giving me the insight I require to construct an appropriate reflective tool that: reflects the dynamic nature of my emerging narrative, viewing my narrative not only as an account of my actions but as an account of my learning, demonstrating how I intervene in my own learning and how that learning influences my practice.

4.0 The nature of my reflective spiral

An introduction

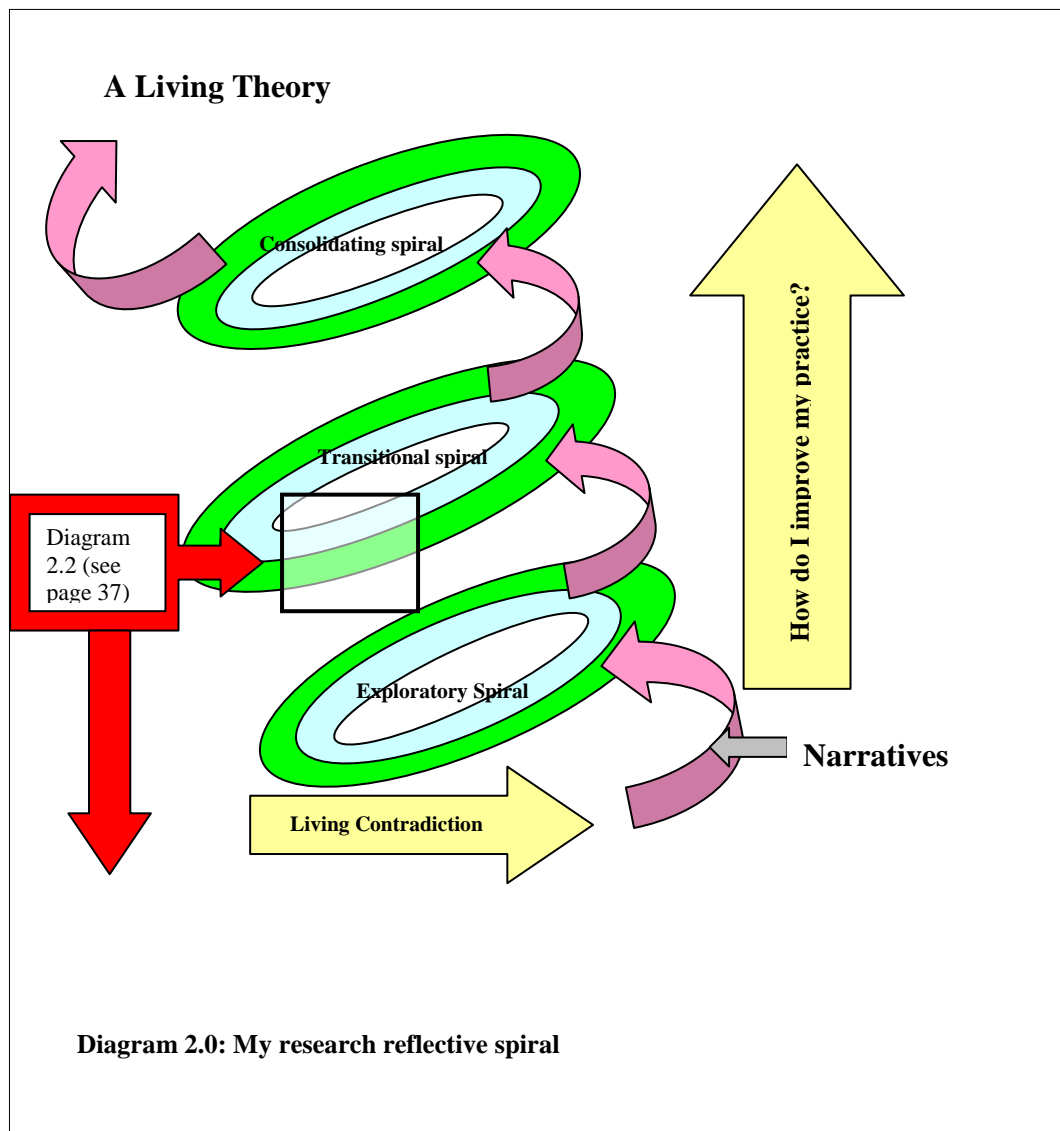
In the introduction to this submission, I visualise my research narrative through the metaphor of a growing tree, (see Chapter 1: Diagram 1.0 page 1) with this organic image giving my narrative its individuality. I explain the importance of the tree metaphor to my visualisation of my research but I am aware that a picture of a tree alone is not enough to convey the dynamic nature of my research because it does not acknowledge the internal mechanism, which gives the tree its shape. To gain an insight into this internal mechanism I unpack the choices and decisions I make, to visualise the nature of the dynamic nature growth process of my narrative, when constructing my unique reflective spiral. My reflective spiral becomes the analytical tool with which I unpack my narrative, allowing me to critically interpret my actions and explain, and therefore can be seen as the way I am able to, '*articulate of my own educational theory*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 117). For example in Chapter 6, when describing and explaining the choices, decisions and action of the summer term 2006, through the local spirals embedded within my main spiral, I understand how my practice is becoming an articulation of my own educational theory.

As my research progresses, my reflections on my choices, decisions and actions become an important part of my research. This was not the case at the beginning of my research and it is not until I write my preliminary research report, which I discuss in Chapter 3 that I begin to value this process. My reflective spiral offers a strong conceptual frame in which I am able to design my own finely tuned

reflective tool, which, not only, critically analyses my narrative but also reflects on my individuality. The design of my reflective tool will also incorporate the dynamic nature of my dual roles as a practitioner and researcher and accept that information from these two roles flows between the two, informing choices, decisions and actions.

My research reflective spiral

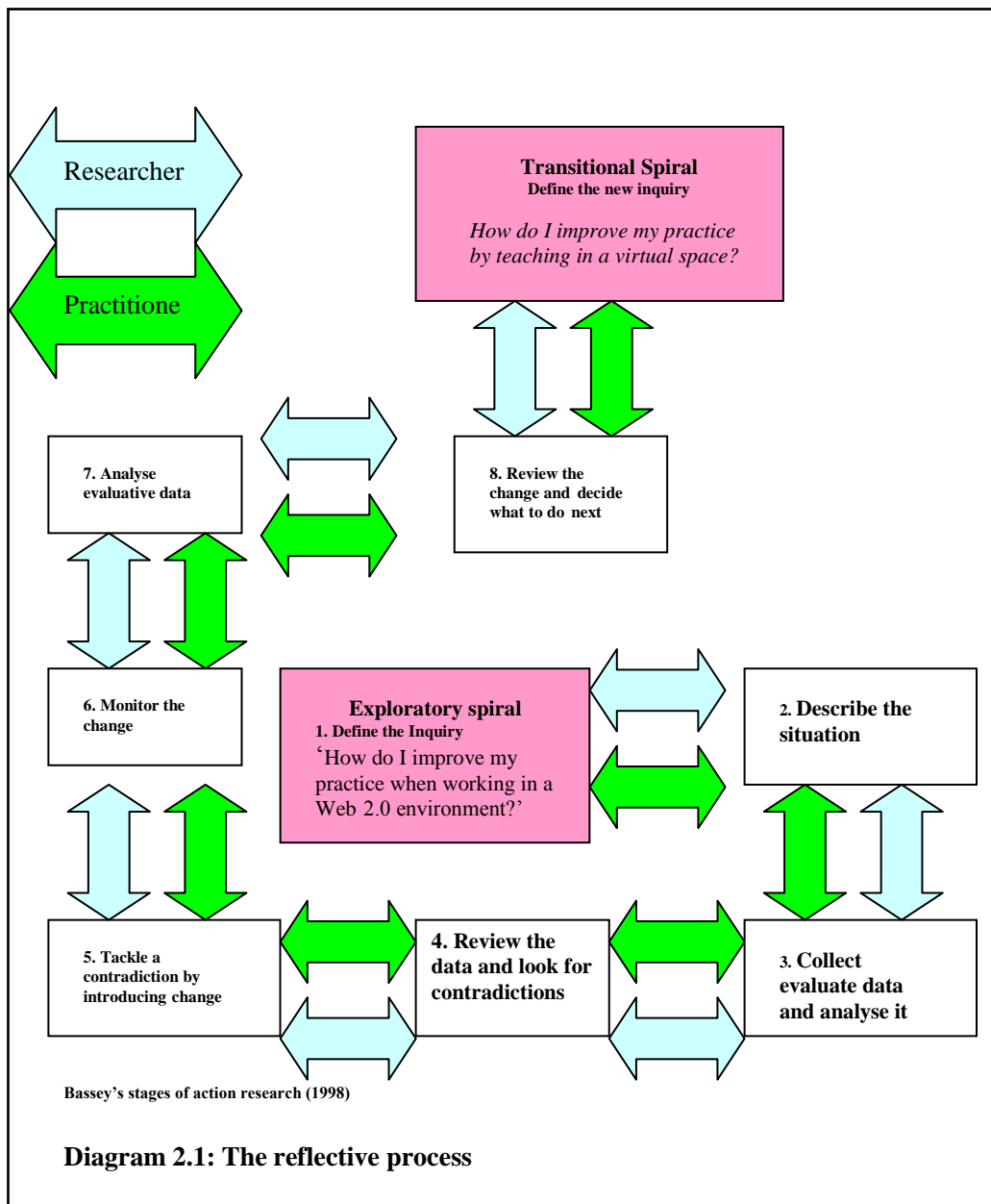
In Diagram 2.0, (see below) I illustrate how I adapt the basic reflective spiral design to construct my own reflective spiral and in this section, I will explain these adaptations.



I visualise my research reflective spiral as having three main spirals: the exploratory spiral, the transitional spiral and the consolidating spiral; each of these spirals representing a key stage in my research narrative. The key words: exploratory, transitional, and consolidating reflect the type of choices, decisions, and actions I experience through the three phases of my research between the summer term and break of 2006 until the end of the spring term of 2008.

The reflective process

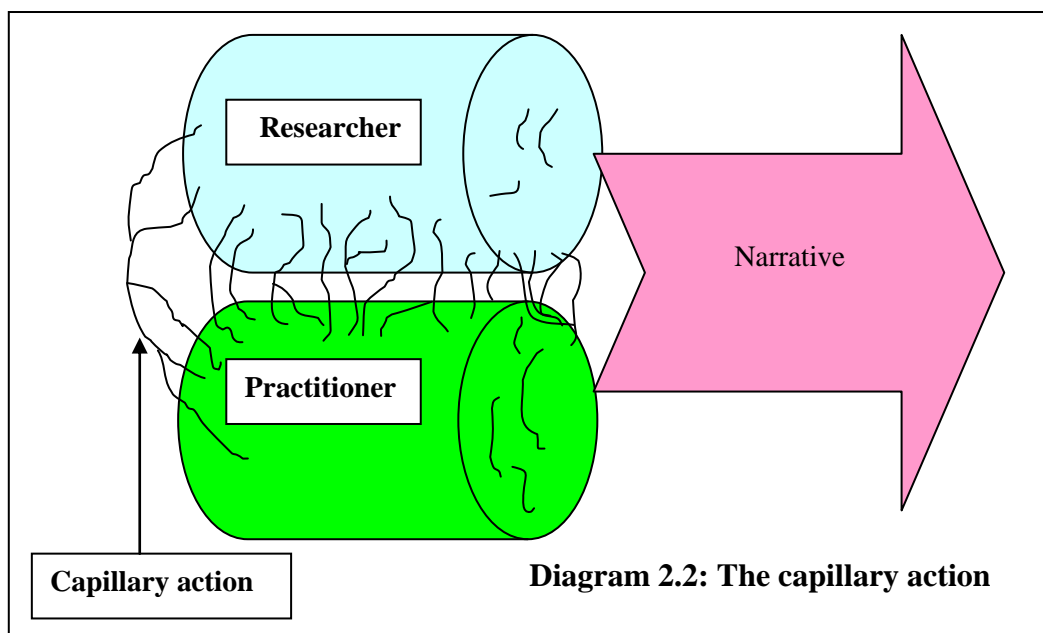
The clear logical structure, described by Bassey (1998), initially influences my thinking about my spiral when explaining the reflective process-taking place in my context. Diagram 2.1 (see page 36) illustrates Bassey's influence on my understanding by my use of his reflective process as an exemplar and reference point on how I intend to reflect on my choices, decisions, and actions. It is this refinement that eliminates, 'fuzzy generalisations' (Bassey, 1998) and anchors my reflections to specific choices, decisions and actions. The reflective process, illustrated, in the Diagram 2.1, starts with a key question, which defines this stage of my research, 'How do I improve my practice when working in a Web 2.0 environment?' This question, through a series of different actions- defining, describing, collecting, reviewing, tackling, monitoring, analysing, reviewing and reflection leads towards the next question that will define the next stage of my research. This reflective process, I discovered, is not a logical process and, in the course of my research, I was to use many combinations of these stages when reflecting on the key questions directing my choices, decisions, and actions.



In the reflective spiral illustrated in Diagram 2.0 and Diagram 2.1, I embed the duality of my context within their structures: the researcher (blue arrow) and practitioner (green arrow). I envisage, in my narrative reflective spiral, this duality: me as the practitioner and me as the researcher moving through the same reflective process to gain the knowledge, insight, and perception to answer the key question of ‘How do I improve my practice?’ To acknowledge the relationship between me: as the researcher, and me, as the practitioner, is essential because the interaction between the two has the potential to influence the choices and decisions each makes.

5.0 Information flow: Capillary Action

I visualise the communication between the practitioner and researcher as a form of a free-flow movement of information. In Diagram 2.2 (see below) I illustrate this capillary action as a *'flow-form network'* (Tesson, 2005: 3) where I am viewing influence as not *'a thing but within human relationships and operated via a kinds of capillary action'* (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 116). It is through this capillary action, I believe, the researcher and practitioner connect and inform each other about their choices and decisions.



I visualise this free flow action between the researcher and narrator as *'interconnected tubes'* (Ibid: 115) or capillaries which according to Whitehead and McNiff, create the *'potential of ourselves to be living spaces'* (Ibid: 116). This *'living space'* represents a space where I can choose to be influenced through my capacity for choice; I have the choice whether to learn from my reflections or I have the choice to ignore them. For example, in my own experience, the flow of information informing my choices, decisions and actions in my exploratory spiral acts like capillary connecting my role as a researcher with my role as a practitioner and Chapter 6 describes the resulting narrative.

‘Local spirals’ is a term I use to describe the minor capillary-narratives feeding into my main emerging narrative (I unpack the term local spirals in section 9.0 in this chapter, see page 49). These information capillaries or local spirals inform me, the researcher and me, the practitioner through ‘*a network of nodes and clusters of concepts*’ that spread and develop ‘*a rhizome-like action where the roots spread and metamorphose into new extended roots that will generate new growth*’ (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 114). These local spirals represent a more informed way of gaining an understanding of what my experiences mean in terms of my practice and research. I am therefore able to visualise, using my local spirals, this growth occurring around these nodes and clusters. For example in the summer of 2006, I create a framework of key words to act as a network of nodes and cluster of concepts to make sense of my experiences.

6.0 My reflective filter: A network of nodes and cluster of concepts

The practicalities of a busy and very short summer term meant that my research had to be accommodated into an already full schedule. In April 2006 I am determined to avoid Wenger’s assertion that ‘*constant change is so much part of day to day engagement in practice that it largely goes unnoticed*’ (Wenger, 2001: 94). My desire is to notice the changes and to achieve this aim I set about constructing a simple reflective filter enabling me not only to identify the ‘*constant change*’ but also enabling me to notice the individual changes. The loose framework of key words, or nodes, is based on Marshall’s ‘*multi-dimensional frame of knowing*’. In using ‘*key [words] which are charged with energy or hold multiple meanings to be puzzled out*’ (2001: 432) as a simple mental construct and reference point, when filtering through the constant stream of data I had to process throughout the summer term 2006, I am able to make sense of my experiences. For example, I use the words, *agents of change* and *facilitator* as key words within the nodes: pupil and teacher and filter the ‘data’ making it easier to identify experiences when examining my choices, decisions and actions; Chapter 6 reviews the results of using this reflective filter when I am examining my summer journal through nine local spirals.

The simple key words filter is my way of organising the kaleidoscope of experiences from which I tease out, evaluate, and analyse those choices and

decisions, which influences research and practice. This simple linguistic device of key words keeps me focused while helping me make sense of what I am seeing, hearing feeling and writing both as the practitioner and as the researcher enabling me to make sense of my experiences.

In the key word framework (see Diagram: 2.3, page 40) I identify seven key components of my research: the Internet, the practitioner, co-researchers: the pupils, my colleague, the historical enquiry process and, lastly, the researcher. The main aim is to use the filter to direct those experiences from the key components to inform the main key word phrase, '*virtual teaching space*'. Each of these components generates a key word or phrase giving me an affordance and therefore an opportunity for action guiding my choices and decisions when accepting or rejecting the experiences informing my research. For example, *agent of change* is the key phrase informing my choices, decisions, and actions by focusing my attention on any change made by the pupil by signalling to me to take action, even if it means stepping outside my comfort zone and overcoming my reluctance to tackle the fear of the unfamiliar. In Chapter 6 through local spiral 6, 7, 8 and 9 I describe and explain how I shape my experiences around my acceptance of my pupils being *agents of change* and how this acceptance influences my choices, decisions and actions when changing my practice.

I visualise this key word filtering device in the form of a simple flow chart. I believe it was important to reflect on these affordances and associated key words because it is through the influence of this simple filter of my experiences that I determine what I record in my summer term journal.

7.0 My framework of key words

The flow chart, in Diagram: 2.3 (see page 40) has, at its centre, the key phrase *Virtual Teaching Space* and all the key components and key words interact with this central point. I will briefly explain the origin of each of the affordances and associated key words.

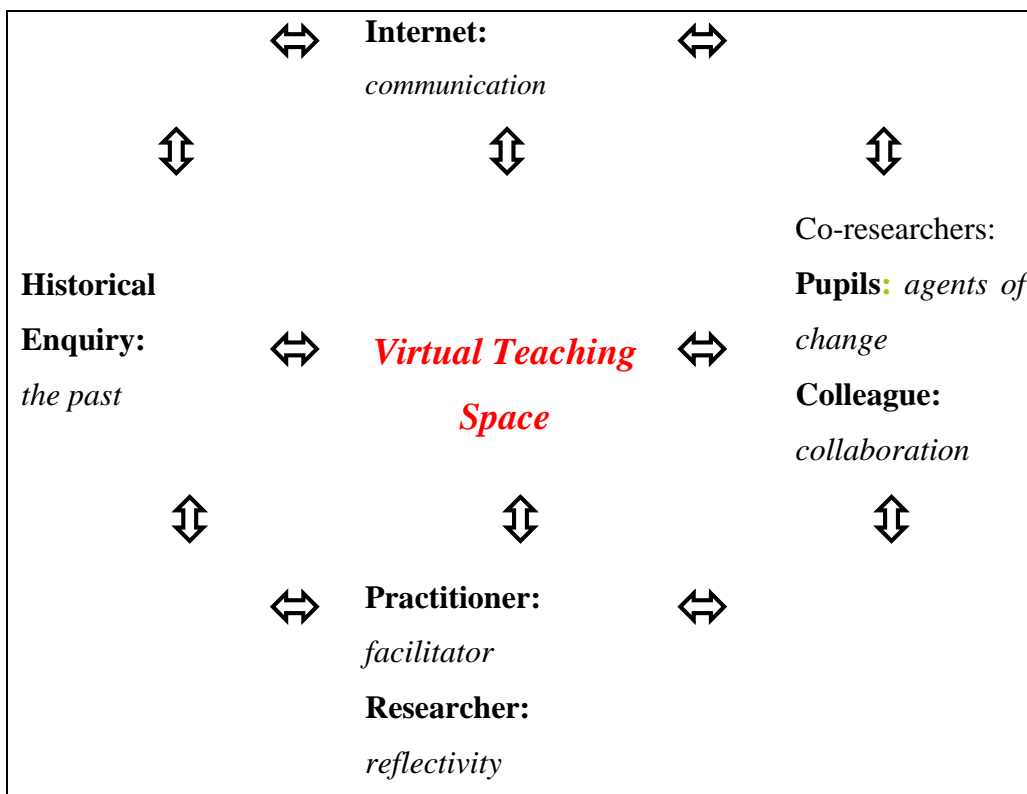


Diagram 2.3: Filtering framework: key words for the summer 2006 research

Understanding how to work on the **Internet** is one of the central aims in my research but at the beginning of the 2006 summer term I have very little expertise when using the Internet beyond e-mailing, using msn messenger, and searching for information on web sites. In my preliminary study, I view the main affordance of the Internet as a repository of knowledge and in order to teach history effectively, I reason that I have to master the skills of locating, retrieving, and publishing information. I realise after my preliminary study that the major affordance of the Internet is *communication* and this meets my need for a general key word to guide my thoughts as I research and set my practice within the Internet.

Having established a key word for the Internet I then reflect on my role as a **practitioner** in this next stage of my research. Central to my teaching practice at this time is my perception that I am a *facilitator*. By this, I mean I am responsible for providing the necessary technology for the pupils to investigate independently rather than structuring sessions around a pre-planned set of tasks.

For example, in after-school sessions, I facilitate the pupils, depending on their choice of what they are going to research: filming, audacity or podcasting. In making the decision to focus on being a facilitator I am being sensitive to the influences directing my research and practice. I do challenge my use of the word facilitator, in Chapter 8, when I gain a deeper insight into what responsibility means to me in my practice.

In my preliminary study report, described in Chapter 4, I observe when I am transcribing the interviews of the **pupils** discussing their tasks on the Internet the resulting narratives are fragmented and I find I am unable to interpret their verbal, physical, and emotional interaction with the Internet. In retrospect, I now realise the pupils are showing me how to change but I am not listening. I believe that I have learnt from that experience but, in Chapter 6, when reflecting on local spirals 6 and 7, I describe my lack of awareness of what the pupils are trying to tell me. For example, in this extract I am not giving the pupils the opportunity to contribute when setting the agenda for our research in the summer term, *'GP: What we will do is try to do is have a session when we could look on the Internet. The first thing we will look at is the wikipedia and also the Internet radio and maybe blogging and podcasting. We will be looking at all these different things and how we can actually use them in the classroom. I don't want it to be extra I want it to be part of the lesson and I want to teach it next year, How would that be put into a lesson how would it be part of the lesson'*. In my explanation of this extract I observe that, *'Nobody in the group had mentioned the wikipedia, internet radio, blogging or podcasting but having listened to my volunteers I had in fact not listened'*.

I realise from reflecting on this local spiral that the pupils' have a 'voice' that needs acknowledging but it is not until I read *Constructing Childhood* by James and James (2004) that I find the affordance reflecting the role I want for my pupil researchers: i.e. as *agents of change*. Of course, I need to unpick what I mean by them having agency in this context and what counts for change. This unpicking became part of my journey.

In my preliminary study, I am the sole researcher and this isolation results in my lack of engagement with my colleagues and my wider community and I know I have to address this lack of engagement. I realise in order to engage in what Marshall (2001) calls an ‘outer arc of attention’ I have to establish a self-expectation that reaches outside of my practice and research by, questioning, raising issues and seeking to test out my developing ideas with my colleague and **co-researchers**. For example, to gain a different perspective I discuss my choices, decisions, and actions with another practitioner rather than working alone as I had been for the first part of my research. The affordance, and the key word, for connecting with my colleagues through discussion and joint action, is therefore *collaboration*.

Another central theme in this submission is my personal journey to improve my practice in reference to teaching **historical enquiry** in an online environment. The historical enquiry at this stage of my research, I believe, is not crucial because although I need to keep a focus on history, I want the emerging new ideas on the historical enquiry to be open to interpretation by the learning community working in the online environment. The historical enquiry affords our learning community an opportunity to set up enquiries into any designated event in the past. The key word identifying my affordance is therefore, *the past*, because it a general definition that allows for different interpretations on its meaning from the pupils.

In this phase of my research (from 2006 to 2007), I am critically reflecting on how I, as a practitioner-**researcher**, am changing as my research evolves. To make sense of those changes I decide to keep a detailed journal of all my actions and decisions and make them subject to different levels of reflection: therefore, the key affordance word I use to make sense of my choices, decisions, and actions in this time is *reflectivity*. By this, I mean I intend to construct a reflective tool fine enough to, give me insight into the changes I am making to improve my practice and create a vocabulary to describe those reflections. Chapter 2 is the narrative that describes and explains the realisation of that intention. In Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 of this submission I reflect on

my experiences through the reflective tool I construct and describe later in this chapter.

These key affordances make up the framework filtering my experiences and informing my thinking and action for this phase of my research. This filter, with its cluster and nodes of key words and affordances, helps me create a conceptual landscape of the virtual teaching space informing the next stage of my research in the autumn. The filter helps me to rationalise the multitude of choices, decisions, actions, and discussions taking place over the summer term 2006: it represents a simple self-reflective filter for selecting experiences I examine in my local spirals. Marshall (2001) saw everything as an object of self-reflection, where ‘...*an event, issue, theme, dilemma, or what ever is an inquiry for me [and in] ...doing so heightens my attention inwards and sharpens my external testing of developing ideas and of my practice in action*’ (Ibid: 435).

I accept that my whole life is an inquiry but by using this self-reflective filter to narrow down the experiences, I am creating a structure and direction for my emerging narrative that is set in the context outlined above. My key word filter enables me to identify the choices and decisions in my local spirals, which influence and shape the type of changes informing and directing my practice and research. Clearly, there is a risk in separating out some choices and decisions for attention at the expense of others and therefore I need to recognise in my writing up of my narrative that such selectivity, is by its very nature artificial. I need to remain aware of the artifice – reduce it where possible but recognise its influence where appropriate. For example, when describing experiences through my local spirals in the summer term 2006 and narrated in Chapter 6, I select choices, decisions, and actions in order to answer the question each spiral posed.

8.00 The growth of my main reflective spirals

My research reflective spiral, see Diagram 2.0, (see page 34) has three main reflective spirals: exploratory, transitional, and consolidating. I call my first reflective spiral exploratory because it reflects on the period of time when I am exploring Web 2.0 with a small research team consisting of a co-researcher and two groups of volunteer ten-year-old pupils between April 2006 and July 2006.

This exploratory spiral has its genesis in what I believe is my, ‘*living contradiction*’ (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006:18). In Chapter 1, I explain what my ‘living contradiction’ represents in my practice; my value system is not in tune with my practice. I also identify that by using my value system to influence my choices and decisions I expect to make the tacit knowledge creating my ‘living contradiction’ explicit. The process of embedding my value system into my practice requires an exploratory stage. In the exploratory reflective spiral, as the word implies, I am intent on exploring all of the possibilities for improving my practice through my choices and decisions when working in a Web 2.0 environment. I write a detailed journal, which notes and reflects on all my choices, decisions, and actions in this period. In Chapter 6, I describe and explain this exploratory spiral.

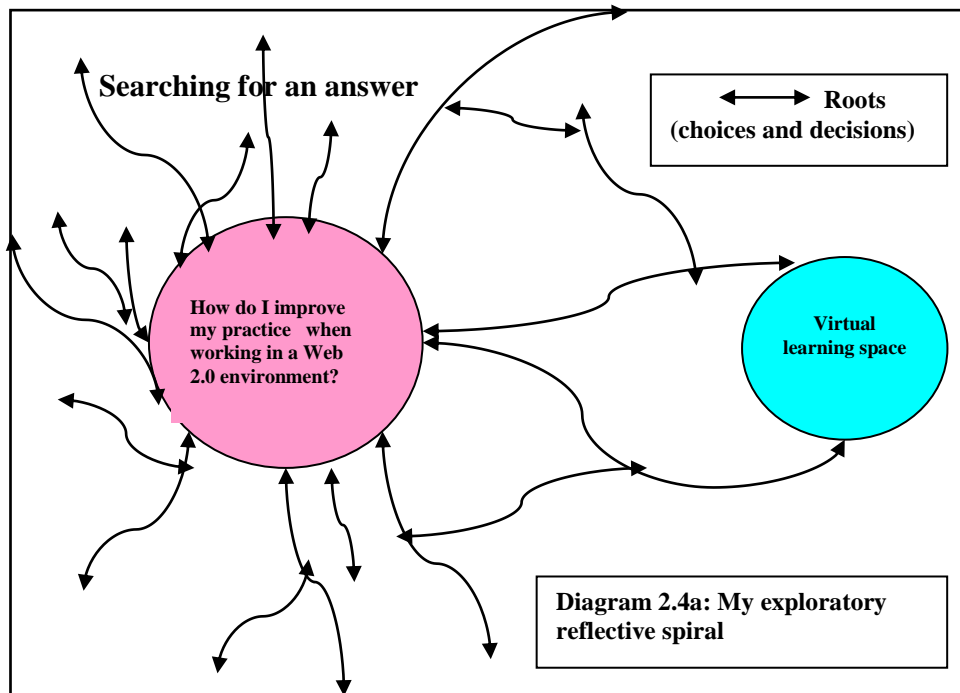
In order to visualise this process I link the reflective spiral to my metaphor of my research as a growing tree. I visualise this stage of my research as roots growing exploring and strengthening. To achieve this visualisation I design a series of diagrams: 2.4a: *The exploratory spiral* (see page 45) 2.4b: *The transitional spiral* (see page 46) and 2.4c: *The consolidating spiral* (see page 48). In using the metaphor of a growing root system to help create these diagrams I acknowledge the influence of Cunningham’s (1996), Keiny’s (2004) and Rayner’s (2004) inspirational and elaboration phases of ‘dynamic fluidity’ and ‘labyrinthine network’ and ‘rhizome like action’ to visualise my reflective spiral as a dynamic, evolutionary and transformational process. This visualisation, encourages and influences the direction of my growth as a researcher and a practitioner. Rayner’s inclusion theory gives me an insight into the process initiating the direction and the spread of roots in the ‘*tapestry of space*’ (Ibid: 86) which I now use in this submission. I construct three diagrams, as a visual aid to represent the fluid dynamics of my narrative to show that my growth as a researcher and a practitioner is achieved through the energy produced through the process of making choices and decisions.

8.1 My exploratory reflective spiral

Diagram 2.4a (see page 45) illustrates my exploratory reflective, or what Rayner would call the inspirational stage, clearly. This stage in my research has one

main aim, to answer the question, ‘How do I improve my practice when working in a Web 2.0 environment’ and it is this key question, which motivates me and acts as a driving force for me in this exploratory reflective spiral.

The arrows indicate the individual searches I conduct in order to gain the knowledge and skills to answer the inquiry question. Each of these small search journeys involves making certain choices and decisions initiating changes. This continuing sense of transaction is the reason for the lines having arrows pointing in both directions. These arrows reflect the situation in which, for example, I had to plan a staff meeting on independent learning at the beginning of the summer term 2006.

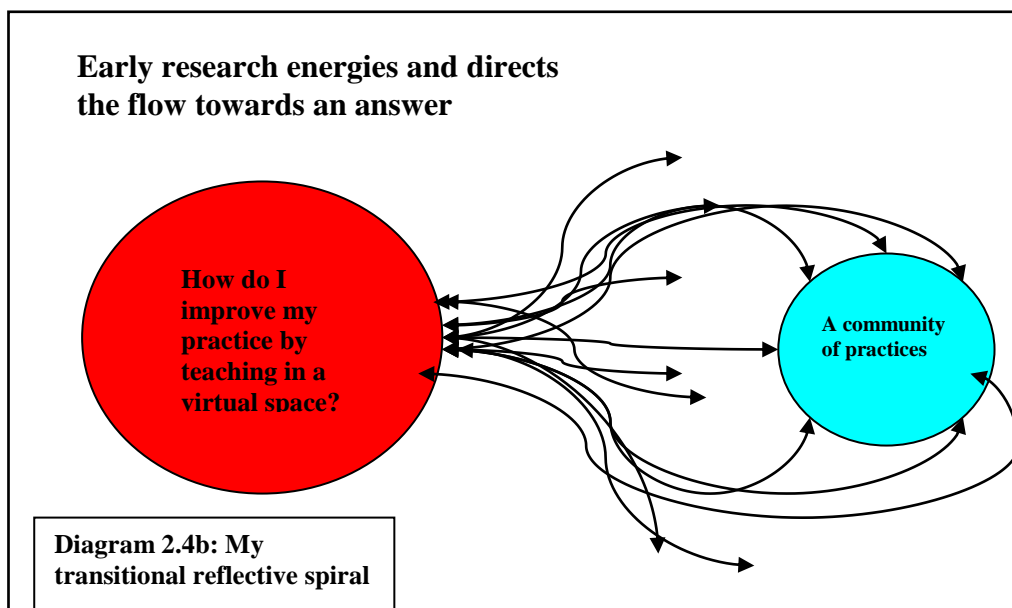


The research I access, in order to set up this meeting, makes me re-examine how I view my school and colleagues in terms of my research. This, in turn, affects my understanding of my own practice and how I might be improve it, i.e., I need to gain reassurance from my colleagues that my research has relevance in our school context, (see Chapter 6, section 4, for a fuller description of these transactional events). The shape of those early exploratory searches can be seen in terms of the roots in my tree metaphor. This exploratory stage is characterised by a diverse range of searches open to all possibilities but the

choices and decisions I make eventually lead me to towards finding my answer to locating my virtual learning space. The main narrative moving through this exploratory stage, as with the other stages, is fed by the numerous smaller local narratives emerging from the choices and decision process involved in all the searches.

8.2 My transitional reflective spiral

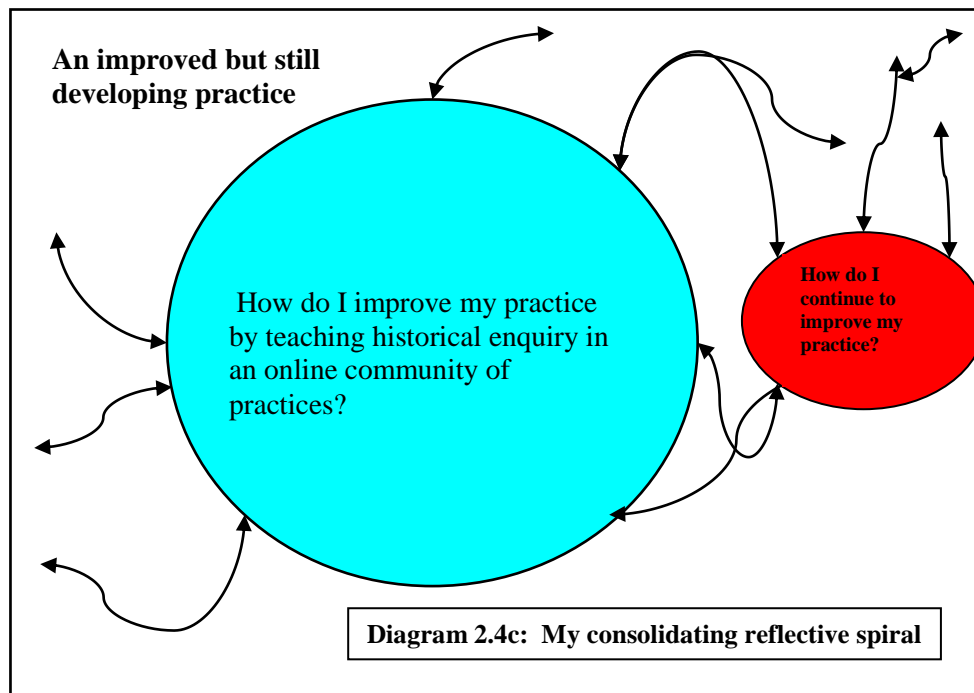
The narrative emerging from my exploratory spiral influences my thinking and informs the choices and decisions in the next main spiral: my transitional spiral. The transitional spiral represents a point in a narrative when I am assimilating the knowledge gained from the exploratory spiral and Diagram 2.4b below illustrates clearly this stage. Diagram 2.4b represents a stage in my research when I engage in a process of deep reflection assessing all the choices and decisions leading to changes that are now channelling my resources into answering a new inquiry question. For example, in trying to answer the question ‘Have I found my virtual teaching space?’ I come to an understanding of what I am really asking. I am now asking myself the question, ‘I hope I have found my virtual teaching space?’ In Chapter 7, I describe this lack of certainty and my attempt to make sense of my exploratory summer term of choices, decisions, and actions and where they were leading me.



In this transitional stage, I critically examine my actions and think through two key 'local spirals'. The first of these two local spirals consists of a set of journal entries I link together and represents my actions and reflections in my 2006 summer holiday in preparation for the autumn term of that year. The second 'local spiral' consists of one journal entry on my online blog discussing the effectiveness of my filter of key word framework. The transitional spiral also explains the thinking behind my decision to change the way I record my experiences. In making the decision, I am responding to my reflections on my summer research. I have begun to visualise the audience to whom I want to describe and explain my research to in the autumn 2006 and spring 2007. Chapter 7 narrates this transition stage from writing my reflections on my choices, decisions, and actions as a personal account of my research to that of a journal open to public scrutiny. This key reflective spiral has its own characteristic, which separates it from the exploratory and consolidating spiral but at the same time links them both. In short, my changing writing style is not part of the exploration or consolidation but it serves to connect all of my work. In using the imagery of Rayner's natural inclusion theory to describe this stage in my research I am visualising it as a time when all the energy, motivating the choices, decisions and actions in the summer term 2006 is now directed towards a state of realignment. A time when I am narrowing down my possibilities and focusing all my energy towards my online location to conduct my historical enquiry.

8.3 My consolidating reflective spiral

The narrative emerging from the transitional spiral influences the consolidating spiral, Diagram 2.4c (see page 48). The consolidating spiral, as the name suggested, represents the time in my narrative when I am consolidating my research and theorising my practice. At this time in my journey (September 2006 – April 2007) my energising question has now become 'How do I improve my practice by teaching historical enquiry in an online community of practices?'



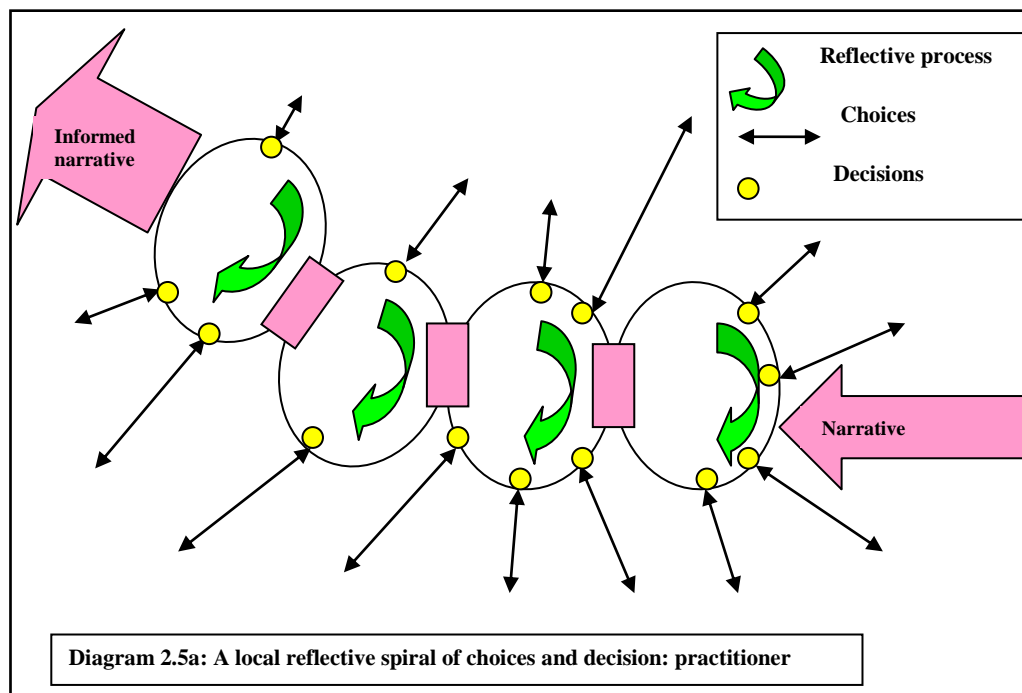
The consolidating reflective spiral pertaining to the period, autumn 2006 until the spring 2008, indicates that all my choices, decisions and actions draw towards making the changes in my practice so I am able to develop an online teaching space. The consolidating spiral examines my research and practice from the point when I set up my *Trading Places* blog and my *caedemon* wiki in September 2006 to the point in my research where I am working with my ten-year-olds on our collaborative online authoring site, the *whitby* wiki in April 2008. In Chapter 8, I describe this consolidating phase through separate localised spirals based on the type of audience I am addressing. It is within this consolidating spiral that I am critically examining my choices, decisions, and actions through articles, workshops, and lectures. I start my reflections with the publication of my first article, *Blogs Wikis and Podcasting update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry* in the spring of 2007 and finish with my reflections on the ICT school training session: *Creating a safe caring online community of practice* in the spring of 2008.

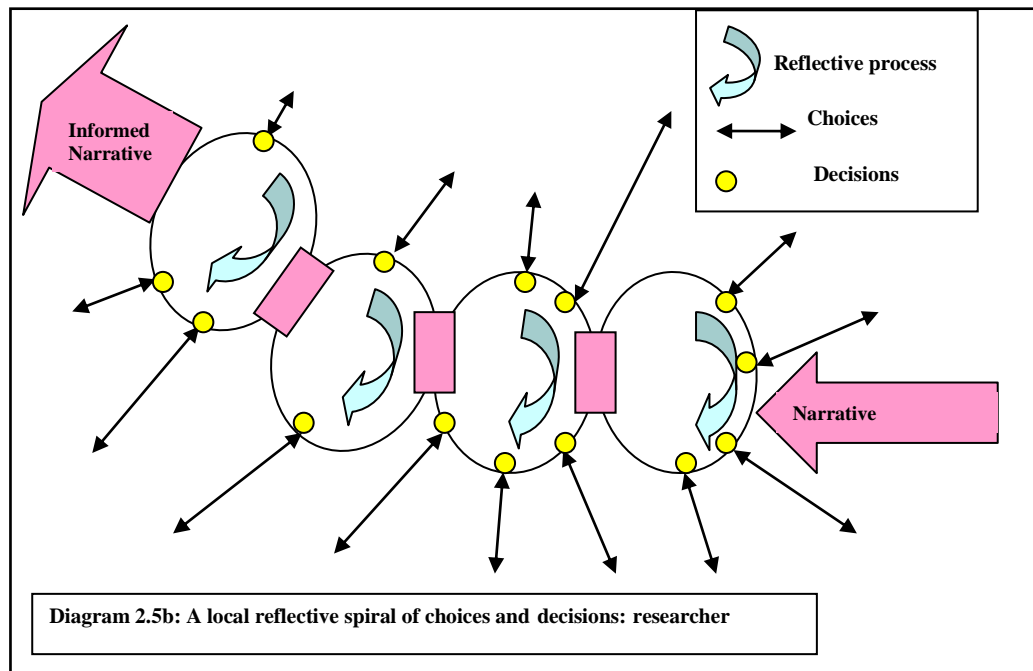
The consolidating reflective spiral illustrates the point in my narrative where I am able to consolidate my research and beginning to theorise my practice. For example, in Chapter 8, I describe and explain the thinking behind the presentation of my research to my university and within this section I am

beginning to be part of the process of, *'synthesizing of this knowledge [and] the act of writing [articles] proved to be a catalyst that unlocked my accumulated knowledge and gave it meaning. I was beginning to understand my research.'*

9.00 My local reflective spirals

I refer to my local spirals, when introducing the capillary communication process described in Diagram 2.2 (see page 37), in the context of how I organise my main reflective spirals. The local reflective spirals are central to my reflective process. My network of small local reflective spirals informs my wider more global exploratory, transitional, and consolidating spirals. These local reflective spirals through, describing the choices, decisions and actions I make to answer more specific questions informs my narrative drew together the knowledge to answer the central question for the main spiral. I visualise my local spirals in Diagram 2.5a (see below) and Diagram 2.5b (see page 50).





Each choice and decision generates energy from the narrow more specific questions informing the narrative with new knowledge as the narrative moves through the main exploratory, transitional, and consolidating reflective stage. In Chapter 6, I split up my experiences in the summer of 2006 into nine local spirals to describe and explain how my choices, decisions, and actions inform my thinking. Each spiral represents a local set of choices and decisions loosely connected by an enquiry question that requires an answer connected to an event: for example, a staff meeting, an activity, interviewing pupils or an article with an explicit and implicit aims energising the process. Chapter 6, section 5, describes local spiral 4, a time in the summer term 2006, when I am aiming to include a colleague as a co-researcher. That is the aim of that local spiral and all my subsequent choices, decisions and actions become energised by this desirable outcome. I visualise these local spirals as the growing roots in my tree metaphor. However, it is only when I am able to reflect on my summer journal of 2006 that I am able to identify the connecting questions, and then reflect on the response that I am able to make; i.e. the connection between all my local spiral questions is my growing insight into the meaning of the words equality and individuality

It is within these local spirals that I am able to identify, analyse ontological and epistemological influences on my practice and research. For example, in Chapter 6, section 6, I am reflecting on local spiral 5, a spiral in which I describe the first of two interviews I conduct at the beginning of the summer term 2006 with my pupil volunteers. In the process of reflecting on the set of choices, decisions and actions I make, I am able to identify and analyse why my practice is a 'living contradiction' through my lack of clarity of how my core value of equality are being interpreted in my practice at the time. It is this process of using my local reflective spirals to connect choices, decisions, and action that I am able to make explicit tacit knowledge and identify factors, which locks my practice and research into a living contradiction. The knowledge, I gain through these local spirals, I now believe, enables me to engage in a reflective practice which gives my narrative the energy to be a generative, transformational and potentially evolutionary tool for understanding the nature of the changes.

10.0 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the influences that shape my view of the nature of change and how to analyse my narrative. This insight enables me to understand the type of reflective tool that can tease out the tacit knowledge I have to make explicit in order to make informed decisions about how my practice changes. The tool I construct becomes a powerful analytical tool for identifying and reflecting on the change process in my practice. Through a sequence of linked diagrams, I demonstrate how I construct a tool that reflects the dynamic fluidity of my narrative. In describing my reflective spiral within a spiral concept, I show how my ontological and epistemological narratives continually inform my research and practice. Chapter 6, section 9 and 10, where I analyses the transcripts of the two concluding research discussions with the pupil volunteers where I make the decision to have no adult present in pupils discussion illustrates this point. My decision to omit an adult in these discussions with my volunteer pupils is informed by the reflective process in an earlier spiral. In constructing and using a reflective tool that is capable of identifying choices, decisions, and action in my methodology and practice, I am able to articulate a reflective process that can transform my choices, decisions, and actions into standards of judgement enabling me to validate my practice as a

living theory. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 illustrate, why in understanding these local spirals, I have the authority to make this claim.

Chapter 3



Identifying and addressing my causes for concerns through a reflective conversation with the literature.

Table 3.0

Identifying and addressing my causes for concern through a reflective conversation with the literature: 2002- 2008

In this chapter, I explain my transformation, as the research-practitioner, through a reflective conversation, reviewing the literature influencing me on my journey. I use questions, encapsulating my causes for concern, when reviewing the literature, with the answers showing how the literature influences my choices, decisions and actions by becoming instrumental in transforming my research and practice. In addressing these causes for concern, through my reflective conversation, I am acknowledging my practice and research is transforming by drawing on my pedagogical content knowledge and creating new perspectives on accepted knowledge. My narration of my epistemological journey becomes another thread in my story of transformation as I gain the knowledge and skill when articulating and theorising the changes taking place in my teaching context.

1.0 Introduction

This chapter (and outlined in Table 3.0) explores my growth and transformation as a researcher and a practitioner. I achieve this through the act of reviewing and relating to the literature, by showing that there is, *'no separation between [my] inner and outer self around [but only], a rich, never-ending tapestry of space.... that moves reciprocally around and along with [me] as [I] move through it.'* (Rayner, 2004: 1) The phrase, *'tapestry of space'* helps me visualise the space within me to be influenced by the literature I encounter and through the experience of reading this literature my self identity evolves within this, *'tapestry of space'* into, *'my complex self'* (Ibid). To help me visualise the process of moving towards my complex self I interpret Rayner's conceptualisation of self-identity and natural

inclusion theory, a process where I define my choices and my decisions in terms of their dynamic self-boundaries.

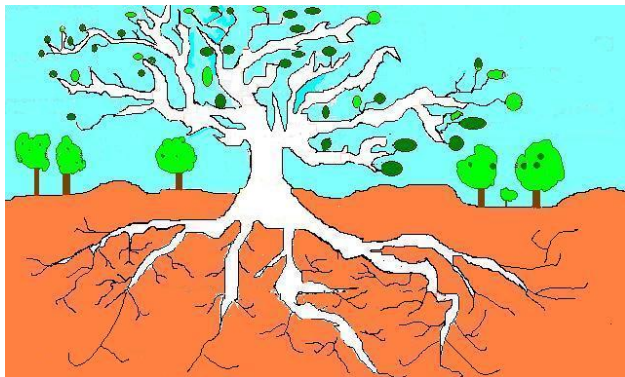


Diagram 3.1: My complex self (Rayner, 2004)

Rayner asserts that any choices or decisions require a reciprocal action that produces a dynamic action. This action determines the growth process of the next set of choices or decisions; where the consequences of making my choices and decisions supports and strengthens my research and practice and acts like a spreading system of roots supporting the growth of the tree and my complex self. Diagram 3.1 (see above) illustrates this clearly. My decisions to accept an author's viewpoint or theory to influence my research produces the energy that moves me towards the next author, book or article. My choice of books, authors, and articles connect to the dynamic action I am making with my informed choices and decisions. As a practitioner I come, through experience, to accept Rayner's assertion that I have lost my ability to make informed choices and decisions. Why?, because I have lost the ability to, '*distinguish [my] inner self as a subject from what [I] regard as objects in [my] external surroundings*' (Rayner 2004: 1). Rayner is claiming that we have lost the ability to make informed choices because we are unable to identify what factors influence our choices. In this chapter, I counter Rayner's claim by identifying the influences informing my choices, decisions and actions and by reviewing the literature I encounter as a researcher and a practitioner.

To help the flow of the narrative in this chapter I describe my experiences with the literature through the composite voice of the researcher and practitioner by acknowledging there is, *'no separation between [my] inner and outer self'* (Ibid) and through this single voice narrative the transformative nature of my story is judged. I agree with the Socratic view that, *'narratives are a valuable transformative tool... allow[ing] an understanding of the world in new ways'* (Gudmundsdottir, 1995: 34). As an experienced teacher, I am well versed in transforming the curriculum, drawing on my pedagogical content knowledge¹ to create new perspectives on accepted knowledge. I accept I am not the author of the knowledge I teach but I do stand in the place of the author (Palmer, 1969) and giving, it what McEwan (1987) calls, a pedagogical interpretation by assigning it meaning, coherence and integrity. This chapter represents the transformative narrative of my journey to become an author of knowledge, validated by my living standards of judgment² and using the dialectic approach to structure my thinking and actions because, *'if you want the truth you must have conversation'* Palmer (1990).

The dialectic approach requires me, to have a conversation with the literature, in order to challenge and understand that literature, but in doing so, I accept that in reviewing the literature it will have, *'a life of its own distinct from [my] intentions...and reveal new meanings'* (Schön, 2007: 163). This observation echoes Eames view on questioning within a practice. *'When I question my own practice, then, or when I engage in dialogue.....I don't know for sure what the answer will be, or where it will lead me, but I do know that [it] will sustain the forward movement of my living, changing understanding'*, (Eames, 1993: 5). The action of questioning and reflecting on answers is already a part of my practice, both as a researcher and a practitioner, and I have noted that the *'dialogic process create[s] emergence in [my practice and research] rather than progressing to a predetermined plan'*. (Hartog, 2005: 65). My review of the literature has therefore

¹**Pedagogical content knowledge:** the body of knowledge developed through practice,

²**My living standards of judgement:** judgements or decisions based on my value system

to be seen an emergence in my thinking and actions as a practitioner and a researcher as I critically examines the literature that transforms me to become an author of knowledge.

2.0 My reflective conversation

The review of the literature in the chapter is organised into seven sections. Each section has a question that voices a cause for concern I have about my practice. Each question I view as a local reflective spiral linking the literature influencing my thinking with the answers to the questions and therefore becoming instrumental, in transforming my research and practice, through the insights, knowledge and skills I gain. These sections or local spirals do not represent a chronological progression in my thinking but they do reflect my key concerns about my research and practice and the choice of literature between 2002 and 2008. McEwan and Egan believe *'that the time between the self that tells and the self that listens is fluid'* (1995: 26) which does reflects my experience but perhaps should read: *'that time between the self that reads and the self that understands is fluid'*.

This chapter represents the *'multiple facets of understanding [which] interweave, collide, contradict but ultimately move towards the connectedness of things'*. (Josselson, 2006: 10). The questions are the dialectic devices I use to synthesize this new knowledge into my context. By drawing together the literature through a key question, I am explaining how my thinking evolves and matures as my research progresses. The questions can therefore be seen as individual threads weaving together to create a bigger more complex picture; each thread useful to explore in its own right but not understood totally unless woven together. Through the questions I therefore *'ultimately move towards the connectedness of things'* (Ibid: 10).

Getting to 'know' the literature, that ultimately helps me answer my questions, is a challenge. Over the six years of my research, I read numerous books and articles revisiting many of them before I understood their meaning and therefore capable of

transforming me into ways I could then apply to my practice and research. Covey's advice to, '*seek first to understand then to be understood*'. (1989: 235) is an important part of my epistemological journey and this current chapter demonstrates, '*how [that knowledge] came to be known [and understood]*'. (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 23)

On reflection it seems that the importance of what I was reading sometimes did not reveal itself until my thinking reached the required 'maturity'. The term 'maturity', in my context, is a grouping together of related concepts that combine to give me a deeper insight into the literature. Over my six years of research I come to recognise these groupings as my 'moments of epiphany' - valuing their dynamic and fluid nature that give me the insight to make sense of the continually evolving conceptual landscape of my research and practice enabling me to assimilate further new knowledge. My reaction to assimilating this vast body of literature varies: some books inspire me, others excite my imagination, now and again I just do not understand what I am reading and occasionally I am side-tracked by literature that is interesting but not applicable to my research or practice. I 'cannot *not* learn' (though I may learn one thing as opposed to another); I do have a choice, all the literature I encounter does influence and shape my thinking and subsequent actions, but it is the literature I choose to influence my research and practice that becomes the central theme of this chapter.

My questions

3.0. Why do I believe it is important to understand how to teach effectively using the Internet?

My concern I frame in this question is clearly influenced by Wenger's observations that '*learning and teaching are not inherently linked*' and '*much learning takes place without learning and indeed much teaching takes place without learning*' (Wenger, 2004: 228). These observations mirror my own experience when working on the Internet in 2002. This concern is the driving force behind my research from

the very beginning and although I do not encounter Wenger books until 2006, I accept though my own research that Wenger's observations are accurate. In 2002 I do observe, when using the Internet in lessons '*much teaching takes place without learning*' (Ibid 1998: 228) and I ask myself the question; 'Why, after twenty-five years of teaching do I have concerns that learning may not be taking place? These self-doubts about my teaching coincide with the rise of the Internet and its introduction into my school as well as the time of my researching for this academic award.

In the late 1990's and early 2000's the Internet technology looks exciting. Papert, (1994) book, *The Children's Machine, Rethinking the Age of the Computer* introduces me to the word constructionism³ and gives me an insight to the idea that children, '*will do best by 'fishing'⁴ for themselves for the specific knowledge they need*' and '*that the knowledge children need is the knowledge that will help them get more knowledge*' (Ibid: 139). Intrigued by the idea of my pupils reconstructing a personal version of the knowledge they gather I began seeing the Internet as a useful resource when teaching. Doubts set in when watching the pupils working online and interacting with a wider world and these doubts makes me aware that I do not know enough about this tool. If I am going to use the Internet tool within my practice I realise I have to gain an understanding of the nature of the Internet and discover the type of learning taking place when my pupils are working on the Internet.

In 2002, digital skills, in schools, through the then new subject of ICT (Information Communication Technology), aim solely to teach computer skills. *Transforming the Way We Learn* (DfES, 2002), although a useful document, represents a starting point in those early days of my research, but does not offer any insight to the

³ **Constructionism** is an educational theory that advocates that individual learners construct mental models to understand the world around them

⁴ '**fishing**' comes from traditional idea that education codifies what it thinks citizens need to know and set out to feed children this 'fish', Papert believes children should do their own 'fishing'.

‘emergent learning’⁵ (Wenger 2004: 267) taking place when pupils are working online. I am feeling confident, after gaining my ICT coordinator certificate in 1998 and start to teach the ICT skills that will develop the pupils’ digital literacy when working online. I know I have no insight into the nature of the emergent learning occurring when the pupils are using the Internet. I have to acknowledge that in order to improve my teaching I have to gain a deeper insight into what it means to be digitally literate by becoming digitally literate myself. To be digitally literate at the start of my research in 2002 there was an expectation that pupils be proficient in four key skills: ‘*identifying, locating and retrieving information on the Internet* [then be capable of] *discerning, evaluating and assessing its reliability*, [and, lastly] *presenting the retrieved information in an appropriate style and medium*’ (DfES: 2002: 11). This is perhaps a simplistic view of the emerging literacy but I soon discovered that digital literacy is, in fact, not one type of literacy but an umbrella term for the many skills of the emerging ‘multiliteracies’ (Warschauer: 1999) skills which shift emphasis from text to that of multimodality⁶ (Kress and Leeuwen: 2000). The knowledge that, by identifying these multiliteracies with their multimodal skills and by decoding them, I am able to understand and assess open-ended learning environments, such as the Internet, is exhilarating. Hill and Hannafin studies (1997) give me my first insight into how to research in an open environment such as the Internet. It is the influence of these authors, providing me with this initial knowledge on this new online domain, which gives me the energy to embark on my research journey to understanding this online learning environment afforded by the Internet.

4.0 Why use Action Research?

Bruner helps me to visualise my concerns about my research in late 2005 by stating that ‘*we live in a sea of stories and like the fish will be last to discover the water*’. (Bruner, 1996: 147) In 2005, I am a bit like Bruner’s fish; I am looking at one (*fish*) story and not understanding the nature of the water in which the fish swim. It is

⁵ **Emergent learning:** Learning that takes place all the time

⁶ **Multimodality:** refers to different types of discourse e.g. text, music, film , etc.,

through three concerns I tease out of my preliminary summary and discuss in detail in Chapter four, that am I able to visualise Bruner's 'water'.

Concern one

When conducting my early research I realise I am not connecting to my pupils' thinking when they work on the Internet. The lesson central to my early research, that reflects my practice and informs my research design, is not '*in collaboration with the learner*' (Laurillard et al 2000: 17), a quality promoting the '*conceptual learning that can be applied to any learning*' (DfES, 2003: 25). I am not listening to or interacting with the pupils' 'voices' (Macbeath et al 2003; Fielding and Bragg 2003), and therefore unable to identify and understand the emergent learning taking place in lessons. On reading Roche (2007) I realise my research in 2003, is reflecting my practice. My research tool design is didactic and fits neatly into the way I am teaching. Roche reflects my thinking in 2003, '*I can now see the didactic lesson are reliable 'things' that can be 'planned', 'executed' and assessed within a given timetable especially if the only voice is that of the teacher [researcher] and the children passively follow her plans*' (2007: 121). In order to identify the emergent learning processes, my research tool(s) and subsequently my teaching, has to become dialogic. Roche describes this type of dialogic lesson accurately, '*as a process: it is about opportunity, conversation, flow, engagement, being: the process can be planned for but there are no guarantees around outcomes or about what happens when children and teachers explore and create knowledge together*' (Ibid: 121). Between 2002 and 2005 I believe I am teaching dialogically but it took my preliminary research to realise I am actually teaching didactically. The lesson, central for my Preliminary research, structures the pupils' progress through a comprehensive set of tasks. Roche influences my retrospective thinking by giving me the language to articulate this contradiction in my practice; I am not giving the pupils the opportunity or responsibility to be individuals or equals in the learning process by not giving my pupils a learning '*space that invites the voice of the individual and the voice of the group*' (Parker, 1998: 73)

Concern two

I realise that my identity as a teacher needs clarification and it is through Bruner, who is a great influence on my thinking, that I am able to articulate this concern. I know that after my preliminary research, which I conduct alone, I have to connect to the outer world because '*as [I] encounter [my] effect on the world and develop [my] relations with others these layers build upon each other to produce [my] identity.. a very complex interweaving of participative experiences and reifying projections*' a process that requires me to '*bring together, through negotiation of meaning a construct who [I am]*' (Bruner, 1996: 151). I must understand my role within my own practice and accept that '*good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher*' (Palmer 2000: 11) and discover how that 'good teaching' connects to the wider '*community of practices*' (Wenger: 2004) or my research question remains unanswered.

Concern three

I also realise that by researching alone I am giving myself too narrow a view of the possibilities and influences available to me. To become more collaborative I have to actively listen to pupils and colleagues and in the process make '*new connections and open new possibilities of meaning*' (Ibid: 109) by engaging actively with the wider communities of practice that overlap and define my context: Bruner's sea.

These three concerns, emerging from my research between 2002 and 2005, help me to shift the focus of my research towards clarifying my practice by reflecting on my thinking and actions and enabling me to deconstruct my context when teaching online, but now within a wider scope. This realignment to the reflective interpretation and analysis of my changing practice becomes the next stage of my research.

I am drawn to the interpretive model of action research, through the influences of Kemmis and McTaggart (1997), Carr and Kemmis (2002) Ebbutt (1985) and Reason and Rowen (1981), by connecting with the methodology, through its spirals

of planning, acting and reflection, making it ideal for my research journey. This methodology encapsulates my perception of the way my concerns about my practice can be resolved. The cyclical model with its different actions feeding into the continuous spiral: collaboration, participation, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, influence my perception as a researcher and a practitioner by describing what I want to be doing in my research. It is important for me that the methodology I adopt to complete my research includes a reflective process acknowledging the sense of 'being' part of the process and gives meaning to my place in the reality that represents what I am experiencing.

Action research, I begin to appreciate, is a powerful tool for change and improvement at a local level (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2000: 227) and by gaining a better understanding of the problems that arise from improving and changing my practice, I gain the insights that inform me and ultimately help the wider educational community. I see that my action research is empowering me by making me question and challenge my values system: a value system I accepted without reflection or criticism for years. Action research, as a methodology, gives me the mechanism to change my practice and I support Robson (2002: 216) view, that the way to learn about my organisation is through the process of changing it.

In deciding to use action research, to interpret my changes to my practice, I accept this approach has its critics. Bernstein (2000) warns that because life is complicated and no situation exists in isolation, researchers overlook situations that presuppose a structure of meaning and therefore are ignoring a wider area of negotiation. Habermas (1984) describes this, interpreting and operating in an already interpreted world, as 'double hermeneutic'. This double hermeneutic leads to one of the main criticisms of the interpretive approaches; there is a danger that I, as the researcher, will neglect to acknowledge the power of the external and the emerging truths, therefore, making my research hermetically sealed from the real world.

To avoid this criticism my research aims to connect to a wider community of practice because it is important that my research is relevant to my practice, my profession, and me. I acknowledge the power of external influences shaping my research ensuring that it will not be hermeneutically sealed in my context and become one more story in '*a long gallery of finely wrought miniatures*' (Josselson, 2006, 4) that does not connect to the audience I am addressing. Connecting to different audiences is a subject I unpack in Chapter 8.

On reading Kemmis and McTaggart (1992), Carr, and Kemmis (2002) I discover the action research approach involves '*practitioners themselves in researching the relationship between theories and practices*' (Kemmis and Taggart: 2001:91). Through this process of '*self reflective, self critical and critical enquiry*', I gain an '*understanding of [my] practice and the wider contexts of [my] practice*' (Carr and Kemmis, 2002: 122). I am reassured my research will not become hermetically sealed. The descriptions of action research are in tune with my research thinking, although I do acknowledge, and am influenced in this by Webb's (1996) note of caution. He warns that any description of action research be used as a guideline rather than a set of criteria to be rigidly observed, otherwise my action research becomes codified, and, rather than be a guide, it becomes '*the way to do action research*' rather than my way to interpret my research.

I started my research in 2002 with a very narrow understanding of the term '*collaborative*'. In my preliminary research I thought I had been '*collaborating*' with my pupils, when in reality my pupils are passively following my researcher's plans; my didactic approach to teaching influencing my research. To redefine my practice in terms of the word '*collaborative*' requires another look at the literature, especially in the context of my action research. Reading McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead clarify my understanding of the word collaboration when describing action research collaboration as '*sharing information on progress and insight,*

offering feedback and providing support and challenge' (2003: 39). I find 'collective self-reflective inquiry' a useful phrase to anchor my thinking when exploring the possibility of engaging with a wider community. This phrase puts my reflective process into a context that I can relate to and this helps me to start to clarify my interpretation of my own role within my action research.

I achieve this clarity through using McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead description of action research as being one that is *'involved, informed, committed and intentional action*. I am now confident that I am able to, *'turn [my] practice into praxis* by making my action research, *'first person research, [with] the emphasis on the living person, and show[ing] how individuals can take responsibility for generating change*' (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 2003: 20). Reading this description becomes one of my 'moments of epiphany'; I narrate my research and I take responsibility for any change my research generated. This first person action research is called 'a living theory' approach. It is hard to describe the influence of Whitehead and McNiff on my thinking and after reading their books my whole research programme becomes transformed. Whitehead's (1991) view that the 'living theory' research is rooted in the context of a study of singularity and represents a growing response to practitioner-based researchers who traverse, with their research, the traditional divide between educational theory and professional practice helps me, and after spending three years of trying to traverse that divide, feel that I am coming home.

I acknowledge that my action research has a clear intent to intervene in and improve my own understanding of my practice by accepting responsibility for my role in my practice and research but always doing it in relation to others. I ask the fundamental question: 'How do I?', because my action research is about my actions, not the actions of others (McNiff, Lomax, Whitehead: 2003: 19 - 20). I agree with Lomax (1994), an advocate of the 'living theory' approach, that this type of educational action research is research carried out by people who practice education.

This living theory approach uses my own living standards of judgment to validate the new knowledge my theory generates. These standards of judgment are rooted in, '*ontological, epistemological, methodological and pedagogical values [and] act as the explanatory principle and living standards by which we judge our practice*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 85). The words: ontological, epistemological, methodological and pedagogical are new to me but they come, in time, to shape my thinking, my research and my practice.

Throughout 2006, I find myself reflecting on my value system and its importance in influencing my choices and decisions. The process of indentifying the constraints making my practice a '*living contradiction*' (Ibid: 25), integrating my key values into my practice so they work in harmony, making them my living standards of judgment validating my living theory of my practice, is the central narrative of this submission.

5.0 Why use the narrative technique to describe my research journey?

In my early research, described in my preliminary study summary, I try to write my research in a scientific style but through reading McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead I become '*the author of my own research account*', (2003: 20) so I can '*make sense of [my] experiences*' (Jarvis, 2005: 28). Through my authorship I acknowledge I have the power to transform the reader because '*narratives are a valuable transformative tool*' (Gudmundsdottr 1995: 34), allowing me to understand and interpret the world. Telling my stories of my learning becomes a '*generative transformational process*' (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996: 55) with this '*generative power act[ing] as a unit of energy whereby each [person] may transform [themselves] endlessly in the process of [their] own realisation of potential*' (Ibid: 56) and therefore any one person has the potential to transform the world.

My research becomes my transformative story and as the narrator, the fundamental

question of ‘How do I?’ has to be answered: I have to know the voice of my own research as I narrate my thoughts and actions, the *‘multiple and complex, cumulative fragments of a lived autobiography’* (Davies and Harre, 1990: 4). Through writing, my narrative, I am not just observing material facts, *‘but [observing] the meaningful shape emerging from selected inner and outer experiences’*. (Taylor, 2005: 7), drawing out an inner dialogue where *‘the time between the self that tells and the self that listens is fluid’* (McEwan and Egan 1995: 26). Bruner eases my mind about narratives, and after reading *The Culture of Education* (1996) I realise I can make sense of the world by creating theories and stories. I understand that the process of making sense of the world is a natural process, *‘because, we adapt to the natural and social worlds through appropriate actions and [through this we] create theories and stories to help us understand, and even explain, the world and our actions in it’* (Bruner 1997: 63). We then, *‘try to rationalise about who we are and in the end we become the autobiographic narratives by which we make sense of our lives’* (Ibid: 15).

Ritche and Wilson (2000), inform me that narratives are composed and recomposed, to create multiple potential meanings and even contradictions, and therefore can create spaces for rethinking and resisting old interpretations, so individual identities are never singular. I find a connection with this thinking in Wenger’s (2004) *‘Communities of Practice’* approach to learning and his description of identity as possessing five characteristics. I begin to understand that identities can be seen as part of my: negotiated experience, community membership, learning trajectory, a nexus of multi-membership and my relationship between the local and the global communities to which I connect. Teasing out my identity through my narrative is not the simple process of writing down my observations of my practice. I have to be aware of the competing and conflicting narratives in my teaching, and understand the context in which the narration is unfolding.

It is therefore important that I understand the rationale underpinning my research because narration, in this context, has its critics. Josselson (2006) has concerns that

the practice of narrative research, as an interpretive process, will include not just material facts, but the meaningful shapes emerging from selected inner and outer experiences. He contemplates whether narrative research is just a means of working towards a long gallery of finely wrought miniatures instead of fitting together like pieces in a jigsaw. My narrative, Josselson warns, could just be my story, unconnected to other stories rather informing and connecting to a wider narrative. Josselson notes, that narrative research articulates a different set of principles from hypothesis testing by *'stand[ing] outside the hierarchical realm of fact: the multiple facets of understanding.... interweave, collide and contradict when ultimately they should be moving towards the connectedness of things: otherwise all you end up with is an interesting tale and nothing more'*. (Ibid: 4). I am conscious that my story may not connect to a wider audience, and therefore turn to Bruner and Chase to address this issue. I discuss in Chapter 2 the influence of these two authors and at this point just acknowledge their point of entry into my narrative.

Influenced by Chase's lenses and Bruner's realities I accept my narration has the power to be a transformational story of how I, the reflective practitioner, change in the course of my journey to answer the question, 'How do I improve my practice?' I am interested in Weber's (1995) view that, as the narrator, my identity as a teacher reflects my own biography that is my personal, cultural, institutional, historical and collective life history. I know I am unable to separate myself from being the narrator, teacher, researcher, and citizen, but as the teacher, I have to recognise the power of outside agencies and accept that, in my school context, I am employed to maintain the status quo. This narration therefore becomes a reflection of the educational status quo in which I teach my pupils and my quest to 'breach the canonical script' (Bruner, 1996: 139), it is my journey to discover a different perspective on education and teaching when conducting an historical enquiry online.

In order to clarify the reflective process, within my narrative, in my mind, I realise

that I have to create a narrative learning cycle that supports ‘hearing’ of other voices. To avoid becoming locked into my perception of my actions I acknowledge Ramsay’s (2005) narrative learning cycle as a guide by removing the danger of my voice, as the narrator, becoming isolated. The cyclical action to hear other voices through the process of narrating my story, exploring other stories, re-narrating stories and including others in these actions draws in other participants enriches my narrative.

I can now claim I am the author of my research, as I initiate and direct the action in my unfolding narrative, rather than merely using the ideas of others as tools with which to analyse my choices, decisions and actions.

6.0. How do I arrive at Wenger?

As my journey progresses my narration is not only a story of how I change my understanding and perception of the learning taking place in my teaching context, but of how I am now able to articulate and theorise those changes. In 2002, at the beginning of my research journey, I am still very much under the influence of Piaget. Like many teachers with whom I trained (1970-1974), I learn my professional skills and understanding using Piaget’s constructivist theories of hands-on, self-directed activities, orientated towards design and discovery, with children building their own mental structures when interacting with the environment. Over time experience teaches me that learning is a far more complex process and is not subject to one theory, but Piaget’s developmental stages still has the power to influence the way I teach and still think. Old habits die hard.

Over the years I become familiar with and am influenced by the term ‘spiral curriculum’ (Bruner:1996) but it is not until I read Bruner’s *The Culture of Education* 1996, Daniel’s *Vygotsky and Pedagogy* (2001) and Moll’s *Vygotsky and Education* (Moll, 2002), that I discover Vygotsky and his thinking on teaching and the educational theories he influences. Through Vygotsky I am introduced to ‘*the world in which we live [being] humanized, full of material and symbolic objects*

(signs, knowledge systems) that are culturally constructed, historical in origin and social in content'. (Scribner,1990: 92). Daniels (2002) introduces me to Engestrom and his 'activity theory' where he views human activity as a *'collaborative and dialogical process in which different perspectives.... and voices, meet...collide and merge'*. (Engestrom, 1999a: 382).

On reading Engestrom, I believe I have found a theory that has relevance for my research. Tikomirov (2003) when reflecting on Engestrom's theory suggests a connection with activity theory and teaching with computers by seeing *'the dialogue between human and computer is characterized by the emerging personification of the computer'* (Tikhomirov,2003: 357), and the *'dialogue between human and computer [being] characterized by the emerging personification of the computer'* (Ibid: 357). Tikhomirov reinforces Engestrom's activity theory when he visualises a computer *'not only a universal data-processing device, it is also a universal means of influencing human activity'* (Ibid: 353). The activity theory underpinning the interaction between the computer and the pupils, through this type of joint activity, reflects my thinking at the time providing me with what I believe maybe a theoretical framework to my research. Later, when reading Wenger, I realise that activity theory is an echo of my didactic approach to teaching where *'the 'zone of proximal development' in which learners who receives help can perform an activity they would not be able to perform themselves'* (Wenger, 2004: 280).

Wenger takes away from Engestrom's narrower view of an activity, with its pedagogical focus defining Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development', to the wider assumption *'that places learning in the context of our lived experiences of participation in the world'*. (Ibid: 3) Scaffolding of experiences is a strategy I use regularly when teaching but this strategy does not sit comfortably with my perception of my emerging research. It is only when I read Wenger's *Communities of Practice* (2004), that I find a model reflecting what I come to recognise is actually happening in my context. My practice is now changing from a didactic to a

dialogic approach, when I interact with my ten-year-old pupils, and the term ‘participation’ now becomes a more appropriate the term than ‘scaffolding’ when describing the strategies I employ in my practice when I conduct historical enquiries on the Internet.

Reading Wenger I start seeing learning as social participation and a ‘*process of being [an] active participant in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities*’ (Wenger, 2004: 40) and therefore ‘*capturing the profoundly social character of our experience of life*’ (Ibid: 57). In coupling this social participation with reification⁷, Wenger shows me how to give solid form to my experiences by explaining that ‘*any community of practice produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms, and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed form*’ (Ibid: 59). I recognise this learning now involves me as an active participant in the practices of social communities and constructing identities. Understanding the structure of the communities of practice and their impact on learning now becomes the focus of my thinking and actions

The pupils I teach are also members of many overlapping communities of practice. These communities have their own practices, routines, rituals, artifacts, symbols, stories and histories: they are an integral part of their lives. The pupils and I are learning all the time from other people, the environment we live in, past and present: it is an active social experience, where ‘*learning cannot be designed.... ultimately it belongs to the realm of experience and practice... learning happens, design and no design*’ (Ibid: 225). Wenger adds a word of warning that teaching is not the same as learning because ‘*learning is an emergent, on-going process which may use teaching as one of its many structures*’ (Ibid: 267), concluding that, ‘*teaching and learning are not inherently linked*’ (Ibid: 266). Wenger expands this statement by citing the example of the school as being recognised and culturally significant ‘community of practice’, which should be the centre of the meaning-

⁷ **Reification** is a term used to treat an abstraction as substantially existing by it’ making into a thing’ (Wenger 2004: 58)

making process, but the participatory process required to make that possible does not fit into the current model on which school education is based. The codification of knowledge that should have participation at the centre of the learning process is reduced to reified subject matter that has to be decoded for the pupils. For example, textbooks replace real experiences with codified knowledge taking the place of actual practice. Lave (1997) identifies this danger of codification when researching a pupil's inability to transfer knowledge into practice and notes that learning can be bound to the situation in which it has been learnt. In my staffroom, the constant moan by staff is the inability of pupils to apply one piece of knowledge from one context to the next. Wenger acknowledges this danger by asserting that teaching knowledge within a school curriculum represents a balancing act. This balancing act has to take into consideration the 'emergent learning' pupils experience through being members of the many communities and the reified knowledge prescribed, by the state, through the national curriculum, in order to educate them; it is a difficult juggling act. The advent of the Internet illustrates this juggling act. The emergent learning occurring when pupils use the Internet with its World Wide Web and evolving communities of practice influences the tightly controlled school community.

The advent of the Internet brings the unofficial knowledge of the wider society into the world of officially sanctioned knowledge housed in the National Curriculum (DfES, 1988, 1999, 2002). This National Curriculum is designed, as an educational system set up to meet the needs of a future society. Originally, a detailed framework of skills and knowledge, it has, over the years, become more prescriptive through the introduction of a tight regime of assessments, examinations and school inspections. When teaching what I term 'school knowledge', available to me through text books etc, it is a different experience from the dynamic and changing unofficial knowledge I experience when using the Internet. This brought to the fore the old debate about official and unofficial knowledge, (Bernstein, 2000). I am, as the teacher, expected to be the expert on school knowledge or, to be the *'knowledge worker: [an] educated professionals with knowledge and expertise,*

dealing with the creation and communication of information', (Hartnell-Young and Morriss, 2007:3) with the pupils novices to be initiated into the skills to access that knowledge. The Internet, on the other hand has the potential to change that dynamics by becoming a place where, *'everyone is just a learner'*. (Hartnell-Young, 2003b: 17).

Bernstein (2000) and Lave (1997) influence my thinking through their discussions on the nature of knowledge, exploring in their different ways: the tools, control of communication practices and the discourse that creates knowledge barriers. It is through their influence I now visualise the tensions between school subjects and other knowledge bases. Influenced by both these authors I see the barriers between my school context and the real world when I encounter official and unofficial knowledge using the multi-literacies on the Internet when teaching history online. I am researching in a domain where I am developing my own interpretation of a community of practices that allows both official and unofficial knowledge to coexist. Wenger, with his model of 'communities of practice', gives me the ideal framework in which to place my research. I want to understand my practice within my context and identify the emergent learning taking place when working online. By understanding my role and participation in the reification, or meaning-making process with the pupils, I can identify the learning taking place.

7.0. Why is an historical enquiry central to my research?

I enjoy teaching history and when deciding on a subject to represent school knowledge, in my research, I naturally chose history. In the 1990's the National Curriculum framework influences me by replicating the historians' way, through its themes of: historical knowledge and understanding, historical interpretation, historical enquiry and organisation and communication. The framework gives me a set of guidelines enabling me to teach my pupils how to 'do history'.

I see the school *'knowledge of history'* (Hedegaard, 2002: 19) as a powerful a tool; a tool that my pupils should learn in order to understand their society. History,

besides being in my view a powerful tool, is also a subject that is so complex that Elton feels it is '*not a good subject to teach children*' (Elton, 2002: 134). Nichols (1997:1), citing Hexter, supports this view that 'doing history' with children by acting as historian but not being one, implying that the 'real thing' is too difficult, because children do not have the life experiences or the cognitive capacity to understand the evidence fully. This 'doing adult' approach with children results in a superficial understanding of the subject and I recognise that history is a difficult subject but I know, from experience, that it can be taught in some intellectually honest form. I demonstrate this claim through my historical enquiries with my ten-year-old pupils on our wiki as described in Chapter 5. I teach as, Bruner suggests, by introducing key concepts and revisiting in them different ways throughout the year. Bruner's 'spiral curriculum' approach still influences how I ensure my pupils gain a deeper level of understanding in history.

My understanding of history also acknowledges the influence of Nichols (1999) who supports the view that thinking skills should be embedded into historical pedagogy and Shyer (2002) who wrote that it is not what children learn that is the main issue but the skills to interpret, with understanding, what they learn being ultimately important. In accepting this view, I acknowledge that my pupils conduct their historical enquiries the historian's way rather than '*letting [them] loose as....independent souls doing their own history*' (Nichol, 1997: 1)

When starting my research in 2002, I am concerned that I am not teaching history by replicating the skills of the historian because, as Elton asserts, I am still viewing the nature of history in an oversimplified way. Harnett supports this concern and summarises the teaching of primary school history as giving '*insufficient attention... to the skills of historical enquiry [and as a result] not all children experience good teaching in history in primary school.*' (Harnett 2004: 2) Harnett points out that when implementing the history curriculum, within primary schools, an account needs to be taken of both teachers' knowledge of history and their personal beliefs and values, but she accepts that the majority of teachers view the

content of the curriculum as a 'given' but not necessarily a consensual one. This lack of interaction with the subject matter encourages some teachers to believe they need only plan for content coverage rather than appropriate historical enquiries leading to *'too much history.... concerned with low level tasks'* (Ofsted, 2004).

In response to this concern, the Excellence and Enjoyment document (DfES, 2003) gives teachers more freedom to plan the curriculum. I am influenced by this publication and choose to *'take a fresh look at [my history] curriculum, [my] timetable and the organisation of [my] school day and week, and think actively about how [I] would like to develop and enrich the experience [I] offer [my pupils]'* (DfES 2003: 12). I knew that *'teaching is a deeply complex, intellectual and practical activity. It is a creative act [where I] the teacher select from a store of experience and repertoire of strategies the most appropriate for my purpose'* (Turner-Bisset, 1999: 52). My understanding of the nature of history impacts on my research through the level of task I am expecting from the pupils when working online.

I am concerned that if the purpose of teaching historical enquiry to my pupils is a way to enable them to develop the skills of the historian, I have to clarify for them that the history I teach is only one version of the kaleidoscopic, multilayered place called the past. After reading Carr's (1990) seminal book: *What is history?* I realise my perception of the past had been shaped by the National Curriculum. *Fascinated* I read Tosh (2002) who expands Carr's vision that history is *'an unending dialogue between the past and present'* (Carr, 1990: 30), a view of history where the historian chooses what "facts of the past" he or she intended to turn into "historical facts according to their own biases and agendas. To gain a counter view I read Elton (2002) who is critical of Carr's philosophy, believing that *'historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian'* (Ibid: 12) with only the critical skills of the historian able to validate historical knowledge. All three authors are very influential in giving me a new perspective on the subject history.

The intellectual rigour, used by historians, to validate historical knowledge creates an awareness of the dynamics of change over time and the skills are very powerful tools. I believe historical knowledge unchallenged becomes moribund and mummified into a version of history that values only tradition and nostalgia, or worse: a tool to mislead. When learning about the past it is therefore essential that the version of the past my pupils study is not seen as just one viewpoint and I agree with Wray and Lewis '*that the nature of historical records is such that it is almost impossible for there not to be a 'point of view'*' (Wray and Lewis, 1997: 11).

The implications for my research are important; teaching history requires me to replicate the intellectual rigour used by the historian. I believe that teaching a subject like history should allow the pupil to experience how to be an historian by using the analytical, critical and interpretive skills when investigating the past but tempered with the knowledge that it represents only one point of view of that past. These skills will help the pupils when dealing with 'facts' that masked opinion and untruths, and ultimately they give them the power to develop their own point of view. Hedgegaard (2003), research into teaching history, sees these skills as a '*toolkit*' (Ibid: 296) for teaching history. An online historical enquiry requires the pupils to use a 'toolkit' of critical and analytical skills when working on the Internet. In my research this toolkit becomes some of the practices we negotiate and develop in our learning community where '*we [are] no longer limited to being independent readers or consumers of information.....we [are] collaborators in the creation of large storehouses of information. In the process we can learn much about ourselves and our world*' (Richardson 2006: 2). Understanding the nature of history is therefore important to me because I believe the stories from the past can be transformative and the tools we use to interpret those transformative stories become central when understanding my identity and the world around me.

8.0 Why did my pedagogical research framework have to evolve?

The transformation of my teaching from the didactic to the dialogic is, in a sense, my journey of change. My early research, in retrospect, is a time when I am

critically examining my practice and accepting the uncomfortable truths about my perceptions of who I am as a researcher and a practitioner. These perceptions change only when I begin to work together with my pupils online. The online spaces the pupils and I share are very new and, as a learning community, we come to understand how to use these new spaces. The design features that make these online spaces so versatile need understanding. Each design feature, or affordances, gives the user the opportunity for action in an individual way.

The term affordance (Gibson, 1979) describes the interaction between perceiver and perceived and the action that produces. Laurillard (Laurillard et al: 2000) influences my research and I use her view of affordances as a starting point when understanding and playing with the design features. I begin to realise that the affordances of online spaces are the key to developing the practices that become my toolkit for developing my community of practices. Laurillard identifies seven affordances that give her students the tools to be independent and personalise their learning when working online. Laurillard also noticed that the students' perception of the task using a particular design feature could differ from the teacher's perception of that task. I realise in order to create meaning for my emerging practice I require a process of negotiation between my pupils and myself as we gain an insight into our different perceptions of the task.

Wenger (1998) calls the process of negotiation the meaning of new practices, within a group 'reification'. This occurs when new 'reified' words give communal meaning to new practices. A good example of this process, from affordance to negotiated meaning of a new word, is the changing function of a tag on the Internet. A tag is the key word you type in when filing online information on social networking sites; this helps you identify and locate information later. Tagging these words then becomes a way for the Internet user to find associated information. 'Tag clouds' is a design feature that affords action and is perceived differently by different people. A tag cloud creates new associations, viewpoints and meanings.

The word 'tag' is an affordance that has been 'reified' by an online community and becoming the living language by which members of the community communicate.

The 'tag' example illustrates how the creation and ownership of knowledge is in a state of conflict. I, through my role as a teacher, deliver the knowledge as a finished product, but to those using the Internet's vast repository of knowledge and information there are no fixed answers but, rather, multiple perspectives from a complex world. Understanding the online space in which I am going to develop my learning community becomes my aim after my preliminary study, when I realise my answer to 'How do I improve my practice?' involves me answering the question 'What did user control mean?' and is only to be answered by working in those online spaces located on the Internet.

The journey to gain user control becomes challenging and I start by accepting Jonaason's (1994) view that learning is distributed between the medium, the learner, and the context. Although I come to accept that, the Internet is more an infrastructure with its multiple affordances than a medium. Working within this infrastructure, my learners, consisting of a small learning community of ten-year-old pupils, develop their historical enquiry skills. The Internet is a good working infrastructure because it overcomes many restraints imposed by an educational infrastructure tied to the national curriculum, for example my pupils are able to access libraries, museums etc at the click of the mouse. Understanding the design features of this online infrastructure is the next stage of my research.

At the beginning of my research, I use Laurillard's pedagogical framework as a guide to my thinking; it is useful but proves to be rather complex, with my early attempts to produce a pedagogical framework reflecting this complexity. Understanding the new affordances on the Internet is a steep learning curve and Chapter 6 describes my experiences this in depth. Very little literature, that I understand, is available in 2006 and I rely on Richardson (2006) to initiate me into the world of Web 2.0 with its simple explanation of blogs, wikis and podcasts. The

British Educational Communications and Technology Agency: Becta and Futurelab organisations, set up to help transform the way people learn through innovative technology and practice, are very influential and provide invaluable support for me, both in directing me to relevant research but also by being able to inform me of the 'whole online picture'. Through the insights I gain with these organisations I develop a deeper understanding and perspective of my research and sense of where I belong in current educational research. Through Becta, I become aware of two research projects that help me shape my thinking and create the pedagogical model for my research: Enquiring Minds and the PELR (**P**edagogies and **e**-learning resources)

Enquiring Minds was a three-year research and development programme aimed to create opportunities for learners to be independent, to take responsibility for their own learning, create their own knowledge and conduct their own research in the context of a rich digital information landscape. The central principle of Enquiring Minds, as cited on their web site, states, *'that children and young people themselves take increasing responsibility for defining what and how they want to learn.'* (<http://www.enquiringminds.org.uk/>). This introduces the idea that pupils can be responsible for defining what and how they learn, becoming researchers capable of planning and conducting studies and developing their own knowledge: I am influenced by these three core aims from this study.

This research directs me to *'Constructing Childhood'* by James and James (2004), though the use of the phrase 'digital native', a term coined by Prensky (2001) to describe the generation of children who have grown up using, working and playing on computers. James and James's influence my perspective on childhood and I find the process of teasing out the terms: 'child, children and childhood' helps me discover the concept of the 'child's voice', which, up to that point has been missing in my research. I realise that to move forward I have to re-evaluate my relationship with the pupils I teach and create a space, which merges our two constructs: a common space where a new learning community can develop from the merger.

Somekh's (2004) summary of her PELR's research at Manchester Metropolitan University reassures me as I now see my how my research connects and although I am not part of this research project, I visualise myself as part of a wider community of practices sharing the same research goals. The pedagogical framework used by the PELR's research reflects the way I view the whole issue of teaching online: this reassures me, I am taking a slightly different research path, but I am finding the same key language useful when describing my experiences. My research, I know is local, focusing on a small community of practices rather than Somekh's research, that is more global, but I can see how our research is connected.

9.0. How would these emerging technologies help me answer my research question?

I come to believe that *'to learn [about Web 2.0, I have] to immerse [my]self in the network'* (Downes, 2007). Immersing myself in the emerging technologies on the Internet I learn that *'a learning activity is [seen as] a conversation undertaken between the learner and other members of the community. Consist[ing] not only of words but images, video, multimedia and more'* and I discover that, *'this conversation forms a rich tapestry of resources, dynamic and interconnected created not only by experts, but by all members of the community, including learners'* (Becta, 2007: 20).

At the beginning of my research, the government classifies 'digital literacy' into four key skills. By 2007 the government's perception of 'digital literacy' has changed beyond recognition and is now housed in an e-strategy that views these emerging online tools as vital to the personalised learning of future generation of children. This e-strategy is discussed in great depth in Becta's excellent summaries of recent research and current thinking: *Harnessing Technology* (Becta, 2006), *Emerging Technologies for Learning: Volume 1 and Volume 2* (Becta, 2006), (Becta, 2007) and the DfES's *2020 Vision the governments Review of the Teaching and Learning Review Group* (DfES, 2006).

These emerging technologies and online spaces are very new and note two words of warning. Hartnell-Young researching online learning communities observes that, *'in spite of our attention to capture students voice, we found the voice of the teacherintrudes, whether through rules, guidelines'*, (2007: 195) and Bryant warning that working with online communication tools does not automatically produce new thinking on the part of the pupils or teachers. Bryant voices a word of warning when discussing wiki spaces, whilst *'wiki sites are undoubtedly useful as resources for education, there is a legitimate debate about the reliability of completely open systems like the original Wikipedia. On one hand they are vulnerable to vandalism, the influence of special interest groups and error.....low quality of writing on pages that have been subject to many edits-the writing by committee problem'* but it does feel that ultimately they have an, *'extremely valuable role in play in allowing students and teachers to quickly and easily explore an area of knowledge ... and build up resources in a genuinely collaborative wayand encourage people to share early draftsand move beyond individual ownership of document's*. (2007: 18). Bryant concludes, on an optimistic note, by observing that, because an increasing number of classes use wikis, this emerging 'wiki' practice can be shared among teachers. I acknowledge Bryant's warning about wikis and in Chapter 5 I address this by setting affordances into my wiki that allow the community to combat the vulnerability of vandalism and editing by committee.

Finally, the DfES's *2020 Vision the governments Review of the Teaching and Learning Review Group* (DfES 2006) states that each child should have a personalised learning platform where skills useful for the future are to be developed. Bryant, in his article, *Emerging Trends in social software for Education* (Becta 2007), agrees with the government's vision, but sets out a different set of skills. These include social skills more critical in nature, more in tune with a society that will 'always be on', networking, search and assimilation of new topics, sense making, pattern recognition and decision making as well as in development of shared values. These tools or social affordances, he explains, are about connections

and context not content. Through the three years of using wikis to conduct historical enquiry I have reflected upon and been informed by Bryant's vision when using this type of social software.

These publications become very influential in consolidating my thoughts and reinforcing my own observations of the learning potential of these emerging technologies: I now appreciate that my research dovetails neatly in with current thinking. Through my own research and the reading publications, I now see Web 2.0 technology, with its social networking and authoring tools, as technology that is facilitating a network generation and through this process, my perception of the information landscape is changing. I now understand my complex research jigsaw and I have access to the knowledge that will piece it together. At last, I visualise the landscape and the path taking my research to its journey's end.

10.0 Conclusion

This chapter follows the development of my 'single voice' through a reflective conversation as a research-practitioner as I identify my causes for concern and explore the influences, which helped me find an answer. It has offered a narrative of the epistemological journey to gather 'what is known and how it came to be known'. The device of posing, then answering, questions teased apart the key concerns that frame the practitioner's belief of practising in a 'living contradiction'. The questions are not set out chronologically but do create a structure to my epistemological journey with these questions affording me the opportunity to identify the key issues characterising the research. In a sense then, this chapter creates the conceptual landscape in which the next two narrations take place. Chapters 4 and 5 follow my journey as researcher and as a practitioner separately, narrating the story of two different perspectives, with chapter 6, 7 and 8 unpacking the journey between the two perspectives and explaining the nature of the changes that lead to my transformation between these perspectives.

Section 2



Two perspectives on my journey: researcher and the practitioner
2005 - 2008

Chapter 4



My researcher's story: two perspectives

Table 4.0

My research perspective 1: Preliminary research summary extracts : 2005

My research perspective 2: Narration of my researcher's story : 2008

In this chapter, I explore my reasons for embarking on my journey of enlightenment by identifying the key issues influencing my research through two points in my research: 2005 and 2008. I achieve my insights into these two perspectives on my research journey by critically examining my 2005 preliminary research summary, a document summarising my research between 2002 and 2005. The narrative examines the two perspectives by identifying the origin of my core values: equality, individuality and responsibility underpinning and validating the changes in my practice in order to answer the question 'How do I improve my practice?'

1.0 Introduction

The Tree

*I stood still and saw a tree amid the wood,
Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
Of Daphne and the laurel bow
And that god-feasting couple old
that grew elm-oak amid the wold.
'Twas not until the gods had been
Kindly entreated, and been brought within
Unto the hearth of their heart's home
That they might do this wonder thing;
Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
And many a new thing understood
That was rank folly to my head before
by Ezra Pound*

Ezra Pound's poem uses the image of a tree to describe beautifully the process of learning from, *'the truth of things unseen before'* to, *'many a new thing understood'*.

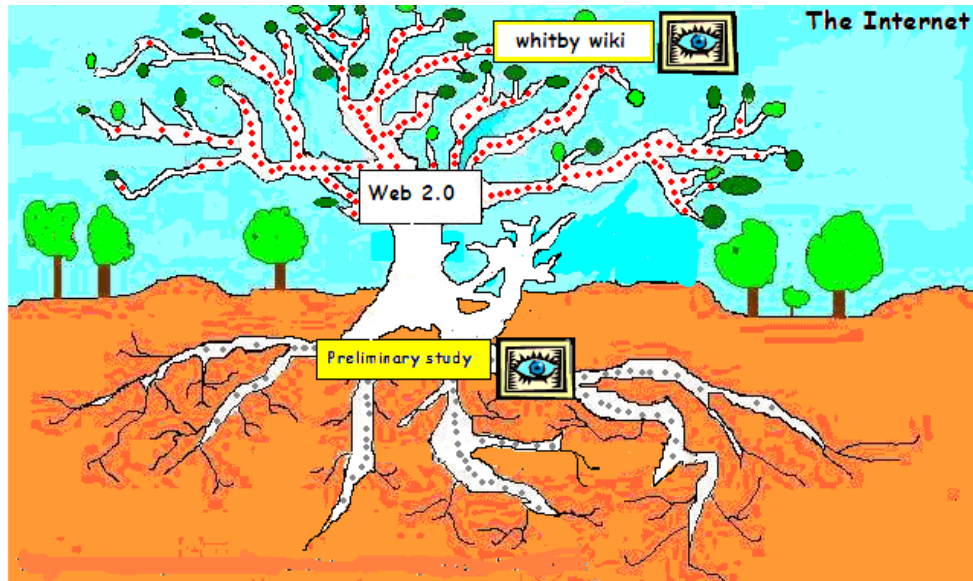


Diagram 4.0: My researcher story: perspective one and perspective two

In Diagram 4.0 (see above), I am visualising my research journey as a growing tree. My preliminary study, in the root system, represents a time when I am still searching for the answer to the key question, 'How do I improve my practice?' The tree's roots spreading and strengthening as I explore all the possibilities. The *whitby* wiki, in the branches, represents the time when all the energy I produce to answer my question, 'How do I improve my practice?' enables my tree to grow into full bloom. However, it is through Pound's poem I am able to describe that journey and my relationship with the educational institutions I looked to for guidance throughout my career. The '*gods*' Pound describes are, to me, the lecturers teaching at my local university. The act of writing this submission is a testimony to my confidence in my ability to theorise my practice and claim that I now stand still, '*amid the wood*' of my peers and know the truth '*this wonder thing*' for which I had spent seven years searching. I am grateful to the university for giving me the opportunity to make this claim '*unto their hearth of their heart's home*'. The

journey I had to experience to gain the knowledge to make my own claim to knowledge and my own *'wonder thing'*. I had to find my own *'truth of things unseen before'*. I make no apologies for using a metaphor to structure my thinking because it is the way I think. A metaphor is a powerful mental construct that has the power to organise my experience, uniquely expressing those experiences and creating the necessary realities to conceptualise my journey (Lakoff and Johnson, 1987) (Fichtner, 2003). My tree metaphor perfectly encapsulates the necessary reality I require to visualise my journey as researcher and practitioner when discovering the answer to the question 'How do I improve my practice?' This visualisation is central to the conceptualisation of my experiences into a living theory; it gives a structure and shape to my thinking and a sense of the ownership of those experiences and, through this ownership, a sense of originality where *'we understand ourselves and others as unique because each of us is an original creation ... free and self-transforming.'* (Whitehead and MC Niff, 2006: 83)

The tree metaphor I use to structure my thinking is the visual representation of the growth of my understanding through the choices¹, decisions,² and actions I make in the course of my journey. These choices, decisions and actions are influenced by my interpretation of my ontological values of equality, individuality and responsibility, helping me to understand how and why I lived, taught and researched the way I did; shaping me as a practitioner and a researcher. To understand who I am is central to understanding why my living theory evolves in the way it does and to achieve this it is necessary to unpack the reasons for starting this journey. The aim of this chapter (and outlined Table 4.0) is explaining my changing ontological perspective. I start my journey from a perspective, where I am seeing myself as separate from other people, *'offering descriptions and explanations for what I am doing'* by observing other people to a perspective where I am, *'offering descriptions and explanations for how I am involved with other people in a mutual relationship of influence'* (Ibid: 23)

¹ Choices; the act of selecting

² Decisions; a judgement, conclusion reached

This chapter narrates my ontological journey back into academia after many years of teaching in a junior school. Pound's poem *'The Tree'* captures the awe I feel on returning to academia, with the process of enlightenment it offered. I also identify the choices and decisions I make which start this journey of personal growth. It is a journey that gives me a deep insight into the reflective process necessary for me to theorise my practice and gain the confidence and authority to validate my living theory and claim that it has the, *'transformational potential to change the world'* (Whitehead and McNiff 2006: 86)

In using a tree metaphor in this submission, I am accepting that my personal growth as a researcher and practitioner is not necessarily a logical process - it is organic. Many factors influence the choices and decisions I make, as a researcher and practitioner, like fine roots responding to different nutrients and obstacles each determining the direction, growth, and final shape of the tree. This whole process gives me a continually changing perspective of who I am as a researcher and a practitioner and the opportunity, *'to develop free, self transforming, relational and inclusive attitudes, and practice'* (Ibid: 86). This chapter also examines how I, as the researcher, through experiencing this journey, gain my voice and originality in my thinking.

I am narrating my story by describing my growth as a researcher through two voices: my voice as the researcher describing the first three years of my research (2002- 2005) through extracts from my preliminary study summary and my voice as the researcher writing this chapter (2008- 2009). The chapter is organised into the following sections,

2.0 1955- 1997: Seeds in the soil

3.0 1997- 2002: The beginning of my concerns: the shoots begin to grow

4.0 2002: The roots get stronger

5.0 2005/2006: My preliminary study summary extracts

6.0 The conclusion

Each section follows and reflects on the process that leads me to-

- identify and articulate the concerns that set me on my research journey,
- discover the living contradictions existing in my practice,
- understand why my three values of equality, responsibility and individuality, represent my living standards of judgement validating my claim to knowledge, and,
- gain insight into my changing ontological perspective and to the impact that process has on my choices and decision making as a researcher and practitioner.

2.0 1955- 1997: Seeds in the soil

At the beginning of my research journey in 2002 I am still in awe of the academic institutions I passed through to become a teacher. These institutions represent the authority in educational thinking; the creators of truth housed in the knowledge and skills I master as: a student at school in the 1950's and 1960's, a trainee teacher at teacher training college in the early 1970's and as a teacher in the classroom throughout the next three decades. In all these stages of my education I am the passive recipient of authorised knowledge; never questioning the process and never doubting its truths, it is a relationship I accept, without criticism, for decades. In retrospect I now see my passivity as my tacit acceptance that the learning relationship between the knowledge holders and knowledge receivers is not equal and reinforces this relationship through the tacit expectation that my pupils mirror my passive behaviour. I did not see the inequality in my position as the learner accepting this transference of knowledge as the norm.

As a child, I love school, enjoying the thrill of learning and from the age of seven I know I always want to be a teacher. I attend a local teacher training college and on passing my Certificate of Education with a credit, am given the opportunity to go my local university for a year in order to gain my degree. My lecturers inform me that I am very lucky to have this year at the university and I should view the experience as a great honour.

My teacher training in the 1970's is very practical but my year at my local university proves to be the opposite; it is drenched in a culture of education that is very alien to me. I nearly drowned in a sea of new words, new knowledge and new concepts stripping my confidence and engendering a sense of inequality at this opportunity to understand and know the truths that were to be at the centre of my chosen career. My one year at university plants a belief deep within me that teachers are not viewed as equals in the world of academia. I gain my B.Ed³, but it is achieved at a personal price. I embark on my teaching career with a sense of inequality hard wired into my practice seeing my role, as a primary school teacher, of being of less value than other educators in the system. I therefore look towards my practice to gain my identity and spend the next two decades personalising it with my vision of what I perceive constitutes a good teacher. Through this vision, I create a network of established deeply entrenched routines and I gain my professional identity and an illusion of individuality.

Starting my teaching career, in 1974, I become part of the generation of teachers who implement the endless raft of changes successive governments introduce through the later decades of the twentieth century (Tomlinson, 2001, Ross, 2000, Burgess, 2004). Education, in the decades at the end of the twentieth century, becomes the tool by which politicians, with good intentions, try to shape the British education into a model that enables a future work force to adapt, innovate, and flourish in a rapidly technologically changing information rich world. This constant changing comes with a price because politicians, according to Heller (1988), overestimate the power of education to reform and ultimately politics and good intentions do not mix. It is a turbulent time for me, powerless to intervene or contribute: initiative upon initiative cascading down from above, unchallenged and as an educator, I do my best to implement the changes but accepting, *'that the world is in flux and conditions always change.'* (Wenger 2001: 94). The major change to my teaching is the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1989, with its fully approved bodies of knowledge. This National Curriculum proves to be

³ B.Ed: Bachelor of Education

unwieldy and difficult to implement resulting in a slimmed down, more manageable, version (DfES, 2001) being implemented with Information Communication and Technology (ICT) given pride of place as a core subject next to the traditional mathematics, English and science. The introduction of ICT, as one of the core subjects, reflects the government's response to the technological changes transforming all aspects of life on the planet: economic, cultural and social and becomes the catalyst that starts my research journey.

3.0 1997- 2002: The beginning of my concerns- the shoots begin to grow

In early 1997, at the beginning of my research, and in the role of Deputy Head, I become concerned, that, with the introduction of ICT, as one of the foundation subjects, the school will be judged on how the ICT programmes of study are being implemented by individual members of staff. I remember saying to the Head Teacher at the time that there is a need for someone '*to go out there*' to train as the ICT co-ordinator. The phrase '*to go out there*' reflects the sense of alienation in the academic institutions promoting the ICT initiatives at the time; the creation of this new knowledge occurring not in schools but in remote academic institutions. Despite my misgivings a deep sense of responsibility for my small school community persuades me to become the ICT expert; to achieve this goal I volunteer to attend a year long part-time ICT co-ordinators course, which as fate dictates, is in the university I had attended to gain my B.Ed twenty five years previously. My sense of responsibility is in essence, what starts me on my journey in 1997 and its power to motivate me and keep me on track and not giving up through all years can not be under estimated and I include it as one of my core values for those reasons.

The year (1997/1998) proves to be an interesting year for me I know I have to learn how to learn again, overcome my sense of inequality and the vulnerability with its origin in my fear of drowning in a sea of new words, concepts and knowledge. I try to overcome my sense of inequality by drawing strength from the knowledge I am a good teacher with years of experience as a form teacher and as a Deputy Head. I complete the course but I do not feel that I gain the required expertise in ICT; I am

unhappy and through this discontent I begin to doubt my identity as a teacher and make the discovery that, '*my sense of my own self identity*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 146) connects to my self-identity as a practitioner. In 1998, I am the school 'ICT co-ordinator' but my experience at the university left me with many questions unanswered and a desire to know more about the thinking underpinning and validating my professional life. My curiosity, once whetted, leads me to the decision to go back to university and discover how I can become a better teacher through understanding the knowledge and the thinking that defines what it means to be a good teacher. In 1999 I make the decision to initiate my own professional development by enrolling on a MA programme at my local university. I would to go back into the soil of academia and see what grows.

My MA research is a self-reflective study into my thinking and practice when communicating instructions and information to ten year old pupils. My two year MA course starts me critically reflecting on my teaching practice. Through my professional years I adopt and assimilate change into my practice but I never critically reflect on those changes or the implications for my practice until I start my Masters. It takes a video of me teaching for me realise the lack of understanding I have of my practice. I still recall my reaction to watching the video of my geography lesson on how to construct and read climatic graphs. At the time I perceive the lesson as chaotic and dread watching it but on viewing my practice in action I am stunned to observe a teacher who is skilled and confident. I am able to tackle the numerous enquiries from the pupils by linking their constant stream of questions to the skills development and learning outcomes and the central aim of lesson. I am aware I am watching myself but I cannot relate to the teacher who is teaching. This represents one of my 'moments of epiphany' and the point of origin for my current research when I realise I exhibit – to all intents and purposes – the characteristics of a 'good teacher'. That geography lesson is the moment when I see value in my practice and the, '*vast store of tacit knowledge*' (Polanyi, 1958) I possess; untapped and unrecognised as potential to create my own theories of education.

The MA course is my introduction back into the world of academia and I begin to view my practice through the eyes of the educational establishment. I start to learn the skills of a social science researcher where there is a belief, according to Whitehead and McNiff (2006) that knowledge can be discovered and then be organised into laws and ultimately be applied to like to like situations. I do not doubt, when studying for my MA, or criticise my lecturers or the state of knowledge I am asked to study. I accept it as the truth. Gaining my MA in 2001 is one of the most satisfying moments of my professional life. I feel I have arrived home; I am now part of a community that gives meaning to my professional life. I believe I am sitting at the laps of the gods; I am still not their equal but I am beginning to learn their language, their customs and their culture. My MA gives me confidence and I know I will not drown in a sea of words and concepts. Even with this sense of confidence in my identity and practice, I am still asking the question ‘How can I still improve my practice?’ because even with my MA I sense that there are contradictions still existing in my practice. I know I appear as a good teacher and in Chapter 8 I unpack this perception of myself as a good teacher. An example of one of my contradictions in my practice after my MA is when producing, what I perceive to be exciting and interesting lesson, I am treating the pupils in the same ways the university treated me, passive recipients of official knowledge. I am not seeing my pupils as my equals or individuals, they are my collective charges and I have the responsibility for their education. My MA does not ease my sense of contradictions in my practice and it is with this uncertainty about how to improve my practice I start my PhD research.

4.0 2002: The roots get stronger

In the summer of 2002, I start my study for a PhD with the desire to continue to improve my practice with my chosen research methodology reflecting the skills I develop when completing my masters. I critically reflect on my practice, identify and define a problem, develop a hypothesis, design a controlled research procedure, gather the appropriate data and analyse and interpret them linking it to the theories and literature that endorse and validate my approach. I am so determined to be the

good researcher with my contribution to knowledge emerging from this perspective of the social sciences.

The early stages (2002- 2005) of my research revolves around my preliminary study investigating the effective use of the Internet as the main research tool. My research aim is to understand the thinking of ten-year-old pupils when working on the Internet. I decide to conduct my preliminary study in order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter I am researching. I structure my research design for this study into two stages: firstly, my pupil volunteers are to be videoed discussing their actions and decisions when completing locating and retrieving information from web sites, and then secondly, I interview the pupil volunteers about their task when working on the computers. My preliminary study is a cathartic experience. My research begins with enthusiasm and a belief that significant progress is being made. The volunteers are chosen, the task sessions videoed, the interviews taped and transcribed. I analyse my data for evidence, to provide me with the key to becoming, not a good teacher, but an effective teacher so I can improve my practice. I begin to have doubts and reluctantly accept an uncomfortable reality; the task I set my volunteers tells me very little about their thinking but when analysing the interviews, with my pupils discussing their task, I realise I am objectively researching my pupils, not as individuals with an equal stake in the research process, but as something separate. My aim, in conducting this research, is to know what my pupils are thinking but my methodology proves to be flawed. I had designed my research to, observe what my pupils did, not to listen to their voices or what those voices were trying to tell me. It is after my preliminary study I start to make explicit my tacit belief that *'children have a right to be heardGiving children a voice raises their self esteem and self image as learners..... there are some things that can only be learned through participation* (James and James 2004: 135)

In retrospect, I acknowledge that my ontological perspective of equality is not working in harmony with my methodology. I accept the knowledge that I am

researching my pupils from the outside and I now require an insider's view. Reading Whitehead and McNiff, when they discuss ontological perspectives, clarifies my dilemma, by showing me that if *'you see yourself as part of other people's lives, and they yours, you may adopt an insiders, participative approach, which would involve you offering descriptions and explanations for how you and [the pupil] were involved in mutual relationships of influence* (2006: 23). Prior to the analysis of my preliminary study I confidently describe myself as a researcher who is, *'separate from other people [I have] become a common spectator of the social sciences. [My] task [is to] to observe other people and offer descriptions for what they are doing* (Ibid: 22). Three years into my research I am facing the uncomfortable truth, that I can not answer the question 'How do I improve my practice?', if I see the whole process to find the answer as being separate from my pupils; this is my living contradiction for me as a researcher and a practitioner. In writing my preliminary report I am full of self doubt about the direction of my research and then enter a time of deep and critical reflection about the next stage.

In retrospect I do not view my 2002- 2005 research as a failure (though I did at the time) I now see my experience as an important lesson I had to learn. I now accept at this point, after writing my preliminary study and subsequent summary, I am not in tune with my research: my ontological values and epistemological values are not in harmony because in my haste to improve my practice I omitted to include the *raison d'être* for my practice - my pupils. My preliminary study is a story with a moral: my practitioner research can not improve my practice through researching from the outside it can only improve if I research from inside my practice. Wenger clarifies my thinking by introducing me to the idea that within a practice there reside overlapping communities of practices with overt and tacit influences in play. In my ignoring the influences of my pupils on my practice, who themselves are members of overlapping communities of practice, my practice becomes a living contradiction to my value system; my value system with its core values of equality, responsibility and individuality can only be in harmony with my practice when those values connect and interact with the wider world. In my early research I am

not connecting with my pupils and it took the first three years of my research to recognise this contradiction.

Roche (2007) in her PhD thesis articulates my research position at this time when, *'I position my self within propositional epistemologies and logics and adopt the ontological perspective of one who is separate from the action and outside the study. By propositional logic I mean a form of logic grounded in the idea that knowledge exists separate from the knower and is reified and abstract.'* (2007: 14) I did not understand this propositional logic at the time of my preliminary study but I do realise when reflecting on the data that I have to change, not superficially but very deeply, going through the soil of my academic and professional existence until I found the right research route up into the light. I write a detailed report charting my research but it is not until I complete my summary of that report for my progression am I able to critically reflect on those early years of my research.

My preliminary study represents the catalyst that creates the paradigm shift in my thinking; a time when I start perceiving myself as a unique individual with an informed voice able to theorise my practice. I realise I am not alone but part of a small but significant interconnected learning community where the individuality of voices from all members have the energy to create knowledge and generate theories. This summary also represents an excellent early example of how my reflective thinking which is central to my action research becomes the methodology I embrace in the later stages of my research. This cyclical reflective process identifies the key changes I have to make in order to move forward, as a researcher, and answer the central question 'How do I improve my practice?'

5.0 2005/2006: My preliminary study summary.

During my six years of research (2002- 2008) I select different devices to record my thinking and actions as a researcher. Each device is appropriate to the way I am thinking at that time. In my early research I am writing essay style journal entries exploring aspects of specific knowledge area I am unsure about and require further

investigation: later I am writing reports summarising my thinking and toward the end of my research I am writing an online journal, giving workshops, lectures and having articles published. These devices to record my thoughts, through different genres, represent a maturing of my ability to describe my practice using the cyclical process in my reflective thinking. Each reflective cycle is a tight thread made up of many smaller reflective threads tightly bound together; each informing choices and decisions but moving in the same direction like roots moving towards the light, which I describe, through my metaphor of a growing tree, in Chapter 2. My preliminary study, originally written as a report to my supervisors, summarises my early research and sets the scene for my choices, my decisions, and my actions that characterises my later research. In retrospect, I now view this summary as a deeply personal reflective journal entry on my thinking and actions at the end on 2005 and the beginning of 2006.

In this submission, I give value to this summary because it represents a critical point in my early research. It is a time when I am justifying my decision to change radically my research methodology. A time when I trying to articulate how my *'practice [can] be the grounds for the generation of new theory, which in turn [will] feeds back into new practice'* (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 44) by identifying the living contradictions that are proving to be the real constraints in my practice. What is a living contradiction? I acknowledge Whitehead and McNiff's (2006), explanation when describing a living contradiction as a state of uncertainty when your practice or research is not in harmony with your values: but what does that mean? I did not wake up one morning and think, 'Gosh my practice is a living contradiction of my value system?', this is not a trivial reflection but an honest assessment. I start my research happy but soon become unhappy. I am unable to define what is wrong; I just know my research does not feel right and yet I do not possess the language or insight to verbalise these growing doubts so I can visualise my contradictions. This summary illustrates this state of confusion and the process it took me to find the relevant conceptual frameworks and the language to start to articulate my concerns in my practice.

I acknowledge that when writing this report I am already in the process of change but the contents are good indicators of my reflective thinking and actions at the time. I believe they represent my researcher's voice articulating an early perspective in my research journey. I have organised my researcher's voice in my preliminary research into seven extracts to match the main heading I use to structure the original. Apart from minor edits for grammar, spelling mistakes and the omission of the introduction and the appendices this represent a truthful summary of my thinking, reflections and actions from April 2002 - April 2006. The text discussing my extracts represents my voice as a researcher and perspective in my reflective cycle in 2008 and early 2009.

6.00 Extracts from the preliminary study summary

6.1 Extract 1: 2002- Research aims for my preliminary study

In Extract 1, (see Appendix 4.1) I am teasing apart the aims of my earlier research. I believe that understanding the term, '*digital literacy*' (DfES: 2002: 10) is the key to becoming a more effective teacher; the route, I believe, to improving my practice. I am influenced by all the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) and reason that to become an effective teacher I require my research to be based on the National Literacy approach. It is my responsibility through my research design to deconstruct the term 'digital literacy' into a set of graduated skills. I achieve this by observing how my ten-year-old pupils research a specific task on the Internet. The extract starts with my concern about my lack of clarity over the term digital literacy and how I intend gain clarity by factoring that concern into my research. '[My] concern- *What was actually meant by the term 'digital literacy'? This lack of clarity was a constraint that was inhibiting effective teaching when using the Internet.*'

The aim of my preliminary research study is to identify the constraints I believe are stopping me from teaching history effectively to ten-year-old pupils on the Internet. I do not understand what is involved in the newly coined phrase 'digital literacy'. It

does not occur to me that the government and educational institutions, after years of accepting the '*body of official knowledge*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 45), also lack an understanding of the type of literacy needed for teaching on the Internet. The preliminary study research tool I design to gain an understanding of the potential of the Internet, aims to unpick the skills and knowledge by identifying the new digital literacy I require to work efficiently when using online media. My lack of understanding of this media and my inability to acknowledge my ignorance makes me insecure and vulnerable and, in retrospect, my early research is constrained by a deep fear of not understanding new words, knowledge, and concepts. To gain a deeper insight into the term 'digital literacy' and in order to answer my research question, '*What do I, the teacher, need to know about the child's thinking, about my own pedagogy and understanding of the nature of the subject [in order] to help me be more effective in helping the child use the Internet in historical enquiry*' I cling to the familiar so I visualise the Internet as an online encyclopaedia: it is a safe familiar cultural object and, '*to answer my research question*' I cling to the familiar the working relationship with my pupils when I '*put at the centre of my Preliminary Study a controlled Internet search by volunteers from Year 6*'. In my early research it is evident I am trying to control the variables because I do not understand the Internet and this strategy has proved to be a successful routine in my classroom teaching through the years.

6.2 Extract 2: 2003 – 2004 - My Preliminary Study

In Extract 2, (see Appendix 4.2) I describe my confidence in my early research (a confidence that I later realised to be ill founded). There is no contradiction, I am only, '*concerned by the constraints*', in my mind about my practice, at this stage of my research. I acknowledge the lack of clarity of a common understanding of the Internet as a constraint but rationalise that deconstructing the term digital literacy is the answer. I use the National Literacy Strategy as point of reference, trust my objective methodology and initially collect plenty of interesting data. This extract is of great interest to me in the later stages of my research because I see all the authors and publications that influence me in those early years; it is like meeting old

friends. I think my answer was ‘out there’ and a learned journal or book would give me guidance help me find my answer. For example, through ‘*Kress and Leeuwen’s (2001) explanation of multiliteracies underpins the complexity of literacy on the Internet*’ I thought I had a working definition of multiliteracies. This extract expresses with some clarity my optimism and my certainty, at this stage of my research; I am convinced I am on the right track so I conduct my controlled searches because, ‘*I had been particularly interested in a study by Hill and Hannifin (1997)*’ and transcribe hours of conversations. I create a grid of skills and begin to interpret my data. I am being objective: I believe I am being a good researcher and all my answers will emerge when I analyse the data because, ‘*my preliminary research conform[s] to a classical ‘scientific’ model [and] my preliminary research [seeking] to be systematic, controlled and empirical.*’ and this methodology, I believe, will not fail me. I still have the box files with all the results from my preliminary search representing three years of hard work.

6.3 Extract 3: 2004 - Reflecting on my preliminary study: doubts set in

In Extract 3, (see Appendix 4.3) I am trying to make sense of the results I have gathered from my controlled searches. These searches involve: setting up sessions with my volunteer pupils, transcribing all the actions and conversations the pupil and their partner they make when searching and retrieving information. The videoed searches focus on the information the pupils can discover about the Jarrow Crusade. It is important, at this stage in the submission, that I explain why I chose the Jarrow March as the task for the controlled searches because that choice is indicative of some underlying values that I think I bring to my teaching of history (that is, to the way I select and define topics for the children to study). It is a personal decision because to me the Jarrow March encapsulates what I believe to be a view on history that is coloured by my empathy for some of the protagonists. Decades after the march, the injustice over the lack of equality these workers endured and how, as committed individuals, they translate their deep responsibility for their community by walking to London, still has the power to anger and inspire me. A warm regard for the Jarrow Marchers epitomises my value system but it is

only when writing my submission that I make this connection. I transcribe and analyse the videos of the Jarrow March searches using a framework of five key skill threads. These threads are a set of related skills I group together with each given a separate code. When I transcribe each decision, choice and action the volunteer pupils make I give each response a code associated with the five different threads. These codes, when grouped together, represent individual skills and knowledge narratives giving me a deep insight into the search process. The results looked impressive but told me very little. Extract 3 documents my reflection on the evidence I collected.

This account of my controlled searches reflects, not only the confidence that I feel at the time, but it also introduces the seeds of doubt taking root as I distanced myself from visualising the Internet as a book. If the Internet is not a book, what is it? I am beginning to see that I am unable to observe what is going on in the pupils' thinking from the outside. I had to be part of the process *'to make this type of strategy successful, it is not enough for the pupil to be thinking about thinking, the teacher has to be part of the process'* and, *'come to know what [the pupils] have in mind and how they adjust accordingly (Bruner 1996: 161)*. Intersubjectivity is a process of knowing what others think struck a chord with me giving the language to identify and verbalise the changes required in order to connect to my learning community. In this section of the summary doubts emerge about my role not only in my research but, even more fundamentally, in my practice *'I also begin to question the role of the teacher in this learning context'*. I am not happy with my interpretation of my data so I believe the feedback interview session, with the pupils, about the searches, will shed light on my doubts.

6.4 Extract 4: 2005 -Interviews with the pupils reflecting on their practice: a little voice is heard at last.

In Extract 4, (see Appendix 4.4) I am reflecting on the interviews I have with the volunteer pupils after their controlled searches. These interviews are based on a set

of questions I design in early 2005 and believe the pupil's answers can enlighten me and help me make sense of my results. Interviewing the pupils and transcribing their conversations is very time consuming. I analyse their interviews, using the same coding system I had used for the searches, and again try to see a pattern that helps me understand what my volunteer pupils are thinking. I try to be objective, because, at this time, that is what I think researcher should be, but find it hard to view their interviews objectively. In this section of the report I begin to doubt my research methodology. Reflecting on this part of the report I detect my growing awareness of the reality that, in order to improve my practice and get my research back on track, I have to include the pupils in the process by listening to their voices, then making them part of the research process. I gain this insight because *'the interviews indicated that the pupils' do reflect on their practice and have opinions on the Internet as I reflect and have opinions on the Internet. The interviews made me realise that the pupils' and I were on the same journey and any future research had to be seen in terms of a partnership'*

I have begun to tease apart why I am unhappy when I note, *the pupils, I felt, were 'existing' (Reason and Rowan 1981:118) but in a teaching context where true communication was not taking place. I was reflecting on my practice, but not allowing the pupils to reflect on their practice a process which would allow them to discover the 'routines' that were inhibiting their growth towards self-actualization (Ibid: 118) and be partners in the learning process'*

My aim now is to *'research the interconnection between the subject, teacher, pupil and the teaching tool..... To achieve this new insight I needed to establish a methodology that was sympathetic to my research aims'*. I know in 2005 I am at a crossroads but unsure about what route I should now follow to complete my research but what ever route I choose my pupils have to be my travelling companions.

6.5 Extract 5: 2005 - The interpretive paradigm: which way now?

In late 2005 I acknowledge that three years of research is now not going to answer, satisfactorily, my question, ‘How do I improve my practice?’ To continue my journey as a researcher and growth as a practitioner I come to realise that my research has to follow an interpretive paradigm and that in order to achieve this I have to understand this methodology or the methodology associated with this. Extract 5, (see Appendix 4.5) charts my initial understanding of the interpretive paradigm and the research question guiding me through the next phase of my research. My reflections, in this extract, trace my attempt to move towards a research methodology, which is a good fit for me as a researcher and a practitioner. I recall writing this section of the summary and feeling unable to articulate what I want to do. For example, I write that one of my research aims will be *‘achieved by deconstructing the teaching context where this teaching tool is used. This process will involve researching: the Internet, historical sources, the pupils and me, the reflective practitioner. By teasing apart the ‘iterative interactions’ (DfES: 2003:25) that make up this symbiotic relationship I hope to establish a ‘conversational framework’ (Laurillard et al 2000) or what I term collaborative narratives where ‘conceptual learning can occur and that can be applied at any learning to occur’ (DfES, 2003: 25) which will afford both the pupil and teacher the opportunity to maximize the potential action the learning context offers.* This is a good example of my lack of clarity in the wording of my research aims. What did I mean by, *‘symbiotic relationship’, ‘iterative interactions’ or ‘conceptual learning can occur and that can be applied at any learning to occur’* I am raiding books for key words and phrases to match what I am thinking but my aims become too descriptive reflecting a lack clarity and my ability to describe my research in simple terms. I am using half-digested phrases because I find the language to describe my journey, and give it meaning, a challenge.

6.6 Extract 6: Action Research: 2006- the right methodology at last or is it?

In 2006, after four years of research, I make the decision to use action research as the methodology to achieve my research aims. In Extract 6 (refer to Appendix 4.6)

I am exploring and reflecting why I have chosen this new methodology, as this short extract illustrates, (I have highlighted my reflection green to avoid confusion with my use of quotes). *'Action research is first person research the emphasis on the living person and shows how individuals can take responsibility for generating change'. I felt comfortable with this description of action research methodology. I experience a sense of connection with an, 'approach which would involve practitioners themselves in researching the relationship between theories and practices' (Kemmis and Taggart: 2001:91) and a sense of harmony with a, 'self reflective, self critical and critical enquiry undertaken by professionals to improve the rationality and justice of their own practice their understanding of these practice and the wider contexts of their practice' (Carr and Kemmis 2002: 122) but it is only when I discover Whitehead and McNiff writings, with their 'Living Theory' approach to research, that I find the perfect research methodology.* In discovering the living theory approach, I believe as though I am at last on the right path to continue my research journey.

6.7 Extract 7: Living Theory: 2006 - home at last

When, in 2006 I discover the living theory, action research, I feel I have come home. This methodology is totally in tune with what I am trying to achieve. Through this methodology, I am at the centre of my research into my practice. It gives me the equality I have been seeking in my own research, it values my individuality as a teacher and as a researcher and gives me the responsibility to articulate and theorise my practice in order to improve it for the benefit of my learning community and the wider educational community. In Extract 7, (see Appendix 4.7) I am reflecting on how the living theory approach will become central to my later research. I recall writing this interpretation of the action research as a living theory and remember the deep sense of satisfaction that, at last, I had found a research approach reflecting the reality I am experiencing as a research practitioner. Using my tree metaphor to describe my visualisation of this stage of my research I see green shoots pushing through the soil into the light. This living theory approach enables me to visualise my three years of research as a seed in

academic soil twisting and turning but slowing moving towards enlightenment. I now know where I am in my research as these short extract illustrate,

'My PhD is now a self study of my practice located in the field of educational action research and this thesis will be constructed as a living theory account where 'I', the educational practitioners, will develop a conception of 'what works' drawn from my practice experience'.

'I hope to develop skills of reflection and a critique to my own practice.(Hartog,2002) [by] identifying key values reflecting my own values I believe in and hope to aspire to and underpin my practice when working with the pupils'

Although I now know where I am in my research, I am still finding it a challenge to articulate my thoughts. My attempt to describe my contribution to knowledge is clumsy when I describe my research journey *'as the process involved, which affords the construction of collaborative narratives or conversational frameworks, in the creation of temporary knowledge bases in this specific teaching context'*. My journey to articulate clearly, the process of change in my practice, is not achieved its final form until the end of my research journey. My research now becomes my narrative describing my journey of change in my practice with my submission becoming my articulation of that journey. My narrative of my research journey from this point describes, through the eyes of me as a research practitioner, my story. A story illustrating the *'symptomatic of generative transformational processes and that stories themselves possess'* (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 55) and demonstrating the core condition that *'these stories should be seen as stories of learning'* (Ibid: 55) and available to influence a wider community.

7.0 Conclusion

In this chapter I explore and reflect upon the personal journey I experience, as researcher, to finally gain access to a methodology reflecting my value system and helping me to gain an answer to the question, 'How do I improve my practice?'. I have set this down here in the chapter because I feel it is important to know about

my origins and growth as a researcher in as much as this is a story of transformation that gives my research its unique voice.

Chapter 5



My practitioner's story: two perspectives

Table 5.0
Perspective 1 in my practitioner story : 2005
Perspective 2 in my practitioner story: 2008
In this chapter, I describe my journey of change as the practitioner between two points within my practice: these two points represent two different approaches to conducting a historical enquiry on the Internet. The first perspective, in 2005, is an e-lesson using the Internet as an online tool to aid deeper understanding. The second perspective, in 2008, is examining historical enquiries taking place in a wiki space, using the Internet as a 'living experience' and a meeting place for my ten-year-old pupils as we develop our community of practices. My transformational journey of change between these two points creates the narrative for chapters 7, 8, and 8.

1.0 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I identify how I change as a researcher through critically examining two significant points in my research journey. In this chapter (and outlined in Table 5) I intend to use the same method to identify how I change as a practitioner. In using this same method in this way, I recognise that what I am doing is artificial. It separates out, for analysis, two aspects of my own development that, in reality, were so closely interrelated as to be at times inseparable; that is, 'me as researcher' and 'me as practitioner' are distinct ways of describing me as a whole person. However, I believe that the artifice is useful here because it enables me to unpick the different ways in which I develop as a practitioner between 2005 and 2008.

My tree, Diagram 5.0 (see page 106) illustrates my two teaching perspectives in terms of my tree metaphor. The first perspective is a history e-lesson I am planning

in 2005 where I visualise my practice as being located on a lower branch of my tree, growing slowly, but not blossoming. The second perspective is an historical investigation, on a wiki¹ in April 2008, where I am visualising my practice as branches growing strongly and blossoming.

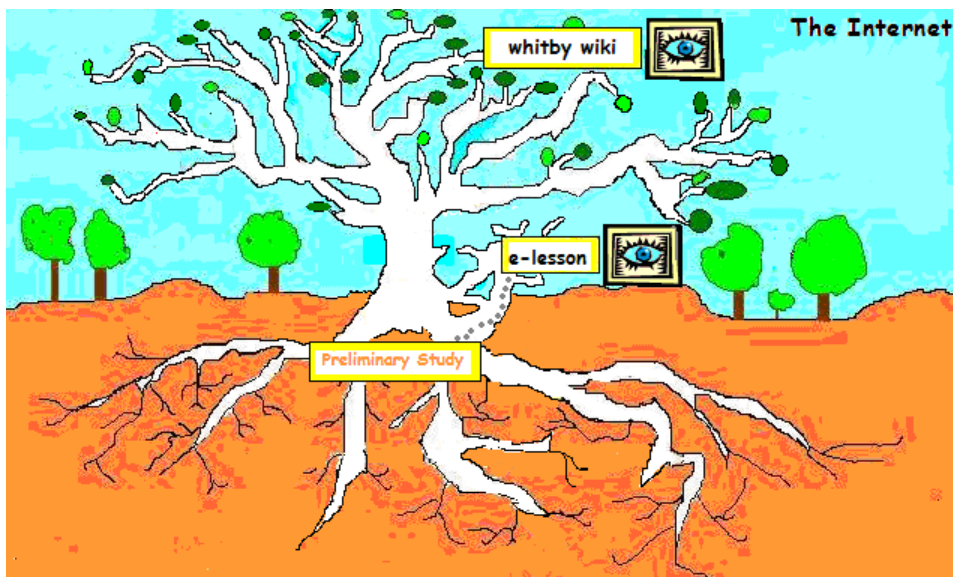


Diagram 5.0: My practitioner's story: perspective one and perspective two

Each of the two teaching perspective is a representation of my practitioner's voice reflecting the background to my thinking informing my teaching choices and decisions. In comparing my two practitioner's voices, separated by three years, I am able to identify and reflect on the changes in my practice when conducting historical enquiries online.

Change is '*the act of passing from one state to another*' (Collin 1979) and in order to gain an understanding of this process, of passing from one state to another, it is essential for me to identify and then describe my two perspectives, or ways of considering, on my different teaching approaches. It is not an easy task identifying two teaching perspectives because *the act of passing* implies constant movement. It

¹ **Wiki** is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. Wiki supports hyperlinks and has simple text syntax for creating new pages and cross links between internal pages on the fly.

is, only in retrospect, when reflecting on two points in time, am I able to identify the two distinct teaching perspectives.

My first teaching perspective focuses on an e-lesson, I am planning in 2005, representing a snap shot, in time, when I am using my journal entries to pose questions and investigate answers as I deepen my understanding of all the knowledge I am linking to my research. My journal entry titles, 2002 – 2005, illustrate my determination to understand key words and concepts:-

- What is literacy?
- What is history?
- What is a fact miss?
- What is knowledge?

My early research is a time when I am assimilating the rules, regulations and culture of academia; moving from being a receiver of knowledge to a producer of knowledge. I am changing all the time as I gain the knowledge necessary to visualise the conceptual landscape of my research. In exploring these new ideas and techniques I am gaining a deeper, more informed, understanding of the knowledge underpinning the education system, and in the process my practice is changing.

Perspective two focuses on an historical enquiry, which starts with the Jarrow March, and is a snap shot of a time, in 2008, when I am viewing my practice as part of a wider community of practices; a time when I am beginning to theorise my practice. This chapter critically examines these two different teaching perspectives, in order to identify and examine the changes this practitioner makes in order to answer the question ‘How do I improve my practice?’

The chapter is organised into four sections:-

- 2.0 My two teaching perspectives when teaching history online: an introduction
- 3.0 Teaching perspective one: 2005 - *an e-lesson set out in a lesson plan format*
- 4.0 Teaching perspective two: 2008 – *an online history investigation using a wiki*

site

5.0 Conclusion

2.0 My two teaching perspectives when teaching online: an introduction

In order to identify a teaching perspective capable of representing my research thinking at one particular time, I revisit my journal and locate an e-lesson², central to a small study, I compile to examine how my research is informing my practice. The e-lesson demonstrates my belief that I am designing the definitive online history lesson; an e-lesson reflecting my research and understanding after my preliminary study. In retrospect the experience of re-reading the small study, containing the e-lesson, is similar to examining an old family photograph; I recognise, in the study, that my thinking is informing my planning of this 2005 lesson but, as a practitioner, my thinking and approach when teaching history online in 2008 has changed. The e-lesson is therefore a good example of how my early research informs my practice and the second teaching perspective a good example of how I am teaching at the end of my research journey.

Again, I can argue that these two perceptions of my research and practice are artificial; certainly, it is a personal choice but these two examples for my teaching approaches do represent significant moments in my research journey and reflect my belief that I am employing ‘best practice’ when conducting an historical enquiry with my ten-year-old pupils. Three years separate the two teaching approaches, representing the two snap shots of time in my cycle of reflection, continuously informing my choices and my decisions, directing the changes and my personal growth as a practitioner. This chapter critically reflects on these two teaching perspectives, thus giving an insight into the anatomy of change in my thinking and actions when conducting an historical enquiry with ten-year-old pupils in an online environment. This insight adds to an understanding of how teachers change according to the multi-faceted kinds of feedback that they receive on their actions.

² **E-lesson:** a lesson where the acquisition of knowledge and skill are gained using electronic technologies such as computer and the Internet.

In this chapter I describe my journey between these two teaching perspectives; a journey of change and growth. In deconstructing and reflecting on these two lessons, I identify the common themes linking them and the changes that differentiate them.

The common themes, linking these two teaching perspectives, represent the pedagogical framework for my journey, around which my continuous cycle of reflection and action twists and turns, to answer the question, ‘How do I improve my practice?’. The common linking factors are-

- Planning an online historical enquiry by drawing on my current knowledge, skill and understanding of the subject to deliver the desirable learning objective set within my interpretation of the national curriculum.
- Using historical enquiry as the vehicle to deliver my lesson objectives (which are broader than historical information alone, for example in examining the notions of injustice and struggle there is the opportunity for the pupils to develop a point of view).
- Using the Jarrow March as the subject and starting point for the historical investigation and as an incident is representative of wider issues linking my history lessons I teach to my ten-year-old pupils.
- Using the Internet as the main ‘delivery’ tool in both of the lessons.
- Expecting the pupils to work independently by offering choice of knowledge location and individuality in accessing and interpreting that knowledge.

3.0 Teaching perspective one: 2005- *An e-lesson set out in a lesson plan format*

An introduction to perspective one

My e-lesson describes the outcome of my thinking after my Preliminary Study. I frame the e-lesson plan around eight questions and the answers to each of these questions are located in eight tables. The questions are-

- Why is this lesson important to me?

- What is a ‘primary source’?
- Where is the lesson within my history scheme of work?
- Why use this new e-tool?
- How do I prepare for the e-lesson: is the Internet safe?
- What web sites would make the best resource for the e-lesson?
- How do we analyse the photographic evidence of the Jarrow March?
- What skills will the pupils use in this e- lesson?

I focus, at teaching perspective one, on three key questions from my e-lesson (see Appendix 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) to illustrate how these questions, critically examining the thinking informing my choices and my decisions, represent what I believe is best practice. These key sections are extracts from the original study with only a few edits required to clarify meaning and tidy up grammatical mistakes. These edits are post hoc and I have put them in brackets.

3.1 Why is this e-lesson important to me?

This question sets the scene and explains the reason for this lesson.

In Extract 5.1 (see Appendix 5.1), I observe that *‘the Internet in the future is going to be the way most people gather information and this information has to be [scrutinized in] the same way that a historian would look at evidence’*. I am obviously viewing the Internet as the future and trying to link my traditional subject to that future. In reading the phrase now, I sense a trace of insecurity. I believe at the time that I am a good history teacher but perceive the Internet, as a teaching tool, frighteningly complex; it is so different from what I was accustomed to in an educational resource.

In 2005, I view the Internet as a repository for information and rationalize that the main skills for pupils will be locating and assessing the facts they gather. I state that I do not want to pay *‘lip service to technology’*, but, if I am honest with my feelings I appear to be paying lip service to the Internet technology being

introduced into schools; on reflection, I now only perceive a lack of confidence and unwillingness to engage with the technology. I sense I am outside the technology with no access to the knowledge that will give me the confidence when working on the Internet. This feeling of being outside, not knowing how to get inside the learning experience, is evident in my observation that *'observing pupils working in this new e-learning environment is essential if teachers are to fuse subject teaching with the technology to achieve the desired learning outcomes'*. With the benefit of hindsight I can see I am hoping the pupils will find a solution because deep down, I now admit, I fear the change will require me to know the Internet deeply enough to change my practice.

Re-reading this part of the e-lesson, I am close to the truth when I state I feel I am being *'Let loose in hyperspace'*. This phrase aptly explains why this lesson is important: it represents an anchor; I want to control my experience on the Internet. In planning this e-lesson, I am establishing what my anchor looks like by deconstructing the whole experience I think I will encounter when using the Internet as a teaching tool. In essence, I am unfamiliar with the environment in which I am going to teach; so when in doubt I identify then try to control all the variables. My aim through this lesson is to be the teacher guide and facilitator with the aim of *'observing pupils working in this new e-learning environment [being] essential'* by planning the route, expecting the pupils to discover and investigate what it is like in this new e-learning environment. On reflection, I see this planning strategy as a well rehearsed teaching routine that fits neatly into my network of well-established routines defining and protecting my good practice and identity as a practitioner.

3.2 Why use this new e-tool?

In 2005 I welcome the Internet as a new e-tool but it is not a space in which I visualise myself teaching, it is a tool, like a hammer or chisel I can use to shape a pupil's understanding of a subject. In Extract: 5.2 (see Appendix 5.2) I am explaining how I can validate the Internet as an educational tool. On reflection, in

this extract, I am attempting to articulate my thoughts on how the understanding of my pupils, using all the different media and subject skills, connect to the construction of meaning. In 2005, I have not read Wenger but from this extract I am gaining a deeper sight into the affordances of online tools when understanding new knowledge, *‘the resource tool chosen affects the way the pupils respond and subsequently the flow of ideas and questions. It is the questions and answers that create the atmosphere where pupils start to understand the message the primary sources are hiding. The excitement, as ideas and connections are made when the pupils begin to hear the past talking to them, can only be achieved if the tool you are using is really understood by the teacher. What happens when a new resource tool is used’?*

It is evident from this teaching perspective that I do not understand, at this stage, the affordances of the Internet; here I am treating it simply as a tool and I do not have the conceptual understanding to see beyond that simple interpretation. In short, at that time, I treat the Internet as just another new tool that I can use; it is simply a tool to locate and retrieve information and an interesting and exciting online encyclopaedia. This use of the Internet as simply another presentational tool, one of many; *‘the text book, part of a video, a poster, using the OHP, a photocopy, a CD Rom [and] the internet’* fits into my well established teaching routines and its addition will not change the way I teach. I personalise the possible changes by absorbing the skills I require to use the Internet by giving them a traditional role in familiar and safe surroundings.

3.3 What skills were used in this e- lesson?

In Extract: 5.3 (see Appendix 5.3) the tacit question, subsumed within the overt question, (‘what skills were used in this lesson?’) is, ‘What did the pupils learn?’ This is perhaps the key question from my e-lesson and reflects my conclusions in the Preliminary Study where I conclude that every lesson can be deconstructed to exhibit numerous skills that link into a network of associated skills. This cobweb of associated skills then becomes a knowledge base. In Chapter 2 I argue that nothing

is learnt in isolation and we cannot, 'not learn', but in 2005, I am unsure what learning is actually taking place when I am teaching. Learning, like change, is not a single event but rather is a process and when planning this lesson I seem to be unsure of the process taking place and the significance of this lesson in that process. I try to articulate this lack of understanding in this extract, *'The e-lesson is not a history lesson using the Internet. It is not an ICT lesson using history as a resource. It is not an English lesson that is reinforcing literacy skills or information gathering skills. The e-lesson is demonstrating the delicate interaction of the different skills that will be used when handling information in the future. The pupils will each have a different experience dependent on their individual skill levels and they will in their own way make sense of the journey.'* I am describing the initial stages of the change process I am experiencing. I am clinging onto what is familiar, twisting my research to match the assumptions that will fit into my teaching.

I think, by planning this e-lesson, I am being adventurous; I reason at the time that I am taking my pupils forward but, on reflection, the e-lesson is evidence I am planning the Internet investigation based on what I believe the pupils should be experiencing rather than what they may be experiencing. I am choosing the variables, but I am not able to control the learning that is taking place, because I do not understand what learning is taking place. In short, I see what I want to see. I am deconstructing an event when I should be deconstructing my experience in order to gain an understanding of the learning process itself. Metaphorically, it is like becoming a native of a foreign country but never visiting the place. The two experiences are very different.

In 2005 I did not want to get lost in hyperspace, in retrospect, I now accept, that getting lost is a good way to get to know a place (though this was not part of my thinking let alone my actions at the time) but to gain that experience I had to leave my comfort zone. Most importantly, on re-reading the extract I note my two key values of independence and equality are missing from my planning. I do accept I

have responsibility in my planning to be responsible for my pupils but in denying them equality of opportunity to choose how they learn and what they learn this lesson does not work. It is not until I identify then challenge my understanding of my key values that the change process changes gear and I start to make significant progress in my both research and practice as evidenced by my summer 2006 actions on Web 2.0 as I describe in the next chapter.

I never taught this e-lesson, although it did reflect the type of lesson I taught at this time. It was a reflective device drawing together my thinking fresh from writing my preliminary report. If I have to attribute the main achievement of the whole exercise, it is my attempt to tease apart my practice when teaching history to ten-year-olds. This e-lesson masks the tacit knowledge that I do not, in fact know, what knowledge or opportunities for action the Internet offers. The Internet, for me, could become just another tool I had to master but it was proving to be a tool, I had to accept, that did not fit comfortably into my well-established teaching routines. It is acknowledging this contradiction in my practice that begins the process of challenging my well-established routines, underpinning my teaching and my perception of being a 'good teacher', and moving me towards my teaching perspective two.

4.0. Teaching perspective two: 2008 - *An online history investigation using a wiki site*

An introduction to perspective two

When deciding how to describe my experiences when teaching history online, I initially intended to compare my e-lesson approach in 2005 with a wiki workshop session I conducted, for ICT teachers, in 2007 and discuss in Chapter 8. Initially, in this section, by planning to use the wiki workshop, I thought I would be able to reflect on my current thinking when conducting online historical enquiries. The wiki workshop, I believe, represented a good description of my practice in 2008 by synthesising my experiences tailored to inform a specific audience. The wiki workshop explains to other practitioners how to teach in a wiki environment using

my experiences with my pupils as examples. Doubts set in when I realise that this example does not give a true reflection into my experience of teaching history to my ten-year-old pupils. This insight is moment of epiphany when I acknowledge the uncomfortable knowledge that I am telling my story, not the pupils' story.

I realise I want the pupils, through their wiki work, to have the opportunity to tell the rest of the story of my changing practice. Using my tree metaphor in 2007 my practice is now a flowering tree. The workshop has value but for the purpose of this submission, it is the wiki community and the practices we develop from the autumn of 2006 until the spring of 2008 that reflects my teaching perspective, the end of my research. Perspective two is the moment when I accept that my tree has flowered and my core values of equality, responsibility and individuality now inform my practice and I have the confidence to allow the story of *whitby* wiki to define my practice in 2008.

My teaching, on the wiki, is part of a living experience, designed to encourage meaningful historical enquiries by a small but viable community of practices. My journey to my wiki living experience is now informed by my core values; a journey of change, I critically examine in Chapter 6, through the choices, decisions and actions I make. In examining my teaching approach, at perspective two, it is important to understand that the *whitby* wiki practices and historical enquiries have a symbiotic relationship. To gain an insight to that relationship I unpack, in the following sections, how the *whitby* wiki practices and the historical enquiry become a living experience.

4.1. What is a community of practice?

Wenger coined the phrase 'community of practice' to describe the process explaining how learning takes place. According to Wenger (2004), learning is not a separate activity but an integral part of everyday life; he subscribes to the view that we all have our own theories and ways of understanding the world these theories originate in communities of practice where they are developed, negotiated and

shared. These practices in the communities shape our experiences and engagement with the world. The word practice then becomes about meaning and the way we interpret the experiences of everyday life. The meaning of practice is not static but is in a constant process of negotiation with many factors coming into play as we participate in, and reify, our experiences of the world around us. Learning is the ability to negotiate new meaning and by that process the learner become a changing person – ever renewed. This learning process therefore is, according to Wenger, negotiated in these communities of practice. By identifying these communities of practice and their structure, educators should find the best way to promote learning that benefits their pupils.

4.2 Constellation of practices

Wenger does not view a school as a community of practice, suggesting that what educators perceive as a community of practice is in fact a, '*constellation of practices*' (Ibid: 126), where a collection of practices in a school is viewed by the staff in a particular way. The school community, for example is seen as having shared historical roots, related enterprises, serving the cause of educating pupils, facing similar conditions, having members in common, sharing artifacts, having geographical proximity, having overlapping styles and discourses and competing for the same resources. These connect and create a sense of community but it is not a community of practice where I, as a member of that community '*experience the world and [through that] engagement [with it] the [world becomes] meaningful [to me]*' (Ibid: 51). Learning changes us, '*changes who we are by changing our ability to participate, to belong, to negotiate meaning.*' (Ibid: 226) and, '*cannot be designed... it belongs to the realm of experience and practice*' (Ibid: 225) Learning is a living experience.

Schools aim to teach pupils but a living experience is hard to replicate in a school, so learning does not necessarily take place in that institution; learning and teaching are not inherently linked, with learning taking place without teaching and teaching taking place without learning. I aim through my work with my ten-year-olds to

show that within the ‘constellation of practices’ called a school a community of practices can evolve becoming a living experience for the pupils.

4.3 A living experience

In the wiki space, I offer, my ten-year-old pupils, an online ‘living experience’ by giving them the opportunity to engage with many differing online affordances, when conducting a historical investigation. Embedding widgets³, inserting files and pictures, creating hyperlinked pages, hyper-linking to web sites, designing how pages are used are just a few examples of the affordances available to the pupils. The practices that develop through interacting with these affordances become the ‘*living language*’ (Burgess 2009:47) of the wiki. I do not presume to know how my ten-year-old pupils negotiate meaning with each of these affordances, I just give them the opportunity for action and they negotiate how that action merges as the historical investigation progresses. I accept that teaching does not automatically cause learning because learning is an emergent ongoing process, with teaching being only one of its many resources. This living experience develops a ‘*living language*’ where by ‘*putting the learners experience at the centre*’ (Ibid, 2009: 248) I am able to hear and understand the pupils’ voices and what they are telling me about their learning experience on the wiki.

In the wiki space, my expertise becomes one of many affordances the pupils have the freedom to consult or not consult when investigating, for example, the Jarrow March. I am part of this wiki learning experience so my pupils also become one of the affordances I negotiate when engaging with the historical enquiry. I believe that learning is facilitated when the ability to participate, belong and negotiate meaning, happens through a living experience. In school, many classroom practices can appear too disconnected from the world, with their exposure to the knowledge that explains that world, being too reified and delivered in a ‘*closed system that shelters a well engineered but self-contained learning process*’ (Ibid: 275). The immediacy of the wiki gives the ten year-old-pupils a living experience, an experience where

³ **Widget:** a component of a graphical user interface with which a user interacts (Wikipedia)

their opportunity to negotiate with many affordances creates a learning experience that has meaning and relevance to them. It is the many practices the pupils and I develop on the *whitby* wiki, through 2007-2008, that allow me to claim that the emergent learning produces a living experience, within our learning environment that has meaning for all the wiki community.

4.4 What makes a community of practices?

Wenger cites fourteen criteria (Ibid: 125) when describing a community of practice as a being living experience, where ‘practice *is about meaning as an experience of everyday life*’ (Ibid: 52). I use these criteria as reference points when defending my claim that my community of evolving practices, emerging, when teaching history to ten-year-old pupils, is a living experience. I am using the criteria Wenger uses to describe a community of practice as a guideline in order to develop my understanding of a living experience. A living experience within a community of practice should expect its members to:

1. sustain relationships whether there are in harmony or in conflict.
2. share ways of engaging in doing things together,
3. provide a rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation,
4. have the absence of introductory preambles; conversations and interactions becoming merely the continuation of an ongoing process,
5. discuss problems quickly,
6. have substantial overlap in the descriptions of who belongs,
7. know what others know, what they do, and how they can contribute to the enterprise,
8. have mutually defining identities,
9. have the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products,
10. be able to use specific tools, representations and other artifacts,
11. should use the community locale for shared stories and inside jokes
12. use jargon and shortcuts to communicate as well as the ease of opportunity to of producing new ones,
13. recognise certain styles as displaying membership, and

14. have shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective of the world.

Wenger describes the living experience, essential for learning to take place, through these criteria and I am therefore using them only as a reference point when describing my wiki online authoring ‘living experience’. I intend to, describe the affordances on the *whitby* wiki to ascertain whether I can claim that this provides a living experience for my pupils. I also intend to discover if there are new criteria that provide me with a more relevant description of a living experience thus giving me a different interpretation of a community of practices. Wenger refers to communities of practice but I deliberately use the term practices rather than practice in this submission because the ten-year-old pupils bring to the wiki community many diverse practices from many communities; practices from the classroom, practices from home and practices from their social groups and emergent practices from working the wiki. In this submission, it is the developing practices the ten-year-old pupils bring and create and we negotiate in the wiki community that gives me a deeper insight and a new perspective into the learning process.

4.5 *whitby* wiki

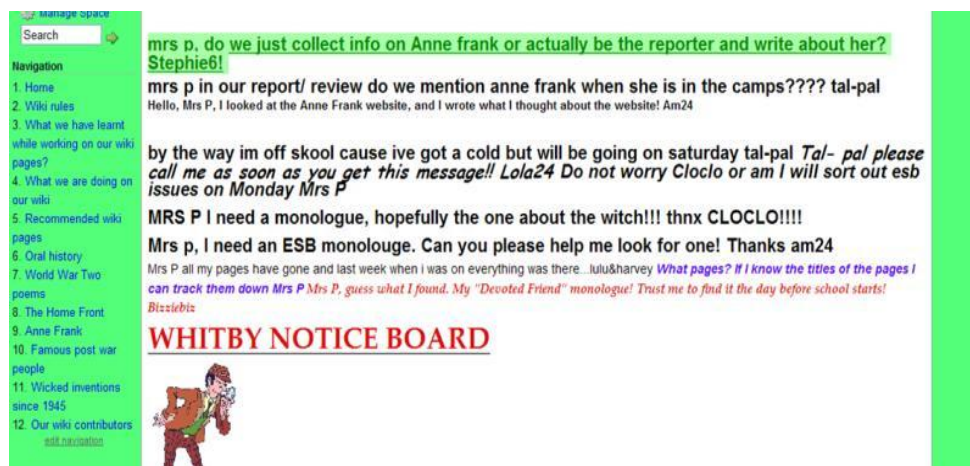
The *whitby* wiki is the second in a series of three wikis I develop to teach historical enquiry to my ten-year-olds pupils and represents two years of gaining the experience and confidence I require to change my practice. It is through working on the wiki that I start to visualise and treat this space as my online classroom. My use of the word classroom does become an issue when I have to tackle my inability to define my core value of equality and I only resolve it by deconstructing the use of the word ‘classroom’ to clarify my understanding of a learning space. I discuss this issue in Chapter 8.

My experience on the wiki consolidates many changes in my practice and I see those experiences as seeds from my early research now taking root. The roots have grown only when the conditions are right and, more importantly, time has been

given to allow those roots to grow. Time to grow, is an element I have come to believe, is missed out when introducing the ‘new’ into an established system. I do not suggest that the wiki I describe in this section is in its complete form; it is part of a much longer process, of which this stage is significant in terms of my research but not my practice. My practice continues to evolve, change and mature as I gain a deeper understanding of all the affordances and practices my ten-year-old pupils of the past, present and future have and will bring to these wiki communities of practices. The description in this section involves examining key pages of the *whitby* wiki.

Each academic year I set up a separate wiki space for my ten-year-old pupils. The *whitby* wiki is the space set up for 2007- 2008 pupils. I am the administrator for each wiki space. The administrative job involves general maintenance and monitoring of user activity. The members of the wiki are my ten-year-olds pupils to whom I teach history. The wiki is not a private online space and available to view by anyone on the Internet but only the members contribute and edit work. I intend to describe, explain and critically examine the affordances of each page using Wenger’s criteria as points of reference and justification for claiming my wiki community of practices represents a living experience.

4.6 Home Page: *whitby* Notice Board



Picture 5.1: *whitby* Home page

One of the affordances I deem essential on the wiki is a home page (see Picture 5.1 page 120), which through my experience with the first wiki, becomes a general notice board page for all members of the wiki. It is an informal space the pupils use in a similar way to a blog. It is an informal conversational page and is influenced by my experiences when using blog with the pupils, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 8. The Notice Board page is linked to my Blogline⁴ site through a RSS⁵ feed so I know immediately when the pupils have posted a message on the page and therefore I am able to respond quickly. I check the notice board at least once or twice a day. Picture 5.1 illustrates the variety of messages the pupils write and are examples of the quick questions and queries I receive from the pupils, for example, *'Mrs. p in our report/ review do we mention anne frank when she is in the camps???? Tal-pal'* or, *'MRS P I need a monologue, hopefully the one about the witch!!! Thnx CLOCLO!!!'* This space affords the opportunity for a rapid flow of information, use of jargon and the pupils establishing shortcuts to communicate that have an absence of introductory preamble. It also affords an opportunity to establish a different relationship with the pupils, more informal and accessible.

4.7 whitby wiki: edits

Over the two years developing the wiki spaces I have been interested in the way the pupils use the notice board to have quick on-line chats between themselves or to direct comments to me about some school issue. In nine months, the *whitby* wiki users edit their notice board page over 523 times. Each of these edits constitutes a simple message and reply from members of the wiki community.

The messages have the following characteristics:-

- The messages, written in a conversational style, use the shorthand familiar in texting and msn⁶ messages. The notice board page evolves into an informal area and it is the practice of all the pupils to use that

⁴ **Blogline** A web site that groups all RRS feeds you use to let the user know changes and new editions to that site

⁵ **RSS** is a facility to link online sites with each other to let user know when have been edited; translated it stands for **R**eally **S**imple **S**ystem

⁶ **msn** is a web messenger service that lets you talk online and in real-time with friends and family

space in that context. There is an acceptance in the community that the text is fun and the messages can be specific to history, the school day or just news from home or holidays. I discuss the issue of writing styles on blogs and wikis in depth in Chapter 8 section 2.3a

- The messages are short and generally asking for specific help. I usually answer within hours but on occasions, other pupils send a message of help. This facility is open all week and in the holidays. It is the practice, within this community, and accepted as a community that I am available at all times.

The practice, of using the notice board as a conversational space, I believe, supports Wenger's criteria for a community of practice when members can quickly '*set up a problem to be discussed*' with '*an absence of introductory preambles and use jargon*' and '*shortcuts to communication as well as.... producing new ones*' (Ibid 125). The community using the notice board develops a simple protocol: thanking people for advice, using symbols to express emotions and text size, colour and font to reflect the personalities posting the message. Through the process of answering queries I begin to recognise the different personalities using the wiki, not just because I am familiar with the imaginative user names, but the notice board messages demonstrates '*certain styles recognized as displaying membership*'. Their message style is unique to this wiki and represents a simple form of membership identity.

4.8 Navigation on the wiki



Picture 5.2: Navigation on the wiki

The navigation section of the home page has a list of hyperlinks that represent the structure or design of the online spaces on the site, (see Picture 5.2 page 122). The list of links evolves over the school year and represents the characteristics of a particular learning community. Each title on this navigation page links to a wiki page with that name. It is not the purpose of this section to examine every wiki page in depth; the aim is to demonstrate the new perspective on teaching history developing through the affordances this wiki design offers. The navigation page represents a teaching design mechanism that builds on my research, changing practice and previous wiki spaces experiences. The navigation page is always changing reflecting the dynamic, evolving and growing online space where ten-year-old pupils are encouraged to work independently within a community, creating and developing practices that are mutually beneficial to all. The wiki aims to be a continuous work in progress reflecting the members of the wiki. In my experience, each wiki proves to be very different, reflecting the personality of the members and evolving in significantly different ways.

I intend to reflect on key wiki pages listed on the *whitby* navigation page in order to describe and explain the types of practices emerging on the wiki.

4.9 Wiki rules

Each wiki community negotiates a set of rules, overtly and tacitly, if agreed upon they become the accepted code of behaviour for the community. Although I initially design the wiki rules page there is an expectation that the pupils add their own contributions. It is important that, as a community, we agree to the rules governing the space in which we are all working or socialising. The '*ability to assess the appropriateness of actions*' is sometimes difficult for ten-years-old pupils to achieve until they have gained the confidence, or taken ownership of a communal space, to contribute their own rules. On the *Wiki rules* page, I introduce courtesy rules: not editing other pupils' work without permission and not writing derogatory comments on completed work because pupils working on the first wiki in 2006-7 did not like their work edited or critical comments put on their work. These courtesy rules represent a tacit practice that encourages praise and admiration

for effort and excellence.

I noticed that the pupils did not contribute to this page and this lack of participation in negotiating rules represents a starting point when I set up the next wiki because I believe setting the boundaries of behaviour is an important practice when the community researches and shares knowledge from the Internet. In not interacting with this page, the pupils do not challenge the official rules and I have come to believe, through my research using wikis, that rules need challenging and then to be moulded to reflect the evolving community, otherwise that community ossifies. I am conscious of Hartnell-Young's (2007) warning that my voice may intrude if I impose my perceptions of what is acceptable and I reflect on this issue in Chapter 7 when I discuss grammar rules on blogs.

4.10 What is it like to work on a wiki?

The *What is it like to work on a wiki?* page gives the community working on the wiki a chance to discuss the space and what they feel are the benefits of being a wiki member. I have included examples from this page,

'I learnt that using time and care is a virtue on the wiki. You learn from your mistakes and trust me you get lots of those!'

'I learnt you have to be very patients whilst working on the wiki'.

'Fun and work well together'.

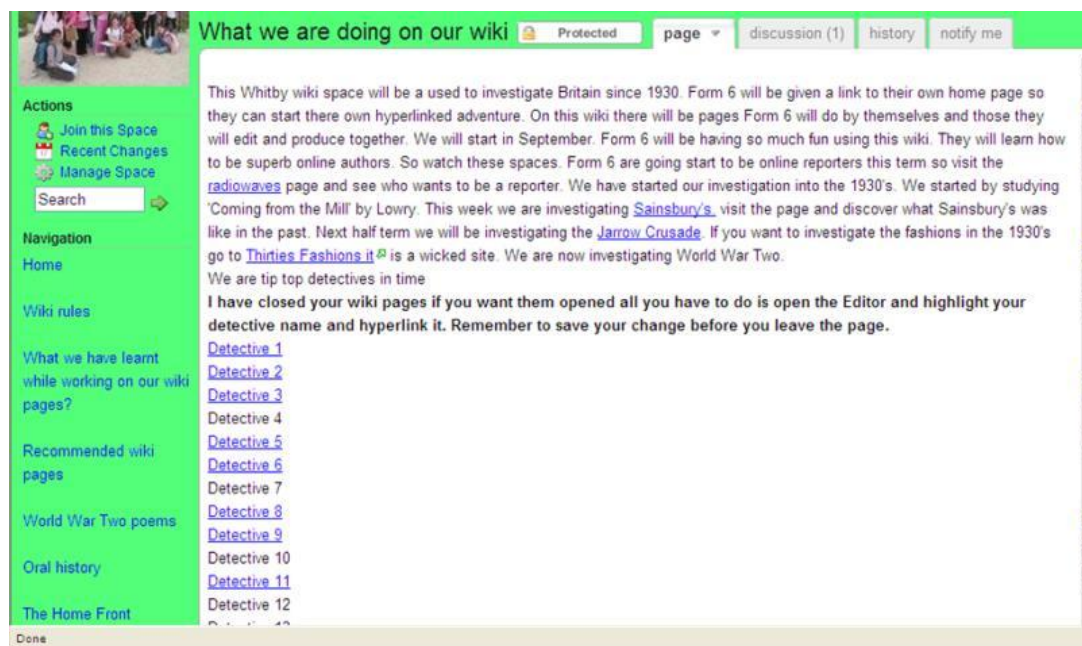
'It helps you to interact with your friends while you work'.

'I have learnt that u can use the Internet without always using YouTube'.

This selection of comments, by the community members, demonstrates that they are conducting *'a shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective of the world'* (Wenger Ibid: 125): a wiki view of the world. This page reflects and supports comments spoken: in the class, in the more social atmosphere of the morning ICT sessions and the evening ICT club sessions. This page makes explicit the tacit observations members make about their learning community and in making them explicit the community gains a sense of cohesion and identity.

4.11 What we are doing on our wiki

The *What we are doing on our wiki* page, (see Picture 5.3 below) informs the members of the community, parents and the wider world of the history investigated on the wiki. In the title for this page I do not use the word ‘learning’ because I cannot design learning in this context - though I am designing a space where learning is able to take place and indeed design it in such a way that the learning may flourish. This page represents the scope of the work I hope to achieve with the wiki members in the course of the year. I update it regularly with key links to web sites that, I believe, represent good starting points for an investigation but with an expectation that the pupils add to these links. The scheme of work on the page links to what we are doing in our history lessons in the classroom. In September, I inform the pupils how the wiki fits into their history lesson. I make each pupil wiki detectives, and each detective has their own wiki page to start their own Jarrow March hyperlink investigation (see Appendix 5.4)



Picture 5.3: What we are doing on our wiki

The pupils have a choice to complete their Jarrow March investigation as all wiki work, a combination of wiki work and classroom work to be written in their exercise book or using the wiki as a base for research with a hard copy stuck, as a

record, in their history exercise books. This practice of mixing the wiki with classroom practices merges two working environments into one multifaceted space. The practices of one space explore the affordances of another space and in the process develop new practices.

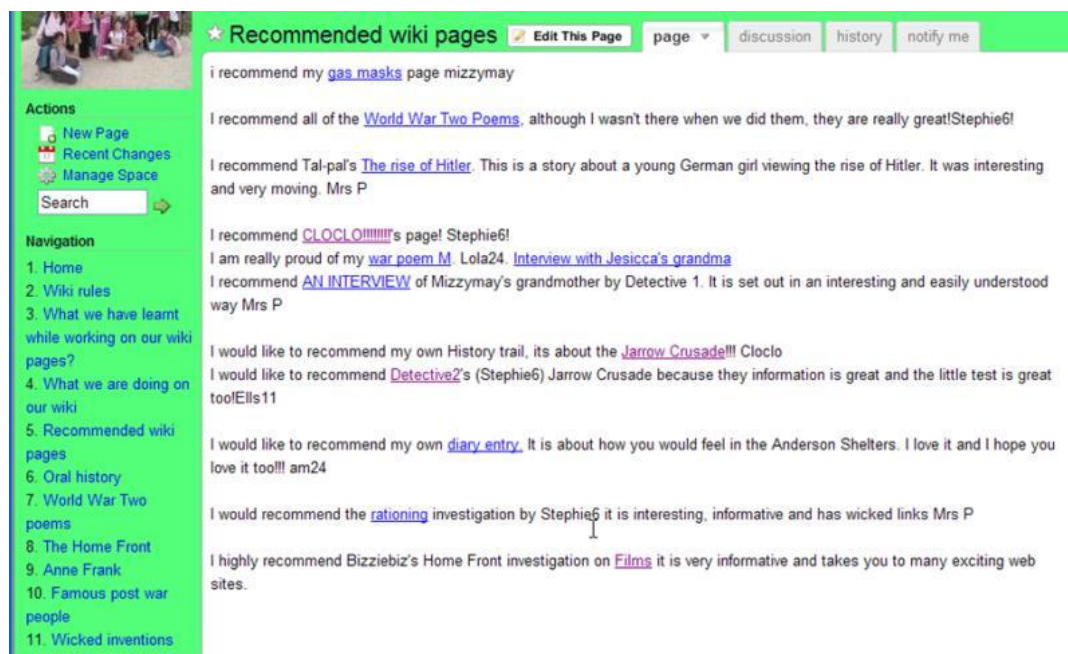
I believe a strong community can transfer practices; in the case of my ten-year-old pupils, the classroom represents a very strong cultural and social space and the wiki gains strength from the practices that flourish in that physical space. My pupils and I bring to the wiki many practices perfected by years of working and learning in a classroom. The wiki is a versatile online space and the affordances, making that space different, have to be tested by the teacher and pupils using and adapting classroom skills, in order to turn the online space into a place; an online classroom space. The wiki, with its emerging practice, can also offer a classroom space an insight into how a learning space evolves into a living experience.

In retrospect the use of the word classroom, which at the beginning of this phase, proves useful now proves problematic when I become aware that the pupils are transferring my role as the teacher in a classroom into the wiki space. I am not aware at the time that this is a constraint; in fact, I believe it is a strength, as Chapter 8, section 3.0 illustrates, when I give a paper on wikis to a graduate conference. It is only when I finally clarify my understanding of equality do I see that the word classroom is keeping my perception of my 'good practice' intact and with it my relationship with my pupils.

Each pupil, on this wiki page, has a personalised history user name. The pupils become very protective of the pages they create so they have the choice of keeping the links they create open or closed to wider scrutiny. Giving the members, the option to close their hyperlink to their main research pages gives the members of the wiki community a choice. The Jarrow March investigation is the first historical enquiry of the academic year where the pupils have the choice of completing the entire investigation on the wiki or in their books. Several pupils decline the task

using the wiki as a portal for their research but putting their conclusions in their history books. This gives the wiki members an ‘*overlap in the description of who belongs*’ (Ibid: 125) in giving my pupils a choice to complete work on the wiki or in their textbook; it is their choice. The ‘classroom’ or learning space of the future should give the pupils a real choice of how their deliver their work: wiki, podcast, Power Point, book or video, it should be their choice.

4.12 Recommended wiki pages



Picture 5.4: Recommended pages

The *Recommended wiki pages* wiki page (see Picture 5.4) develops naturally, over the year 2007- 2008, as my pupils begin to master the affordances offered by the wiki and their skill in researching becomes more sophisticated. Wiki pages and wiki hyper-link trails became worthy of comment and admiration within the community. It is entirely up to each member if they want to recommend their pages or links to the teacher, another pupil or just to show that they are proud of what they had achieved. This affordance is essential in order to ‘*sustain relationships*’ because, ‘*in sharing ways of engaging*’ and, being able to ‘*know what others know*’ the pupils produce ‘*mutually defining identities*’ (Ibid: 125). The practice of

viewing each member's work, and making positive comments, encourages and helps promote good relationships within the membership. The evolving relationship, between the members, is important it represents a key factor in the emergent⁷ learning and a 'living experience' becoming part of the knowledge base in which the historical enquiry develops. The recommended page on the wiki encourages '*shared ways of engaging in doing things together*' (Ibid: 125) and reinforces the practices that create a strong sense of identity. The pupils on this page learn from each other. The learning is the consequence of this practice. Wenger saw learning as '*the engine of practice and practice [as the] the history of that learning*' (Ibid 2004: 96). I cannot claim or prove learning has taken place on the wiki but the practice, especially on the recommended page, facilitates the learning process in another context.

4.13 Oral History

The *Oral History* page is an online location for the audio recordings of interviews with grandparents about their lives in the 1930's and 1940's. There is an expectation on the part of the pupils to listen to the interviews and write a summary about them. The pupils again have the choice to complete the work entirely on the wiki or in their exercise books. I accept that many pupils do not have access to a computer at home and because of this understanding the ten-year-old pupils are given open access to the computer suite every morning before school and two evening computer clubs. This equality of opportunity to access the Internet is important and I trust the pupils to respect and not abuse the responsibility given to them.

The oral page enables me to have an online location for our podcasts so the pupils can then easily access them and use them when summarising their thoughts on the interviews. I do not think I am stretching Wenger's criteria, when I state, I believe this page affords the pupils an opportunity to discuss '*shared stories*' (Ibid: 125).

⁷ **Emergent learning:** learning is emergent it is going on all the time , an ongoing process (Wenger 2004 p267)

The interviews are not without incident, for example, one grandfather got stuck in traffic and had to come another day, a grandmother could not climb the stairs to the classroom so the interview had to be conducted in the dining hall and the whole class shared in those experiences. The interviews represent a community's memory of shared experiences and stories from the past, a living experience. Using the wiki becomes a way to communicate thoughts, stories, and school work with the parents and wider community giving them an opportunity to interact and comment.

4.14 World War Two Poems

In previous years, the *World War Two* poem page was a history book exercise. In making this a wiki task I hope to achieve several things.

- Give an opportunity for those pupils, who prefer to complete their history work in their textbook rather than on the wiki, a chance to open their work to a wider audience.
- Reinforce the recommended page practice of viewing other pupils work and making comments.
- Give the pupils who do contribute a sense of pride in their authorship.
- Encouraging the pupils to understand that poetry is a source of historical information by summarising the Battle of Britain into a poem seen through the eyes of one of the pilots.

The wiki page, with its links to the pupils' poems, is impressive. I am delighted by the contributions and the comments made by the pupils. This page coupled with the *Recommended wiki page* support Wenger's claim that '*knowing what others know, what they do, and how they can contribute*' (Ibid: 125) and is an essential criteria for our evolving community. The pupils who are reluctant to contribute do refer to the wiki indicating that they visit the wiki even if they do not yet contribute. I do not expect all members of our wiki community to be fully involved but I am aware that '*the less [the pupils] do [the whitby wiki could be perceived as no] more [than] a set of interrelated practices rather than a single community of practices*' (Ibid: 127). I would disagree with this description because I see the *whitby* wiki as the

loci of a developing online community encompassing other online locations and associated practices. The pupils working in *whitby* wiki do not work in isolation and other locations are recognised and their influence on the wiki community acknowledged. Diagram 5.1 (see below) illustrates, how the *whitby* wiki connects to the wider school community and I discuss these connections in depth in Chapter 8 2.3a,

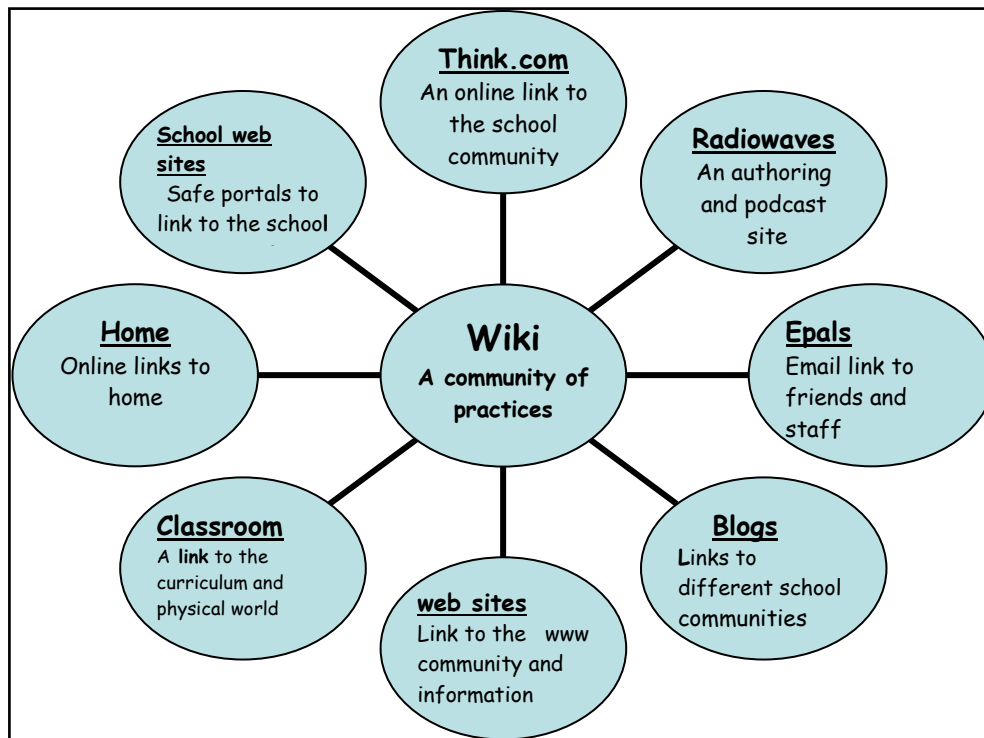
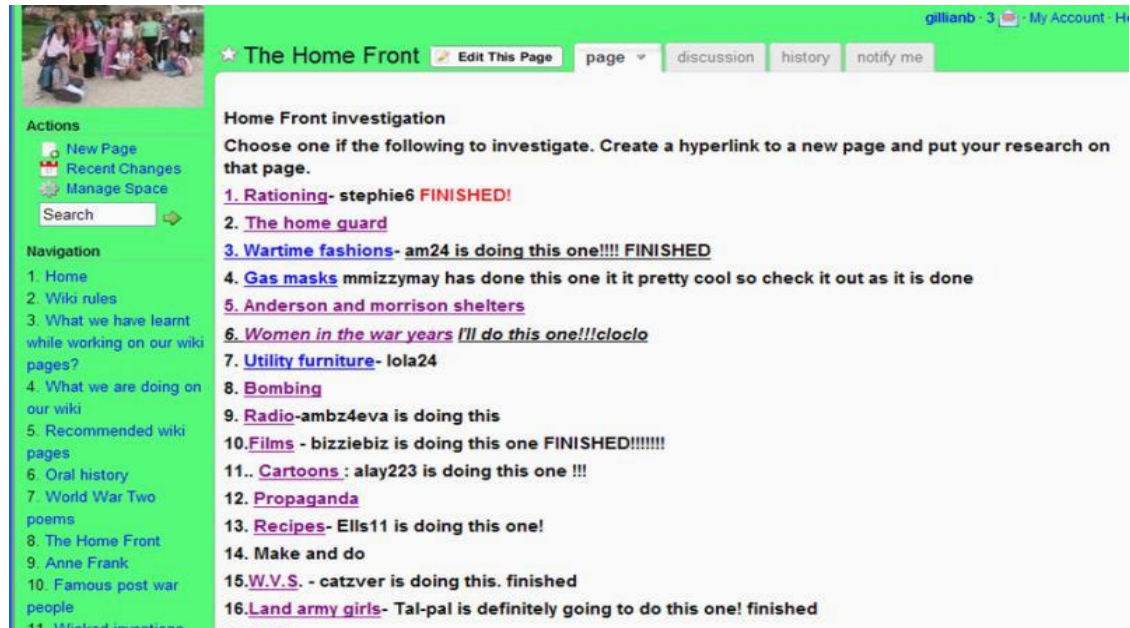


Diagram 5.1: The wiki community in the context of the wider communities of practice

I acknowledge the pupils working on the *whitby* wiki are members of many communities: e.g. the family, Brownies, gym and horse riding clubs, Think.com, school, the list is endless. In putting the wiki in context, I am able to identify other communities the pupils use to communicate and interact with each other and the wider school community online. Each of these communities informs the practices emerging on the wiki enriching the living wiki experience and strengthening the learning process and knowledge base it is generating. The pupils working on *whitby* wiki perceive it as their personal online location, a safe place in which to work,

relax and socialise online.

4.15 The Home Front



Picture 5.5: The Home Front

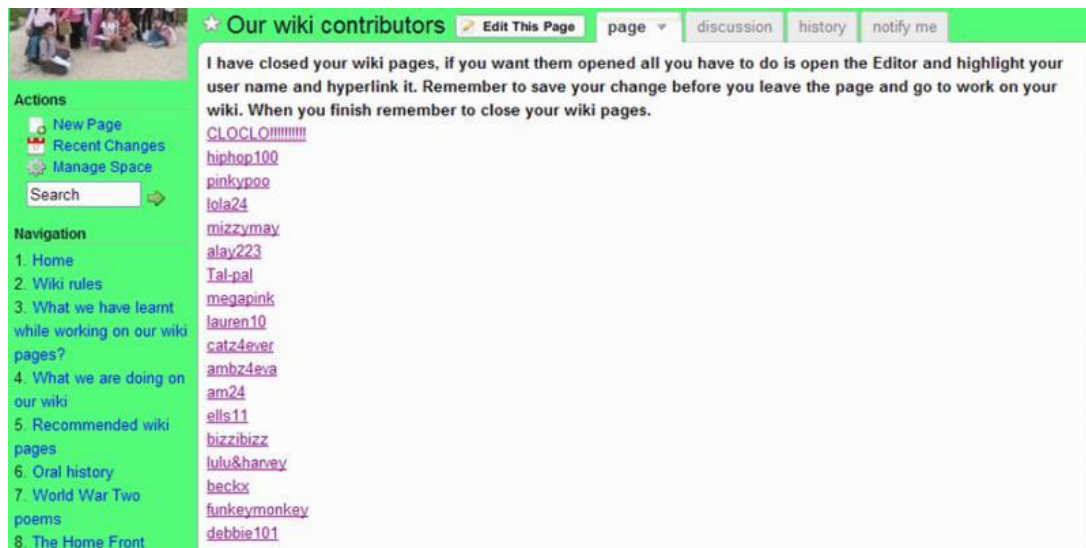
This *Home Front* page, (see Picture 5.5) affords the pupils the opportunity to investigate one aspect of the Home Front in order to create a community data base to gain a deeper insight to what was happening to the people at home in the Second World War. A list of possible subjects provides the individual pupils an opportunity to select the subject they want to investigate. The resultant Home Front database becomes, in future years, a source of information to be scrutinized and edited. Written comments, about the Home Front wiki investigation, at the request of the pupils, are written in their history books because the pupils do not want the work assessed online. This is an example of ‘*a shared way of engaging and doing things together*’ and an example of how a practice evolves. .

4.16 Wicked inventions since 1945

The pupils design and direct the *Wicked Inventions Since 1945* page. I suggest the title to the page and the pupils choose the inventions. Their choice of wicked inventions interests me because my choice, if I had designed the page, would have

included a balanced selection of inventions from over the six decades since the war. For example, the inventions they choose connect closely to their lives, *'I am doing mobiles Mizzymay'* *'Digital Cameras Stephanie6'* and *'Nintendo Wii CLOUCLOU'* the selection is an interesting insight into the life of a ten year old in 2008. This set of inventions reminds me that I have to allow the pupils to choose what to learn about and through that choice; I will learn to see the world from a different perspective. In retrospect, I am aware, in setting up this wiki page, that my pupils be given the opportunity to have an equal share in the design of their learning opportunities.

4.17 Our wiki contributors



Picture 5.6: Our wiki contributors

This contributor's wiki page (see Picture 5.6) affords the wiki contributors' personal pages to relax and collect information reflecting their interests. It is through these pages that the members of the wiki experiment with *'specific tools, representations and other artifacts'* (Ibid: 125) in a safe online environment by gathering information using different media collected from a wide range of web sites and then asking the community for advice about accuracy, suitability or value. These linked pages from the contributors reflect personalities and are regularly visited by all members of the community. The character of the community in these

contributors' pages represents the living community sharing a living experience.

By describing my 2007- 2008 *whitby* wiki I identify the many affordances this space offers. These opportunities for action offer each pupil a choice on how these affordances evolve into practices shared by the community. Using Wenger's criteria I can claim my wiki community creates a living experience and can therefore be called a community of practice where emergent and planned learning merge becoming the 'way things are done' in the community. My community builds on Wenger's criteria by allowing the negotiated practices to evolve through using the different affordances of the physical and virtual learning spaces into new practices.

5.0. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to examine my thinking informing my practice at two different times that define my research journey. At teaching perspective one (2005), I reflect on a time when I am viewing my teaching approach through my detailed planning and scaffolding of the learning experience. I pose questions and find answers as I try to place an online lesson in the classroom setting. I illustrate my lack of confidence in understanding the affordances of the Internet by structuring of the lesson, even down to the web sites the pupils can use: I am demonstrating my fear of the environment by keeping the variables within my control.

At teaching perspective two (2008) I do not use a lesson plan as a reference point because the virtual world of the wiki is not located in the physical world and therefore does not follow the same rules. To claim the wiki is a 'living experience' with a 'living language' it is important to explain and validate the wiki design and affordances through Wenger's criteria for communities of practice. I believe *whitby* wiki adds a new dimension to our developing community of practices by drawing on the practices of both the wiki and the classroom. It is a symbiotic relationship where the practices of one enrich the practices of the other. The wiki community of practices affords opportunities to develop an online space that promotes learning

and encourages the learning of history through enquiry. I also, through my description of the *whitby* wiki, challenge my use of the word ‘classroom’ as I begin to realise that the classroom for both the pupils and myself hold many tacit assumptions of control of knowledge, relationships and expectations.

I accept my understanding of the affordances in my developing model for the wiki is evolving; as a community, we are still learning. I do not have the answers yet for all the questions emerging about the community of practices; the community and the practices are still evolving. The journey from the e-lesson to the community of practices on the wiki involved changing my teaching practice from a didactic approach to that of a dialogic approach. Chapter 6, 7 and 8 will narrate my story of my changing practice.

Section 3



My three reflective spirals: exploratory, transitional and consolidating

Chapter 6



My exploratory reflective spiral

Table 6.0
Exploratory reflective spiral : April 2006 – July 2006
<i>Transitional reflective spiral: July 2006 – August 2007</i>
<i>Consolidating reflective spiral: September 2006 – Spring 2008</i>
In this chapter, I tell the story of my exploratory reflective spiral by describing, through nine local reflective spirals, the way my research and my practice changes through the summer term 2006. This summer term is an exhilarating time when I am reassessing all my assumptions about my research and practice. In this chapter, I am identifying the connections between my: choices, decisions, actions, core values and how this knowledge transforms my thinking about my research and practice.

1.0 Introduction

The exploratory reflective spiral represents a time when I visualise my research and practice as a root system, ‘*where the roots spread and metamorphose into new extended roots that [would] generate new growth*’ (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 114). The new growth is the direction my research and practices takes when exploring the new technology on Web 2.0; my local spirals becoming a device for drawing out the nutrients in order to make my growth as a researcher and practitioner possible. I surmise, by critically analysing my experiences through these local reflective spirals, I am able to identify the influences which inform my choices and decisions making explicit the tacit knowledge which I believe keeps my research and practice in ‘a living contradiction’.

In this chapter (and outlined in Table 6.0) I am critically examining nine local reflective spirals, representing nine loosely connected stages, which constitute my 2006 summer term journal. I include all the local spirals because they tell the whole story illustrating how my changing practice is transforming me through

the choices, decisions, and actions I make. It is through these descriptions and explanations that I aim to influence and transform other practitioners.

2.0 Local reflective spiral 1

When re-reading local spiral 1 (see Appendix 6.1), it is evident I am trying to establish a way of reflecting on my choices, decisions and actions as the practitioner and researcher. The extract at the beginning of my journal illustrates my thinking at the beginning the summer term 2006, *‘Despite three years of studying and thinking I had not really crystallized my purpose. I knew the answer I was seeking was there, but, I was still in the ‘can’t see the woods for the tree’ scenario’*. I also know I am *‘not the same person who started on this research journey’* and understood at the beginning of this stage of my research that my preliminary research had *‘changed my thinking on many levels’* and *‘this growing awareness of the importance of my thinking process [had] produced a new dimension in my research*. I also acknowledge, *‘the role of the pupils [had] changed: their perception of the strategies I [was] developing [had] now become an important part of my research’*. I realise that in describing the thinking process between the practitioner and researcher, I require a finely tuned reflective tool. I visualise this connection between the researcher and practitioner as a form of capillary action (Diagram 2.2, page 37).

This image helps me visualise the type of communication connection that generates the dynamic flow of information between my two personas: the practitioner and the researcher. This flow of information represents the product of all the choices, decisions, and action I make and the process will continuously inform the main reflective spirals and my narrative. I agree with Taylor (2005) that an individual identity can be multiple and complex, so in my visualisation of the reflective spiral process, through local reflective spirals, I acknowledge Taylor’s view. My identity is not a single voice but as a composite voice of the researcher and the practitioner. I realise it is ultimately the power of my composite voice that produces the energy for my narrative to grow towards each answer no matter the size or complexity of the question. My narrative, with my composite voice of the researcher and practitioner weaves together different

stories: methodological and pedagogical stories with their ontological and epistemological themes.

April 2006 is a time of waiting and deep reflection about the direction of my research as I try to answer the question ‘How do I improve my practice? My progression meeting proves to be difficult because I am not able to *‘really crystallize my purpose’* but I did come to realise, *‘how deeply I wanted to complete my research’*. These two extracts from my journal tease out two important driving forces for the next phase of my research: to gain clarity of thought and channel my determination more productively. My choice in late April 2006 is simple: stop my research or change; I decide to change and by,

- Acknowledging the importance of how my thinking is evolving as my research progresses.
- Accepting the role of the pupils in my research because their perception of my practice is now an important part of my research.
- Assimilating the cyclical reflection process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting as the central tool for my research methodology.
- Writing a narrative to describe the reflective journey recording the process of my thinking as I move through the different phases of my research.
- Keep asking the question ‘How do I improve my practice?’

The narrative emerging from this local spiral has within it the key elements of all good stories: the end of the old tale giving the back drop for the starting of a new tale, the main characters with strong values, a mission, the challenges to be tackled and a prize to be collected at the end of the tale. To be worth telling, a narrative should run counter to expectancy, and by breaking *‘canonical script’* (Bruner 1997:139) I am creating an adventure that keeps the interest of the reader. In describing my experiences at this local level, I hope to set the scene and the expectations of the reader of the adventure I am embarking on and describing through all my other local spirals.

3.0 Local reflective spiral 2

Local reflective spiral 2 (see Appendix 6.2) represents the beginning of this exploratory phase of my research journey. I have two aims in this spiral: to write an article for two educational journals and create links with a wider professional community. The first journal, *Education 3-13*, is a journal I recognise as a forum for educators to discuss their research and I believe in the summer 2006 an article in this journal has two functions: clarify my research and tightening up my academic writing skills. The second journal, *satips*¹ is an ICT support and training journal for my educational district; I believe writing for this journal gives me an opportunity to write down my thoughts in a less academic but more intuitive way.

I belong to an ICT organisation called Naace² and after reading an article on wikis by Honeyford (2006), in their magazine, I write an article for *satips* called, *Blogs, Wikis and Podcasting.... the way forward*' (Porthouse, 2006). In describing my experiences to a wider audience, I am making my first attempt at reaching out to other practitioners. The article represents, for me, a public statement of intent and justification for my actions in my response to my initial Web 2.0 research. Including the entire article in my journal demonstrates my vulnerability at this time. I am exposing my ignorance to my peers, but instead of fearing it, I am celebrating the joy of discovering a new way to teach. I analyse my emotions in Chapter 8, section 2.1. In writing the article, I am trying to balance the fear and the excitement of the unknown by acknowledging my fear for what it is, and, tempering my excitement to the practicalities of my context. In retrospect, I view this article, through my tree metaphor, as a seed having taken root and beginning to grow. I am so happy on completing this article because I sense I am beginning to know what I have to do to answer the question, 'How do I improve my practice? The act of writing down my thoughts in the *satips* article clarifies my thinking by,

¹ **satips**: support and training in prep schools

² **Naace**: national association of advancement of computer education

- helping me see my research as part of a wider narrative, '*joining the dots*', and encapsulates my feelings at this stage of my research beautifully,
- giving me the opportunity to engage with a wider audience which gives me different perspective on how I view my research; the inner dialogue of my earlier research had been rather incestuous,
- identifying a key affordance communication but I am still unsure exactly how that word is to be defined in term of the Internet and lastly,
- identifying the location for continuing my research process.

I reflect deeply on the article because it represents a pivotal moment in my research. I believe I am now standing up and taking ownership of my research but my article, for Education 3-13, is only given a title indicating the contrary, because, in April 2006, I am not ready to write an academic article for this, in my view, a more critical audience.

My journal entries, in this second local spiral, illustrate the difficulty in separating my past actions into convenient slices. The action of writing my article is the product of numerous smaller actions: searching articles and books, following up references building up a sketch of the terrain ahead. I accept the direction my research is heading but I am unsure of the actual track. Through the metaphor of a spreading root system, I am able to understand the organic nature of searching for an answer in my research. My exploratory spiral taps into this imagery as I start exploring the answer to the main research question 'How do I improve my practice?' through asking another more specific question, 'How do I understand Web 2.0? In answering this secondary question, I am initiating many smaller searches, like a spreading root system, which strengthen my actions by absorbing the cumulative knowledge I gain from the plethora of choices and decisions located in each of these smaller actions.

When reflecting on my actions in this local spiral I make a decision to be more proactive and interactive with the Internet and the emerging technologies on Web

2.0. In my early encounters with Web 2.0, I become fascinated with the wikipedia and the possibilities of this online authoring. I accept the criticisms levelled at the wikipedia concerning its lack of accountability and accuracy, but believe that the wikipedia's inherent weaknesses act as a good warning for all educators when using Internet information; always cross-reference information. The narrative growing from this local spiral produces several key themes beginning to inform my choices and decisions. I am beginning to take responsibility for my research and through this empowering action I, as the narrator, with my *'single voice'* am informing a wider audience of my transformative story.

4.0 Local reflective spiral 3

Local reflective spiral 3 (see Appendix 6.3) is located in the beginning weeks of the summer term 2006 and focuses on a staff training session I am organising to introduce a different teaching approach to independent learning. I am nervous about this staff training because from previous experience with the staff I anticipate passive resistance to change and I know this reluctance to change can be draining. This expectation of negativity about the training influences my decision to link my talk to established research on the subject. I hope this use of 'official knowledge' gives my contribution authority. I am impressed by Futurelab's³ *Enquiring Minds* initiative which, *'takes students' ideas, interests and experiences as its starting point, and provides them with more responsibility for the direction and content of their'* (Futurelab, 2008:1). I include the notes for the staff training in the action section of my journal because they represent the actions I intend to initiate that term and will, I believe in 2006, influence my research and practice. The staff training I am planning and my subsequent reflections on that training dominate this reflective spiral. When looking back on the notes for the training session, I now see I am being rather ambitious when I want to: *'create a climate in the school where different teaching approaches and thinking about what is valid knowledge is being encouraged'*, and to *'introduce the key competencies that reflected the types of skills pupils would be expected to*

³ **Futurelab** is a not-for-profit organisation transforming the way people learn through the potential offered by digital and other technologies by developing innovative resources and practices that support new approaches to learning for the 21st century.

master to be informed and in control in a rapidly changing information laden world'. In retrospect, I can see I am trying to legitimise my research in the eyes of my colleagues because I am about to introduce different teaching approaches, challenging the accepted definitions of valid knowledge, into the school.

In April 2006 I want my research to be part of the school development, not an added extra, so I introduce the idea of *'key competencies that reflected the types of skills pupils would be expected to master to be informed and in control in a rapidly changing information laden world'* introducing the concept of generic skills transferrable between subjects and locations. To reinforce this transferability of skills I *'explain [that we] have no idea what pupils will require in terms of knowledge and skills in the future [and] therefore any competencies have to be generic and focusing the researching, authenticating and communicating information*. I achieve this by explaining, *that the Enquiring Minds research uses the skills of the future while teachers teach and think using the skills and understanding of knowledge of the past*.

Determined to *'use the language of the research'* I place my research and practice in the same location by *'introduc[ing] the idea that teachers and pupils can be co-researchers'* and *'linking these competencies to curriculum framework that exists in the school'*. Introducing and creating a climate of change in the staff I encourage them to *'discuss current research and encourage them to investigate it further'* and then I *'introduce my own research in the context of the Enquiring Minds research'* by having *'discussion groups explore the competencies and in the plenary identify restraints and commonality with the research'* I want my research to be viewed by my colleagues in the context of 'official educational research, which, although different, has similar aims to mine. It is important to me that I am taken seriously by my colleagues because they represent one of the audiences to which I am directing my research.

This reflective spiral is a clear example of how I am thinking at the time. The question directing me in this local spiral could be 'How do I move towards an Enquiring Minds initiative'. I am still lacking confidence in my own research and, in retrospect I am using the Enquiring Minds initiative as a support before I

have the courage to start my own research. The negativity I anticipate when planning for this training session proves to be wrong and the members of staff are enthusiastic and agree that my ideas are relevant and useful. In retrospect, I now acknowledge my negativity was aimed at my own expectations rather than those of the staff.

The reflective section on this spiral starts with a sense of negativity about my articles and mission but ends with a set of tight and focused actions aimed at my school community. On the publication of my *satips* article, I wait for a reaction and am disappointed with the lack of a response from my target audience of practitioners outside my school context. The school community are impressed and I gain confidence in their reaction. I postpone my article for Education 3-13 because I believe that in order to be accepted for publication for this journal my research has to convey a more articulate and academic insight into my practice. I reasoned that since I have started to engage with two communities, my school community and my local professional training community, the wider academic community would have to wait.

The staff training is very successful and therefore I tighten up my research and focus on preparing the backdrop to my research by setting in motion the actions necessary to create a curricular opportunity for the pupils to work independently on the Internet. I believe my desire to promote individuality, a core value in my belief system is directing my choices, decisions and actions in this spiral, but on retrospect, my understanding of individuality still lacks clarity.

The narrative emerging from this local spiral illustrates the transformative process of continuous reflective realignment as I reassess and reinterpret past choices and decisions by making them an active part of the mechanism for making future choices and decisions. The staff training is the focus of this spiral but I am also reacting to actions set in an earlier reflective spiral. This overlapping of spirals influences me as the practitioner. I am now re-examining previous choices and decisions in the light of new insights I gain through experiencing the choices, decisions and actions in a new reflective spiral, therefore creating, what I believe, is a generative process (Whitehead and McNiff

2006: 56). This generative process ensures that all new knowledge filters back down informing previous spirals and becoming a transformative feature and a key element of making my emerging narrative possible. This process of continuous realignment makes past actions, reflections, choices and decisions open to re-evaluation and interpretation making the root system thicker able to anchor strong growth.

5.0 Local reflective spiral 4

Reflective spiral 4 (see Appendix 6.4) occurs in the first weeks of summer term 2006. It is a time when I am in the process of setting up a new research session with my ten-year-old pupils, as well as, opening up my research to any member of the staff who might share my desire to improve my practice through the effective use of ICT. I know I cannot work in a research vacuum and accepting that I exist within '*a multi- dimensional frame of knowing: acknowledging and connecting between intellectual, emotional, practical intuitive, sensory and more knowing*' (Marshall, 2001: 432). But in these first weeks I am in the initial stages of trying to give a meaningful pattern to '*the multi-dimensional frame of knowing*' and exploring my '*outer arc*' through expanding my research team. I use the phrase '*willing to jump in at the deep end*' in my journal entry for this period to describe the type of colleague, I want to become part of my small research team. The '*deep end*' is my description of the process of discovering and learning to use Web 2.0 sites and the key word for this '*deep end*' stage is experimentation. I discover that my new co-researcher colleague, who I will refer to as BD, and I are able to bounce ideas and solutions for problems in a relaxed and proactive atmosphere but, more importantly, I discover that we both realise that when given the correct opportunity pupils will collaborate with that experimentation. BD and I re-examine what counts as 'correct' (i.e. what the features of the opportunity context are for the pupils) throughout the term.

I am also very interested in the way the two arcs of attention overlap because I know BD will influence the choices and decisions I will be making in the coming months. Asking my colleague to be a co-researcher is the final action in a sequence of smaller actions and inner debates about who will be a good companion on my research journey. The role of co-researcher, we both agree,

involves both of us developing a dynamic working relationship, which produces an exciting and innovative teaching environment. This working relationship becomes very important to me and gives me the confidence to widen my outer arc. BD does not help me with any specific research but her challenging questions about my research, her constant optimism, and willingness to, *'jump in the deep end'* to see what happens enables me to take risks and rationalise my actions by discussing and reflecting on my thoughts with her.

My next action of finding my pupil volunteers involves me sending a letter to the Year 6 parents. Re-reading the letter, in 2008, I draw an interesting conclusion; it appears to be rather apologetic. I know I have to gain the parents' permission but, in April 2006, I still visualise my research being separate from my practice. This extract, from this local spiral, illustrates my concern, *'These [research] activities will be at lunch times or after school. These [research] activities will not interfere in anyway with the Form 6 timetable or involve any extra work on their part'*. It is evident that I am still viewing my research as separate and the word 'volunteer' links my thinking to my preliminary study reinforcing the belief that my research is separate from the curriculum I teach.

Finally, when referring back to my journal entries in this spiral, I am able to identify my assumption that equality is an important value at work here by reflecting on my relationship with my pupils. It is a relationship where I want *'to be equal with the pupils and I had to create a space that merged our two constructs....we would be on a level playing field'*. I am evidently acknowledging the state of contradiction in which I am practicing and researching because although I evidently want equality my action, through the letter to the parents and plans for the volunteer meetings, indicates a contrary reality. My journey to understand how my belief system works in my practice as a reality and not as an aspiration is the most challenging aspect of my change process. In this spiral, I do not see my lack of understanding of what I mean by equality as a constraint but as a reason to continue my research.

The influences from the literature, I am reading in this spiral, do not fit comfortably into my narrative at this stage. It is only, in retrospect, that I see the

significance of these influential additions to my story. These new stories serve an important function, they represent key reference points that over time will, like a magnet, draw together observations, experiences, actions and reflections and create connections giving them new meaning.

Marshall's (2001) 'stories' introduces me to the process of giving a pattern to the maelstrom of data assaulting my senses at this time in my research. Drawn to Marshall's use of key phrases that, according to her, draw together multiple meanings and the, '*key phrases... are charged with energy [and] seem to hold multiple meanings to be puzzled out*' (Ibid: 432) I recognise a way I can make sense of my research. I start, in this spiral, visualising my inner arc and my outer arc, and, through my key word framework, become part of a personalised sense-making process.

Approaching one of my colleagues is an important action in direct response to my understanding the importance I give to Marshall's outer arc of influence, where the, '*alive interplay*' with my colleague will be, '*generative and dynamic*' (Ibid: 434). I realise I require my own sense-making device to filter and grade my thoughts when conducting my research in this outer arc. Marshall influences me through my use of key words and phrase but judge their use to be a rather blunt filtering instrument. I accept that my understanding of what I am doing does match this simple tool so I chose my key words and start using them to structure my observation. My key word framework, although crude in its design, does influence my thinking and the way I navigate the '*multi-dimensional frame of knowing*' (Marshall, 2001:432) which becomes my life in the summer term of 2006. This type of reflective thinking, which I explain in Chapter 2, is very new to me and, in Chapter 7 I discuss the success of using my reflective filter of key words and phrases, as a sense-making process, capable of informing my research and practice.

James and James's (2004) 'stories' also influence my thinking at this time and my reference to the book in my journal is a good example of my response to the literature when I do not fully understanding its implication. I tease out five key assumptions from their book: childhood is a social construct, a child lives in a

world full of meaning to them and therefore it is important to listen to their voices, children have all the characteristics of a minority group, children lack power and children are agent of social change. These assumptions, at the time, I believe, reflect my thinking but, in retrospect, I realise I do not understand what they mean, at this time, but they do become part of the key phrases filter representing the sense-making process informing my practice and research in the summer term 2006.

6.0 Local reflective spiral 5

In local spiral 5, (see Appendix 6.5) and Local spiral six, (see Appendix 6.6) I reflect on the interview transcripts from the two interview sessions with my two volunteer groups. I split the two sessions with my pupil volunteers into two separate spirals because each session has a distinct character. It is through these two interviews that I gain the knowledge, which influences the next phase of my research.

The meetings take place in the lunch break and in both cases last about ten minutes with groups of volunteers sitting in a circle to discuss the questions I set. In local spiral five, I transcribe the first of those two meetings and in local spiral six, I transcribe the second of those meeting. In local spiral four I acknowledge that although I am preaching equality I am acting to the contrary and realise that *'to be equal with the pupils I had to create a space that merged our two constructs....[so] we would be on a level playing field'*. In retrospect, these introductory meetings do not represent an equal playing field and the pupils find it difficult to be themselves. When organising the meetings I believe I will interact easily with the pupils but after the two sessions with the volunteers, I radically review my whole approach relationship to the pupils. In both the transcripts, I use italics deliberately to highlight my contributions to the meetings. It is not until transcribing these sessions that I become aware of how much I am controlling the meetings, by using the occasion, to verbalise my own thoughts rather than gain an insight into what the volunteers are thinking. This is an uncomfortable observation deeply influencing my choices and decisions in my research and practice at the term progresses. It is at this point I begin to challenge my understanding of the word 'equality' in my practice.

The volunteers, who attend this first meeting, are enthusiastic but find it difficult to verbalise their thoughts without continuous prompting from me. My introduction to the meeting reveals my tacit opinion of the pupils' future contributions will be interesting but not influential. *'GP what I am proposing to do is introduce different things the Internet can do over this term and I want you to be helping me sometimes..... I will put you little groups and say can you just do this and you just do that..... I am not worried if you make a complete mess of it... I just want you to have a go'*. It is evident I am expecting very little from my volunteers, *'you just do this and you just do that'* does not reflect a deep trust but an assumption that they will *'make a complete mess of it'*.

In this initial meeting, I introduce my research and explain what I hope to achieve. The transcript indicates that I set a very general agenda in this meeting. I am unhappy after this meeting because I begin to believe it will be impossible to be equal with pupils in the way that I had planned. I now had to face the uncomfortable truth that my well-entrenched pupil teacher relationship remained intact. It is not until I transcribe the meeting that I begin to understand I am merely using the meeting, as a vehicle, to express my views and I am not listening actively to the pupils' views. For example, after listening to all the group's contributions I finish the meeting with, *'GP, What we will do is try to do is ... have a session when we could look on the Internet. The first thing we will look at is the wikipedia and also the Internet radio and maybe blogging and podcasting. We will be looking at, all these different things and how we can actually use them in the classroom. I don't want it to be extra, I want it to be part of the lesson and I want to teach it next year, How would that be put into a lesson how would it be part of the lesson'*. Nobody, in the group, mentions the wikipedia, Internet radio, blogging or podcasting but having made the gesture of listening to my volunteers I realise I have, in fact, not listened. I knew the meeting had not gone well and I prepare for the second interview session with trepidation.

Reflecting, on this transcript, makes me re-evaluate what I mean by equality. In the past I assume, naively, that 'equality' was firstly, necessarily a good thing

and secondly, readily achievable in this context. I now see that what I value, in reality, is to give as much negotiating strength as possible to my pupils. I visualise this inequality as set within a situation in which there is, at the outset, an imbalance between, at the very least, perceptions of the power relationships between teacher and pupil. I view this imbalance in terms of the pupils' access to knowledge, the validity of some kinds of knowledge judged more significant than others and the way in which particular kinds of knowledge is learnt and subsequently assessed. Unpicking the tacit assumption, I had about the word equality, becomes the underlying challenge that weaves through this submission.

My thinking for this spiral reflects my deep concern about my meeting with the volunteers. I realise the pupils see me as 'the teacher' and this session is just another 'lesson' where their behaviour is closely linked to my approval. An extract from the interview illustrates a question answer format so familiar in the classroom,

GP *I am getting quite excited about it I will probably have to do that after school...*

AP yes

GP *would there be any problem to coming after school*

AP no

GP *you see it is so difficult in the day to do things*

PB yes

GB *but I am so excited I would love to get the radio... that would be such a lovely legacy you as form 6 could leave the school.*

Whole group yes

GP *so what else can we do on the internet*

KN this is not the internet but you can send instant messages

GP *but is that msn*

KN yes

Whole group oh yes

GP *has anyone got myspace*

Group no no

It comes as an unpleasant surprise to realise how controlling I am in the meeting. In acknowledging, to myself, that to achieve any kind of equality, I have to

unpack the word 'control' and accept the consequences from this new understanding. This meeting is another 'moments of epiphany' when I now see, through the pupils' behaviour, for the first time, a true reflection of my teaching approach. I know I have to rethink my whole approach to my relationship to the pupils and, I acknowledge, it is going to be difficult: how do you deconstruct routines deeply entrenched and unquestioned in your practice? What routines do I have to deconstruct and rebuild? These questions illustrate the problems of changing a practice, kept intact by unchallenged routines with key words guarding those well-established routines: classroom, individuality, equality, responsibility.

When rationalising my conversational actions in this meeting, as this extract from my journal illustrates, I do not see the pupils as equal through my use of the pronoun 'I' instead of 'we'. *'I steered the discussion towards msm and personal communication and introduced the term 'blogging'. I wasn't sure myself were I was going but I knew the key word communication was directing the way the discussion developed rather than any conscious strategy on my part. I was facilitating a programme that was open to change at any stage'*. The emerging narrative thread from this spiral represents the beginning of a reflective process to gain a deeper insight to what I mean by the word equality. In this submission, my understanding of what I mean by equality is continually evolving becoming an important way I start re-defining my practice.

7.0 Local reflective spiral 6

The way I approach the second meeting in local reflective spiral 6 (see Appendix 6.6) is a direct consequence of my reflections based on the first research meeting. I *'decided to think of this meeting more as a conversation. I felt, even if the pupils did not realise it, I wanted the relationship to change'*, well that was the plan. I approach this meeting with, what I perceive, at the time, to be, an open mind. I am aware that I have to change my relationship with my pupils by giving them the opportunity to re-define our relationship. This reflective spiral represents, the initial stages, of deconstructing my teacher/pupil relationship 'routine' through the choices and decisions I am now making.

I am, again, unhappy after the interview because, even knowing that my pupils require more freedom to express themselves, I am still controlling and surprisingly impatient with the volunteers in this second interview. The impatience stems from the frustration I am feeling about my lack of awareness of where I am going wrong. I want equality but I do not know how to achieve it with my pupils but thinking that a conversational style of communication is all that is needed. This is the reality of practicing in a living contradiction. The questions, I pose myself indicate my turbulent thinking at this time. This extract describes my inner debate about my inability to communicate conversationally with my volunteers; I ask myself, *'am I hearing and seeing in print my conversational style, and is that what the pupils are reacting to? [and] 'am I voicing my ideas and the pupils are just picking up clues from my body and verbal language?'* I know, *'I wanted a conversation but all the signals [are] saying I am giving a lecture and therefore defining our roles in the discussion'*

When reflecting on the transcript for this second meeting with my volunteers I note that many of my future actions for the summer 2006 are embedded in the discussion: creating our own ICT web site, an after school ICT club and setting up a school radio station. In this extract I talk about, *'jumping in at the deep end and [pressing] buttons until you work out what it does..... because that is how I learnif you notice when I teach who ever gets it first becomes the expert'* an approach my pupils come to recognise in the following months. In this meeting, I am trying to persuade the volunteers to think about the wikipedia but their lack of interest finally influences me to change the subject.

In retrospect, I acknowledge that I am using this meeting to test out my own ideas and not actively listening to my volunteers' ideas, even though it is through reflecting on this meeting I am able to set up many very successful initiatives in the summer of 2006. I finish the meeting with, *'you research and I will be watching you and working with you and I will be videoing you'*. When re-reading this extract from my journal I am surprised because I had forgotten I was planning to video my volunteers. Since this second interview session, my research journey has taken me to a different path I hardly recognise the practitioner and researcher who would see the answer to my question 'How do I

improve my practice?’ by again watching and videoing pupils. On reflection, the question I should have been asking was ‘How do I engage with my pupils?’ The lack of the pronoun ‘we’ is very significant to understanding my mindset at this time.

This short extract encapsulates my frustration about this second meeting, ‘*I wanted the relationship to change*’. This frustration hides a much deeper and rather negative mindset skilfully camouflaged by my apparent desire to listen to the pupils about the research. My actions appear to be moving towards equality in the research, but here is a sense that I am still paying lip service to this key value. I reluctantly concede as this extract reveals, ‘*my research focus needed to be wider, encompassing communication in general and not a single Internet facility*’.

Reflecting on these interviews, I decide to re-examine why I want my pupils in my research team in the first place, since I appear to be using them only as a sounding board for my ideas. I ask myself the question, ‘Do I just want to listen to their voices so I can hear what they are saying about my ideas?’ I begin to reflect on my role in this relationship by making explicit the tacit realisation; my pupils will not be equal partner in my research journey as I had originally envisaged because I will not let them be equal because I am still not sure what I mean by equality. I sense it will require me to unpick my relationship with my pupils and at this stage of my research I do not have the insight or language to achieve this target, but I now accept I am beginning to challenge my mind set.

The narrative emerging from this spiral has two very important pivotal themes. First, I establish a vocabulary for working with my pupils on this research journey by introducing key phrases, which dictate future actions: ‘*pupils being part of the equation*’, ‘*joint narratives that merge*’ and ‘*engage with the child’s construct of the world*’. Second, I set myself an ultimate goal of emulating the online authoring site of the wikipedia as the teaching approach for my learning community. I also realising I have to stand back and allow my co-researchers to help me find a route to that final destination; a route that encompasses many Web 2.0 skills. The initial intention for my two research meetings was to inform the

volunteers about the summer 2006 research and gain an insight into their possible contribution, but these two sessions, in fact, challenged and started the process of clarifying my relationship with the pupils.

8.0 Local reflective spiral 7

This local reflective spiral 7 (see Appendix 6.7) narrates my actions and reflections in the summer term of 2006. The research meetings, with my volunteers, are a revelation to me, because I make a startling, if uncomfortable truth. Practicing what I perceive to be to be my values is a difficult process. I have been going through the motions of giving my volunteer interviewees' equality but my actions, as revealed in the transcripts, are still didactic and not dialogic. The realisation that I am not practicing my key value of equality now influences the way I introduce and explore many of my initiatives, with my research volunteers. In an extract from my reflection in this spiral, I debate this point, *'I have not set any conditions on what they do'*. In my determination to ensure I am at least trying to be equal, I am encouraging another value of individuality.

This reflective spiral is a snap shot of how my practice starts changing when I challenge my understanding of my value equality. I am not aware, in the summer term of 2006, that this is my motivation. On re-reading the reflections in this spiral, it is evident that I am beginning to debate the meaning of inequality through my own inequality that I experience through my lack of knowledge and skills when trying to master the new Web 2.0 technology. This extract clearly illustrates this point,

'Is this how pupils feel when they are learning a new subject?'

and illustrates it in this next extract by explaining the sense of inequality I feel, *'If I am to understand and know the Internet I have to fight the overwhelming fear of failure that accompanies any decision I make into a knowledge realm, which at times, makes me feels like I am in a foreign land using a foreign language'*. A stranger in a foreign land is never an equal until the stranger learns the language and thinks in the language of the land.

In this spiral, I initiate many changes and reflect on how I will record these changes and reflect meaningfully on them. These following extracts describe the inner debate I am having at this time about how I should be recording my practice and research in the school context, 'I realised very early on that keeping a journal that noted all the ways I was going to engage with my inner and outer arc of attention was going to be difficult'.... 'I have a busy timetable and..., decide to try to frame my experiences by being sensitive to the key words: communication, the past, facilitator, collaborator, agents of change and reflection'... 'Writing down short entries was not ideal but I began to realise that reflection was like a microscope. If you are examining close enough you will only see the individual cells [and when you] pull away different patterns appear' and lastly 'My notes are the cell stage and only time and several different reflection stages would determine the pattern that would eventually emerge. The reflection at this stage is an initial filter. I will revisit my summer journal later to tease out actions and initial reflections that will have more significance as my narrative unfolds. I conclude that making short notes is the most practical solution; the emerging conceptual patterns hidden within these notes I tease out later.

As the 2006 summer term progresses it proves to be a very busy but exhilarating term. I am now researching the Internet, professional journals, newspaper, and books about Web 2.0. The Web 2.0 language is new and I have no conceptual understanding of the domain I am now researching. I realise 'that the teaching space I was looking for to develop my strategies was going to be virtual. This meant I had to unpick a lifetime of routine'. To gain a deeper insight I start mastering the different interactive software platforms. It is a time of deep fear (fear of failure) and a time of deep excitement as I master a new piece of technology. My little research team is now invaluable as a group who are informing me, challenging me and showing me different ways of using the Internet. BD and my two pupil research groups play with all the new technology. It is interesting to note that the introduction of the free audio editing software *audacity* results in pupils interviewing each other about everything. The energy from the pupils' enthusiasm enables me to overcome my fear of tackling major technical problems when attempting to get the audio interviews into podcasts.

Throughout the term, I keep trying to understand the online authoring site wikipedia through the help pages, but I find them difficult and confusing. My research colleague is supportive and she becomes interested in educational emailing facilities. We both agree that she will be the school ‘expert’ on the emailing possibilities to the wider curriculum. It is at this time that I acquire the book, *Blogs, wikis and podcasts* by Richardson (2006) and it becomes the key reference book for all my thinking in the summer and this extract illustrates how deeply influenced I am by this author. I acknowledge that, *‘this book has given me the technological scaffolding I need to complete my journey. I am nowhere near being e-literate but I now feel I can achieve that status ... I have been given a good phrase book to work in this foreign [Web 2.0] land.’* By reading about the stories of teachers, in exactly the same position as me, I make a connection with a group of practitioner brought together in this book. Their stories inspire me and Richardson’s book influences my choices, decisions, and actions as I endeavour to become a digital native⁴ and start speaking the language of Web 2.0.

As the term progresses I become less reactive to the difficulties I am facing, and more proactive by setting up meetings, with the subject co-ordinators, to discuss how this new technology can be integrated into subject teaching. In retrospect, I can now acknowledge, as the pupils and I gain mastery over the Web 2.0 domain, our relationship changes subtly as the control of knowledge, giving us the expertise to understand the technology, is not mine alone but distributed throughout the research team.

It is in this term that the idea for the historical enquiry emerges. The ‘Voices from the Past’ enquiry it is not an original idea but it represents how I am using my key word ‘past’ to draw together my practice towards the new technology and a subject I love to teach. This ‘Voices from the Past’ feeds into my growing understanding of what you can do with podcasting, it also gives me the motivation to investigate blogs as a possible platform for the investigation. I am still unsure of my expertise but in this extract, I decide I will, *‘jump in at the deep end and set up a blog site. This will be the forum from which I will conduct*

⁴ The term ‘native’ and ‘immigrant’ comes from Marc Prensky’s paper, Digital native, Digital Immigrant 2001 and cited in Richardson’s book.

the rest of my research. I will conduct with the pupils, on the Internet, a historical enquiry using the blog to collect, discuss and finally publish our findings. My thinking on this subject is still in its infancy but most of my motivation to master the new technology originates in my determination to set up this initiative in the autumn.

As the summer term progresses I begin to identify the design features I want on my online space. This extract describes my thinking at this time, *'I want the pupils' thoughts be published immediately and discussed with other [who are] invited into that space. It has to have the fluidity and the dynamic nature of speech'* In response to the pupils' enthusiasm for podcasting, I discover the *radiowaves* web site but the subscription is expensive and my budget is tiny. This lack of funds influences my choices in the type of software I research for my online space; it has to be free or very inexpensive. I am now able to articulate my tacit belief that the software I are going to use, as a platform for the online community, should be freely available to the pupils at home - in a sense equality of access to resources.

I start my reflections on this spiral in a state of excitement, *'I am excited by the prospect of introducing the new technology'* and end with the *frightening and exhilarating'* thought *'in the e-literate world your thoughts are open and the inner voice has been replaced by a world wide voice'*. I view researching Web 2.0 as a set of difficult challenges. I deconstruct the new technology by organising times when the research teams can investigate. I decide earlier in this stage of my research not to video any groups investigating the software. I make this decision because I am still reacting to my preliminary study experiences. The research sessions, in the summer term also prove to be very fragmented, dynamic, fluid, interactive, and therefore difficult to capture visually. I am also more interested in understanding my relationship with my research team in the summer term investigative sessions. Making meaningful records of these research sessions proves problematic but by using my key words filter, I am able to keep my observation meaningful. These key words do not represent a definitive list. New words are adhering to my mental framework but the original

key words remain an effective mental filter to keep me focused when recording and reflecting on my practice.

I must admit *'jumping in the deep end'* describes accurately the summer term as my small research team investigate the Web 2.0 software. Originally, I did want to involve BD in my reflections, but she was reluctant to comment, in any depth, on initiatives, so our communications were informal. This informality did not mean they lacked substance, in fact, the opposite applied. The communication style forged with BD proves to be dynamic, informative, adventurous, and supportive. It teaches me an important lesson; reflective spirals can occur in the space of a short conversation when the stages of thinking, acting and reflecting connects with another person, in what Bruner (1999) calls 'intersubjectivity', which describes the metacognitive process when two people become one in their thinking. In this summer term my research colleague and forge a relationship which enriches our ICT department, informs my research benefitting the pupils because we know what we are thinking and working to our strengths to answer the question 'How do I improve my practice?' by using this new technology. This intersubjectivity is a facet of equality I only achieve when working on the wiki as a member of a community of practices.

My understanding of what I want in an online learning space continues to become clearer as I visualise the essential affordances of the online learning space I am developing as having: immediacy, dynamic, authorship, collaboration and fluidity. In retrospect I am amazed at this list because it describes a wiki, although, at the time of writing I am disillusioned with wikis through my lack of knowledge and frustration with the wikipedia. I decide that blogs were the answer for my 'Voices in the Past' initiative although from this extract I am doubtful, *'I need to engage and develop a narrative in a space which will empower pupils by combining their desire to communicate with the opportunities offered on the Internet: blogging??'*

The emerging narrative in this spiral focuses on my learning experiences when mastering the technology found on Web 2.0. I describe the process of learning a new language in order to visit a foreign country. In narrative terms, I am

achieving three targets at this stage of my research. First, I am getting to know my travelling companions and how I am able to communicate effectively with them, second, I am beginning to master the skills necessary to carry on my journey and, finally, I am building up a picture of my final destination by identifying the key characteristics of my online teaching space.

9.0 Local reflective spiral 8

Local reflective spiral 8 (see Appendix 6.8) and local reflective spiral 9 (see Appendix 6.9) reflect on the transcripts of two meetings the volunteers have at the end of the summer term. I am curious to gain an insight into what my research groups have gained from the term's investigations into the new technology. The two groups who record their meetings are volunteers who want to attend these two recorded meeting, several team members abstain because they make the choice to complete other ICT activities before the end of term. The groups are given the choice of how they can record their discussions; one group decides to audiotape it and the other group decides to video it. I do not attend the discussions but I do elect a group leader and give the leader the following question as a general guide, *'Thinking about all the things we have done this term and how do you think you can help me teach the present Year 5's next year in their history lessons?'* This extract describes my inner dialogue justifying the use of this question, *'I used this question to try and clarify their thoughts and direct their discussions towards history. I had not directed any of the practical sessions towards any subject because I felt that would make them feel I was 'teaching' them. I introduced it now in the form of a request. I was asking their opinion. I did not have the answers and to be honest I was genuinely interested in their response. I was tired and harassed and I needed their help. To be treated like an equal you have to regard their opinion as equal to your own.'* I left the groups alone and apart from checking the groups at regular intervals, I allow them to discuss freely. Despite the reference to teaching history in the question the research in the after school sessions is open ended and centred on the pupils' own interests. I am therefore very interested in their opinions about how we can use these new technologies in our history lessons.

The audio transcript is such a contrast to the transcript of the initial research meetings at the beginning of term. I accept it may not be a good comparison; different grouping of pupils and no supervising adult but phrases like *'I think....'* *'what does M think?'*, *'I think my opinion is...'*, *'it would be interesting to see'*, indicate a dynamic discussion is taking place. The language in the meeting is full of positive words about their research: *'useful'*, *'interesting'*, *'fun'*, *'good'*, *'clever'*, *'colourful'*, *'attractive'* and *'brilliant'*. In retrospect the word that I believe defines this whole stage in my research is *'clever'*. The pupils use *'clever'* in several contexts, *' what do I think of audacity...I think it is very clever'* and *'also on PowerPoint I think I like it , it is very clever'* and it was the pupils use of this word that is revealing. The word *useful* is used in many contexts, one volunteers states, *'I think msn and email is very useful but with either of them you have to be careful and I think audacity is really useful it help records your thoughts and words'* but I believe there is an important difference between the two descriptive words. Collin's dictionary defines *'clever'* as a display of sharp intelligence while *'useful'* defined as being *'able to use for several purposes'*. I believe the pupils understood the difference between the two words, by using the word *clever* they are referring to the software's affordances. What did Audacity and PowerPoint have in common? I believe both types of software offer the pupils control over a technology, giving them independence over how their thoughts, interests, and opinions expressed, enabling them to let their individuality emerge. In understanding their commonality, I believe I have found the true opinion expressed in this transcript. Using the word *'useful'* in describing the different software implies the pupils' ability to manipulate in a mechanical way but when *'clever'* is used in describing software there is a mental connection with the pupil and affordances within the software. All the comments led me to the conclusion that the independent mastery of these technologies by the pupils enables them to discuss and suggests strategies for teaching history for my next class of ten-year-old pupils.

I do not record my reflections, on this transcript in my journal, in any depth but it proves to be a powerful device for focusing my mind on the choices and decisions I am now making about my research. The transcript in many ways mirrors the numerous informal and fragmented conversations I had been actively

listening to in the after school ICT sessions. The pupils prove to be fascinated with the new software and it is through this fascination I realise the pupils' deep desire to tease out their individuality, to be not only recognised but to have that recognition, set in an appropriate platform and to have the tools to communicate that individuality to a wider audience. In using the word individuality I am making explicit the tacit knowledge that pupils gain strength from allowing their own learning styles to be recognised and from being given the opportunity to explore the possibilities offered by having that choice. This insight fascinates me because this desire for individuality, by my volunteers, informs both my practice and research and fits into place another facet of what I finally come to understand as equality: Equality of access to knowledge through an individual's own learning style.

Individuality is the key value emerging in this part of my narrative. The pupils when discussing their experiences in the summer term use language that clearly indicates a deep desire to not only engage with these new skills but to shape them into something uniquely their own. These extracts from the audio tape illustrate this desire to celebrate their individuality,

'I think my opinion on the programme is good'

'you can make up your own thoughts'

'and in my opinion'

The many initiatives the pupils discuss emerge from their opinions, their thoughts, and their experiences. These initiatives reflect their desire for individuality and this extract from my journal illustrates that desire for individuality is influencing me, *'the pupils know the capabilities of the facilities and having played with the skills involved the pupil realise what is possible and they can control the activity'*. In accepting the importance of individuality, I am re-defining my relationship with my pupils, by accepting there is no one way to learn. I can offer a generic approach but must accept there are other ways to learn and that my pupils should be given the opportunity to explore those possibilities.

10.0 Local reflective spiral 9

The transcript I examine in local spiral 9 (see Appendix 6) is interesting on several levels and for that reason I reflect upon it separately. I believe at the time that the group had misunderstood my question because the videoing is taking place in a rather noisy room. Despite these issues, the three pupils thoroughly enjoyed videoing their discussion and when re-reading this transcript it is evident from my lack of reflection, I am not really valuing their contribution. The fact I use the word 'misunderstood' suggests I have a tacit expectations from the discussion and some how the pupils do not achieve this, *'this group misunderstood what was asked on them. They didn't read the sheet properly and thought that they had to think of actual activities in history that would help me teach the Year 5's that term.'* I even suggest it is their fault, *'despite this confusion and in retrospect I now see that they have in fact understood my question and were discussing it in a very thoughtful and insightful way.'*

This group took the key skill in history of understanding different points of views to discuss how the new technologies could help me. This extract illustrate an idea the group discusses, *'the PowerPoint you could [do] two things on the PowerPoint, one from the German side and one form our side then you compare them so a comparison on audacity and on the school web site'*. Reading the transcript I realise the pupils, *'were very interested in getting the other sides views'* I note that *'this [was] a recurring theme through the pupils' discussions: a place where they can voice their opinions and hear what other opinions are out their'*. The pupils have understood from our collaborative research that I want to apply their understanding in creating an online platform that encourages the skills of understanding different points of view. The ideas that influence me include. The pupils see themselves in terms of a wider connected community and in re-examining this transcript I begin to see the discussion as summative account of how the pupils' view our investigating in the summer term.

The transcript becomes an important reference point for me because it is not until reading the video narrative that I value their contribution to my research narrative. The desire to open up discussions to a wider audience influences me and the fact they believe, that by using these technologies you can change

people's perceptions of historical events gives me a deeper insight to the direction of the next stage of my research. The pupils are articulating what I am thinking even though at this stage I am focusing on mastering the technology and not the implication of their application when teaching history. I think I am aware of the discrepancy in my actions in the summer term and believe that is the real reason why I asked the discussion groups for their insight. It is an uncomfortable thought that the pupils are obviously thinking at a deeper level than I am. It is through this insight I can now envisage and accept a working relationship with my pupils where the control of knowledge can be fluid.

11.0 Conclusion

Central to this exploratory reflective spiral is the redefining of my relationship with my ten-year-old pupils who I want to be my co-researchers. Change in a practice, I begin to realise, is difficult and in order to change the dynamics of my relationship with the pupils I have to start with my own perception of the role I expect the pupils to play in my research. My pupils start researching with me, but in their own way using their own criteria. I believe, in the exploratory phase of my research, by focusing on my pupils as 'agents of change' as every time I listen or observe them, I become sensitive to their actions. It is only on reflection that I realise how much the pupils' thinking and actions are changing my perception of my own research. I realise that the pupils are in no position, or indeed have the power, to change their relationship; it will, I acknowledge, confuse their relationships with other teachers who are not prepared to change their status quo. I reflect on this dilemma because my research requires the pupils and I to communicate as equals in our joint pursuit to find an online learning space. An online space where all types of intelligences (Gardener, 1993) and learning styles are celebrated and individuality encouraged and harnessed. I begin to visualise how I can relate to the pupils on their own terms: not as pupil/teacher or even child/adult but equals. The type of equality I envisaged in my practice is still to be determined and I explore this in the next two chapters.

Chapter 7



My transitional reflective spiral

Table 7.0
<i>Exploratory reflective spiral : April 2006 – July 2006</i>
Transitional reflective spiral: July 2006 – August 2006
<i>Consolidating reflective spiral: September 2006 – Spring 2008</i>
In this chapter, I reflect on my transitional reflective spiral through summer break 2006 when I am planning the structure of the next stage of my research. Through reflecting on two different types of journal entries (local spirals), describing my summer term research, I am able to set out a timetable of actions for the autumn term 2006. The first entry represents the last of my personal journals with the next journal entry being uploaded onto my blog and available to a wider audience. This transitional reflective spiral is a time when I am making sense of my summer term experience through my key words framework and planning the next phase of my research. It is also a time when I am beginning to feel more confident about my research by connecting to a wider audience.

1.0 Introduction

My transitional reflective spiral represents my account of my actions and reflections from the end of July 2006 until the end of August 2006. This chapter (and outlined in Table 7.0) describes how, by reflecting on my choices and decisions, in the summer term 2006, I start on a sequence of initiatives transforming my practice and changing my perception of my research. The choices, decisions and actions I make in my transitional reflective stage are influenced by the contribution my pupil co-researchers made to my research and practice. In Chapter 6, through my exploratory reflective spiral, I describe my practice and research in the summer term 2006. My nine reflective spirals describe clearly my actions and thoughts reflecting the intensity of summer term 2006. As the term ends, I know I require a time to evaluate and act upon the initiatives emerging through the combined efforts of my small research team. My summer holiday proves to be the perfect opportunity to reflect on my choices and

actions. It is a time when I can review each choice, decision and action I made. It is a time to assess where my practice and research merge and how they are informing the initiatives, I am introducing, for teaching historical enquiry online, in the autumn term 2006, with my ten-year-old pupils.

I reflect on my summer term through two different journal entries: local spiral 10 and local spiral 11. Local spiral 10, (see Appendix 7.1 and Appendix 7.2) are the action and reflection entries from the last of my personal journals written in note form. Local spiral 11, (see Appendix 7.3) is the transcript for my blog entry representing a change in the way I am reflecting on my research and practice. The transcript is written as a summary, reflecting on my summer term, through the key words and filter framework I was using to make sense of my experiences. This summary illustrates how my research is moving towards a new outward arc of experience, as I change my writing style, in response to my Web 2.0 research, when recording my actions and reflections. In July and August 2006, I am now moving from an internal deeply personal process of recording my experiences towards an external process by acknowledging that I have to actively engage with a wider, more critical audience to stop my experiences becoming hermetically sealed. This chapter describes and explains this transitional stage in my journey.

In the transitional reflective spiral I am examining my 10 local reflective spiral and my 11 local spiral drawing them together, in what I believe are, the significant pedagogical strands which lead me to the virtual teaching space I desire. In giving my transitional spiral its name, I reflect my uncertainty about how my research and practice are evolving; I am still in transit between two points in my research. The transitional reflective spiral is organised into three sections:-

- My local reflective spiral 10a: actions July and August 2006
- My local reflective spiral 10b: reflections July and August 2006
- My local reflective spiral 11: My blog entry '*Finding a virtual teaching space*' August 2006
- Conclusion

2.0 My local reflective spiral 10a – actions

My summer holiday 2006 is a proactive time in my research and this local spiral (see Appendix 7.1) illustrates how active I am through the words I am using to describe my actions: *logged, wrote, contacted, researched, registered, discovered, reread, started, downloaded, discovered, located, published, recorded and set-up*. It is an intensely interactive time and demands a level of engagement that reawakens my sense of adventure and desire to explore the unknown. In 2006 I believe myself to be a good teacher but in the summer holiday 2006 my choices and decisions in my practice are now being influenced by my research and I am challenging what it means to me to be a ‘good teacher’.

On leaving my comfort zone I start tackling the tensions of re-aligning my personal value system with my changing practice. Challenging my good practice makes me examine deeply entrenched assumptions about my role as a teacher. For example, my core values of equality, individuality and responsibility, the heart of my belief system, and representing the essence of how I define myself as a good teacher, are now changing their meaning within my practice. Changing my practice is not a simple process. In July and August 2006 I am scared and excited but determined to overcome my reluctance to open up my research and practice to an unseen audience on the World Wide Web. On re-reading the action section of my journal entry I remember how vulnerable I feel as I begin to expose my deep ignorance by becoming a member of social networking sites in order to gain a deeper insight to the Web 2.0 environment. It is a time when I am drawing, ‘*all my thoughts together [in order to] create the autumn stage of my research*’. My action spiral is split into two parts, ‘Setting up my blog trading places’ and a ‘Timetable of action for the beginning of the autumn term 2006’.

The letter I write to the parents at the end of this action section illustrates clearly the journey I make through this local spiral. I believe I have found my virtual teaching space and the type of historical enquiry completing my research. I confidently inform the parents, ‘*this academic year I intend to continue this research with podcasting and start blogging and using wikis. These communication tools would be central to an historical enquiry I am planning. The historical enquiry I am planning will be called ‘Voices from the Past’ and will be part of the Key Stage 2 History Unit of Study ‘Britain from 1930’*

covered by the girls in Form 6. I have a deep sense of confidence that all my actions and new skills I am mastering now make it possible for me to fit my research aims into the history scheme of work through the 'Voice of the Past' enquiry.

3.0 My local reflective spiral 10 – reflections

The words that leap from the reflection section of my summer journal, (see Appendix 7.3) illustrate how deeply cathartic this time of self-challenging my 'good practice' is for me as a learner: *terrified, vulnerable, difficult, obstacle and battle*. These words give the sense of frustration at the painfully slow time it is taking me to master the technology and start my '*new e-literate life*'. My reflective entry journal illustrates my thinking, as I tackle the choices, decisions and actions I am going to have to make in order to change my practice. This is not a cosmetic change but a change that requires me to teach in a different way in a new conceptual landscape. I am teasing apart my whole practice and with that deep reflective process I am also challenging the way my value system works within my practice. Words that had given me comfort over years of teaching now became strangers, I hardly recognise them. For example, the word equality shifts its meaning as I start learning how to use the new Web 2.0 technology. I do not feel equal with the technology.

The journal entry illustrates the turmoil I experience through the language I am using to describe my experiences. The journal entry starts with words like '*terrified*', and, '*vulnerable*', moving through, '*fun*' and '*enjoy*' ending with, '*master*' and, '*control*'. This extract illustrates my fears as I embark on my summer research, '*I was not sure at the beginning of the summer holiday whether to locate my virtual teaching space on a web site or a blog site. In a classroom setting, and I define a classroom setting where I interact with the pupils in the same physical space, I know my trade. I could list all the factors that make me an expert teacher and interacting with pupils is second nature to me. I know my trade and the numerous decisions I make in a lesson are almost instinctive. I admit I am comfortable in this space and to leave it to find one that was alien was terrifying*'. On re-reading this extract I am interested in my emphasising the fact that, '*I know my trade*', through emphasising '**know**' I am reassuring myself that I am still an '*expert teacher*' even though I am leaving the '*classroom*

setting'. I acknowledge that my perception of being a 'good teacher' is deeply linked to the classroom and by leaving it I am feeling very vulnerable.

In this simple phrase, *'I know my trade'*, I am, in fact, doubting that certainty as I begin to challenge *'all those factors'* that define my expertise. Reflecting on my summer holiday actions is challenging but it helps me prepare for the autumn term by trying to identify *'all those factors'*. I start by *'teaching myself because I want to know the journey: know the pitfalls and feel what the language means. I can read the words that describe a process and I can explain what it but I don't know what it means. I can't visualise the process. My conceptual understanding of the landscape I have chosen for my next stage of my research is slowly being revealed to me'*. This new conceptual online landscape is slowly being revealed to as I begin to recognise *'all those factors'* defining me as *'knowing my trade'* and me, as the *'expert teacher'*, will either be on *'a web site or a blog site'*.

My journal entry represents my inner dialogue and through the act of writing down my deep reflections about my actions I am creating a starting point for my narrative of the last stage of my research. When re-reading this journal entry, I see how I am re-shaping my practice (because the new circumstances are challenging the old certainties) and how I am beginning to understand the learning process in general through my own process of learning. These metacognitive skills, I am developing, feed into my growing sense of what equality means to me through becoming a learner. I do not realise it, but in this spiral I am beginning to take ownership of my own learning. I am learning through my learning. For example, as a full time teacher the act of reading for my research has not been easy for me. In this transitional spiral, as I evaluate my experiences from the exploratory spiral, many of the books I have been consulting are now beginning to make sense. In the summer holiday of 2006 I am not confident how my research fits into the bigger picture and I do despair about my ability to complete my research. Extracts from the journal underline this lack of access to academia at a time when I need reassurance,

'I do feel like the remedial researcher at times'.

'Do people understand these articles the first time? I do feel it is a shame that to explain what you are feeling you have to put it into a language that needs translating into common sense'.

'Why do these researchers never give metaphors to explain difficult concepts?'

'Do the pupils feel like this when I explain things?'

This stripping away of many years of being the expert in my learning community and being reduced to a state of 'not knowing' makes me empathise with my pupils. For example, realising how I needed access to academia, at specific moments makes me realise how children may need to access to me, as their teacher, at key moments that relate to their immediate [learning] needs, rather than to any timetable or time constraints that I, as a teacher, regularly impose (or are imposed by the normal structure of schooling). In short, being suddenly placed in the position of learner, rather than teacher, enables me to re-evaluate that former position.

It becomes apparent that pressures on me are no greater than pressures that my pupils might be facing on a daily basis. This is not only salutary but also useful to my own development as a teacher. I realise that putting myself through all this angst – this set of re-evaluations – is all about becoming better at the thing that I have, in a sense, temporarily stopped doing. By making myself into a naive learner I am getting better at understanding the dynamics of learning and this understanding leads (a) to a realisation that a 'good teacher' is not what I thought it was and (b) to an appreciation of what I need to do in order to make myself more effective as a teacher. An important part of that latter appreciation is a notion that to teach effectively one has to perhaps 'stop teaching' or at least temporarily suspend one's actions as a teacher and let the learner take the lead in the teaching and learning context. The e-learning environment enables that kind of re-positioning.

It may be facile to simply assert that to be a good teacher I need to first comprehend the learner's perspective (though this may be true) – it is perhaps more important to see the e-learning context as one in which a repositioning of both teacher and pupil can take place and hence such comprehension of the pupils' perspective becomes – in the 'natural' course of the artificial environment – transparent. It is in this time of uncertainty that I begin to know what type of online learning space I want. This extract from the journal reinforces this claim, *'In a way I am glad I had to master the technology. If I was going to use a virtual space to create my classroom I had to know that space. I had to build a*

conceptual space in my mind. I had to understand at a conceptual level the affordances of each tool I was going to use. It has been a painfully slow journey and I am the first to admit I am on a very steep learning curve. I am teaching myself because I want to know the journey: know the pitfalls and feel what the language means. I can read the words that describe a process and I can explain what it but I don't know what it means. I can't visualise the process. My conceptual understanding of the landscape I have chosen for my next stage of my research is slowly being revealed to me.

As this period of time progresses, I become happier with the way my practice and researcher are dovetailing together and I view the next stage, in the autumn, with optimism. The following illustrates this, *'I was pleased with both my blog and podcast because I was now working in the domain that my virtual teaching space would be located. I was experiencing the reality: the doubts, the possibilities; the excitement. When 'locating a virtual teaching space' was published [uploaded] I felt both vulnerable and satisfied at the same time. I was beginning to feel more in control and more confident that I would be able to translate this into a workable and hopefully successful historical enquiry'*. This journal is evidence of what is an important part of my change process.

4.0 My local reflective spiral 11: My blog entry '*Locating a virtual teaching space*'

In this local spiral, (see Appendix 7.3), I reflect on my key word filter through the first blog entry called *'Locating a virtual teaching space'*. At the beginning of the summer term 2006 I am starting to use my key word framework filter as a mental magnet to make sense of my experiences. The key word framework (see Diagram 2.3 page 170) illustrates the loose structure around which my choices, decisions, and actions gravitate. In Chapter 2 I explain my thinking behind my choice of words and phrases likening them to affordances; opportunities for action in my practice and my research. It is a simple device for the plethora of information I filter as I embark on an intense term of exploring all the options available on Web 2.0. My blog is my analysis of my summer term activities through this key word filter as I am moving towards a deeper more conceptual understanding of my experiences as a practitioner and a researcher are merging.

In the key word filter I envisage a flow of information, as indicated by the arrows, informing and being informed by the experiences each key word ‘attracts’ to my attention.

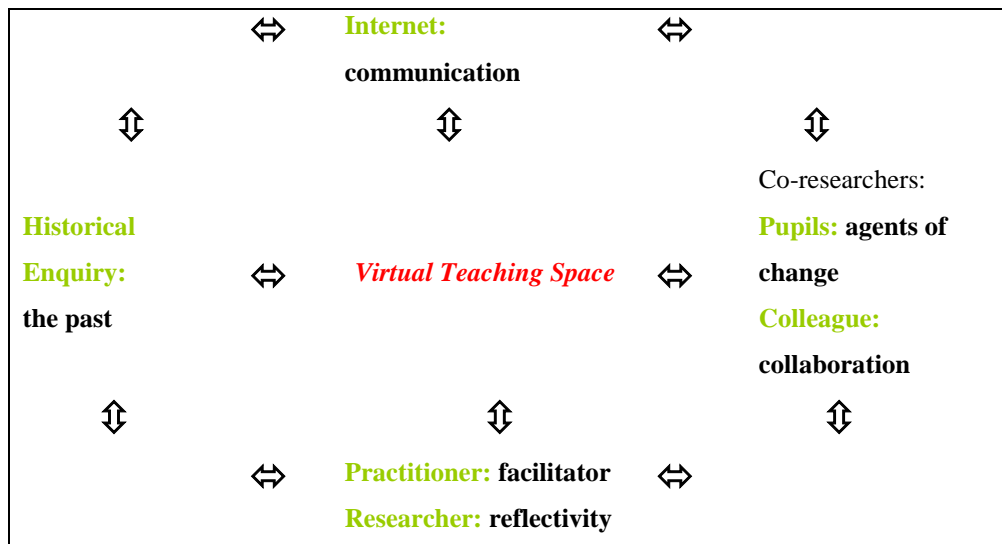


Diagram 2.3: Filtering framework: key words for the summer research

The key words, acting like a candyfloss machine, spinning draw the threads together to form a recognisable structure. The key words do not draw all the relevant data out there to be collected but the process did focus my mind with my summer journal and blog entry indicating its success as a research tool. In August 2006 I make the decision to revisit my experiences, through my key word and phrase filter, to gain a deeper insight to my actions. Emboldened by my new skill knowledge in Web 2.0 I decide to write my reflections as a blog entry.

‘*Locating a virtual teaching space*’ is written as a blog entry illustrating my movement away from writing personal journal entries and towards opening up my views to a wider more critical audience. I intend my first blog journal entry to be a summative account of my research to date through the words I choose to narrow down summer experiences into a manageable set of experiences. In retrospect, I see my choice to use the blog, instead of my journal, as the first overt step towards taking ownership of my research and, also, as a way of revealing myself to others and thus making my work and my motives more transparent. This exposure and transparency I realise are becoming key issues in my developing better understanding of me as a teacher – in a strange way through vulnerability is coming strength and I need to unpick why this should be

so. I am beginning to draw together the threads that will eventually give me the knowledge to theorise my practice. The blog entry is a good example of my thinking with its insights into an important stage in my research that eventually leads to my submission by giving my research a conceptual structure and an online location from which to explore the Web 2.0 domain.

4.1 My key words and phrases reflective filter

Pupil co-researchers

My key phrase for pupil researchers is '*agents of change*'. I start this stage of reflection in my blog entry with my pupil co-researchers because it is this aspect of the summer research that is giving me the most concern. At the start of my summer 2006 research phase, believing I have a good relationship with the pupils I teach, I reason that this same relationship will continue when the volunteer pupils interact with me as their co-researchers.

It may be that my reasoning here is false, in that I am assuming too much on their part in all of this – I have little firm evidence that the relationship is 'good', other than that I feel comfortable with it. I recognise a need to discard some of these assumptions and work up from evidence only. Here, again, I stress not only that this required effort but also a fundamental shift in my practice and the realisation that I could not have known how things really were for my pupils. To know what relationship I have with my pupils I have to put myself in the place of learner with all the exposure that that entails. For example, by having to challenge my belief, through experiencing two interviews, that I have a good relationship with my pupils in the summer term 2006 I reassess my role in controlling the knowledge and experiences my pupils can access through my facilitation. I describe this experience in Chapter 6, when after my initial meetings with my pupil volunteers I accept that the teacher/pupil dynamic is too deeply imprinted into our working relationship to change with words and sympathetic body language. I note that, '*at the beginning I was not sure how to be equal with a child but by the end of this cycle I am beginning to realise that equality is a term that requires deeper thought on my part*'. An important part of this submission is my changing perception of what I had thought of as my core value of 'equality'. It is evident I am not sure how to be equal with my pupil but

I am beginning to unpick this core value in the spiral when I am discussing my vulnerability and the connection I believe this insight gives me to my pupils.

I try, through my blog entry, to tease out what I mean and how I hope to achieve equality, *'This equality would not be achieved in the physical space of the school. It had to start with my own perception of the role of the pupils in my research and as co-researchers. The affordance key phrase 'agents of change' was central to this process.*

If I wanted the pupils to be co-researchers I had to see their input to be equal to mine. I had to value their contributions and make no judgements on where or when it happened. I had to listen, observe and make notes. I knew what I was looking for would not be found in formal lessons, although I did not entirely exclude them, but in those informal times when the pupils were free to explore and experiment on their own.'

On re-reading this part of the extract- *'I had to see [the pupils] input to be equal to mine. I had to value their contributions and make no judgements on where or when it happened'*- I am describing how I can be equal, with my pupils, by shining a light on what I am not doing in my practice in the summer 2006. This extract is a response to my belief that my perception of being a good teacher is being challenged. On reflection, I acknowledge that this response is just my view and accept that my pupils may not view our relationship the same way. I see, *'their input as equal to mine'* but do not value their contributions and make judgements on what they did contribute when it did not fit into my view of my research. Stopping and truly listening to my pupils is something that seems almost counter intuitive to me as a teacher, the pupils listen to me and I listen to their answers. It is only when I realise just how unlike a true listener I am behaving that I begin to see the way to achieve what I want: my pupils gaining some sense of equality with me in this learning online domain. I must unlearn some of the 'intuitive behaviours' that I have developed over time by becoming less like a teacher-learner and more like a learner-teacher.

Throughout the summer term I begin to understand how I have to change if I am going to relate to the pupils on their own terms. To start I begin by deconstructing my understanding of the word 'control' and begin to see myself,

less as the holder of knowledge and the provider of all things, and move towards being, a participant in our venture. I observe that my pupil co-researchers researchers, in their own way, are using their own criteria. I acknowledge the key phrase *agents of change*, as a focus to my observation when working with the pupils, makes me sensitive to their choices, decisions and actions and their capability to change my practice. For example, in this short extract I describe clearly how my pupils are changing my practice and influencing my research, *'[the pupils] change my focus and direct me on the correct path. I did not use the word correct lightly. I was so determined at the beginning to have the pupils researching wikis but they were drawn to the communication tool of audacity and podcasting and would not leave it. I was continually drawn back by the pupils' fascination for voicing their opinions until I realised what they were saying to me. Childhood is all about children listening to others and what I just couldn't see was their deep need to be listened to as equals'*. It is only on reflection that I realise my pupils are changing me and my perception of my research and giving me another facet on the changing meaning of my core value of equality, *'listened to as equals'*. The choices, decisions and actions I make in my transitional reflective stage are influenced by the contribution my pupil co-researchers made to my research and practice.

Staff co-researchers

Collaboration is the key word I chose for my staff co-researcher, a word I select with care, because I want BD to discuss my choices, actions and decisions and BD does play a very big part of my summer research. My blog extract illustrates how I feel about my staff co-researcher, *'we both have the same vision and enthusiasm for teaching and ICT. This deep connection meant that I felt comfortable discussing all my ideas without the fear of having to defend or explain. It was not because I was afraid to defend or explain but rather I wanted the freedom to explore, make mistakes and have someone who understood that joy and frustration of trying to understand the ever changing technology found on the Internet. It is very comforting to have someone to 'play' with'*. On re-reading this extract I see I am defining my relationship with my colleague as someone to, *'discuss my ideas without the fear of having to defend or explain'*. By controlling *'my ideas'*, keeping them safe from scrutiny I am still having issues about being a participant in a joint venture. I am having the same issue

with BD as I am having with my pupils; I want to control my research. It is only in my transitional spiral I begin to realise how important BD becomes to me as we embark on a series of initiatives, reshaping the ICT department as we cascade new skills throughout the curriculum.

I reflect that the relationship I start as a sounding board for my research and changing practice needs clarifying so I can understand the links that make our collaboration work so successful, as this extract illustrates, *'The informality of the collaboration does not mean that it did not have a strong structure. This autumn I will focus on clarifying my relationship with my staff co-researcher so that I can understand the links that make this collaboration work so well.'* The support BD gives me makes many of my changes possible, she did this by adopting the new initiatives we researched, into her own teaching practice, therefore, giving me a valuable insight into how these initiatives become absorbed in a practice. For example, the summer term 2006 we are both teaching ICT using a class expert when exploring new technology and software. A class expert is a pupil who masters the new software or technology first then becomes the 'expert' and instructs the rest of the class, including the teachers, using their new found knowledge to inform the 'novice' users. This illustrates that in sharing knowledge with BD I am learning how to distribute the access to that knowledge and this is making me feel less vulnerable; it is an important insight.

Practitioner /Researcher

The key words I choose, for myself as the practitioner, are *facilitator* and for the researcher *reflectivity*. It is a time of deep inner debate for me, as this extract illustrates, *'The practitioner who is also a researcher is in the constant mental state of having multiple personalities. I am constantly talking to myself: inner conversation making you appear absent minded or speaking aloud make you appear as though senility has set in early. I have had to make a real effort to identify the teacher and the researcher in my mind. I am observing myself observing myself. Am I compromising my research by knowing that I am observing myself teaching and researching? It is important to establish the characteristics of the relationship. The teacher in me is the practical personality in this relationship. I am the expert in all that is involved in teaching. I know my*

domain and the personality the researcher will use to give advice on all things educational'.

In 2006 I find the key word facilitator useful but I am never quite sure which key word I can use encompassing me observing myself. An internal debate has me asking the questions, *'Am I compromising my research by knowing that I am observing myself teaching and researching?'* I rationalise that the practitioner will be the practical personality in the relationship and it is the practitioner's responsibility to facilitate changes in my practice. The practitioner facilitates the changes but it is the researcher who reflects and shows the way to the next stage. On re-reading this extract from my blog, *'The teacher in me is the practical personality in this relationship. I am the expert in all that is involved in teaching'*. *'I am the expert in all that is involved in teaching'* is such an arrogant statement but it is this deep belief that is blinding me to understanding my practice; a practice that is so entrenched in practical routines, tried and tested over years of teaching, with the power to reflect meaningfully on those routines squeezed out. I assume in 2006 that my good practice translates into good teaching and my perception of being a good teacher; it is a self congratulatory reflective loop. My certainty that *'I know my domain and the personality the researcher will use to give advice on all things educational'* has me even controlling knowledge access to the researcher.

In Chapter 4 I describe my role as teacher in terms of splendid isolation and this embracing of a wider community is a real challenge to me. I am not in the habit of changing my perception of my practice, a practice that defines me, not only as a practitioner, but as a person. In re-examining my practice through my values I am reassessing who I am as a person and it is proving to be a difficult process. The words validating my research- equality, individuality and responsibility- are chosen because I believe these three values are central to defining my 'good practice'. Throughout the summer of 2006 my perception of what these words mean, in my practice, starts to change as I use them, as a reference point, when working with my pupils and BD as we introduce and explore the new Web 2.0 technology. I am not only changing my practice, I am now starting to change my perception of who I am as a person in that practice.

History

The *past* is the key word I chose, to help me organise my thoughts about the subject history, when exploring online teaching spaces. The word *past* represents, to me, the perfect affordance word because it allows my thinking to encompass all aspects of history. In Chapter 6 I describe the experiences leading me to realise the pupils' fascination with voicing their own opinions and listening to other people's opinions. It is this observation that sets me on a chain of decisions and actions that centres my autumn research on the 'Voices from the Past' investigation. I reason to myself that it makes a perfect historical enquiry as it is based on what the pupils want: listening to other people's views.

This extract reflects my desire to facilitate my pupils' experiences into my research, *'Over the term it became very obvious that the pupils were fascinated by voicing their own opinions and to listen to other people's opinions. I was amazed by the intensity of the pupils desire to communicate. It was in a way humbling to listen to the pupils in the recording sessions. The facilitator in me [made me] created opportunities to explore this route to the Internet and the researcher reflected on what the actions produced. The idea for 'Voices from the past' came from the pupils and I could see the possibilities'*. The choices, decisions and actions I make in my transitional reflective stage are deeply influenced by my pupils' interpretations of the word *past* and how we investigate the subject in autumn 2006.

Internet

The Internet key word *communication* is generic enough to allow me to explore the domain without too many preconceived idea. My preliminary research is based on my premise that the Internet is a large search machine and this is changing over the summer 2006. In July and August I delve into the inner workings of the Internet and, as my journal indicates, I start the process nervous and vulnerable and finish confident and skilled in using a variety of Web 2.0 tools. This extract illustrates the emotional journey I make in this transitional spiral, *'Learning a new language would have been easier. I had very few cultural references and people I talked to glazed over. The sense of achievement, as I mastered each piece of technology: blogging, podcasting, and publishing, was indescribable. I felt empowered and started the new term with a*

confidence that influenced my whole attitude to teaching. I am not worried about perceived outcomes; there is no success/ failure scenario. It is a process of how I, a teacher, introduces and uses a radically different approach to teaching history through a medium that has yet to reveal its true potential'. The word communication illustrates how my key word works, as an affordance, by giving me the potential for action, with my actions linking to my individual perception of what I think the Internet offers. For example, I see the potential for communicating on the Internet through podcasting, online authoring and blogging whereas BD sees the potential for communicating through e-mailing and working on maths web sites. This individuality of access to the Internet is an important change I have to allow in my practice.

In my 'Final Reflection' section, in my blog journal entry, I reflect on the way I am recording my thoughts on *'the reality of life as a teacher/ researcher'* life. I conclude, *'it was fragmented'* and am having an inner debate about *'how my autumn narrative [will] evolve*. I realise *'I have not yet achieved a satisfactory recording schedule where I [was] recording all my practical actions in any depth'* and do not have the time to create *'a detailed set of notes that record a 'stream of consciousness' as this would be been impractical'*. I consider that *'on the other hand, by selecting what I recorded I [am] making a judgement of what I considered research worthy'*. I am pleased with way *'the key affordance words [have become] a way of filtering out the cacophony of 'noise' that made up my teaching*. I decide to continue using the key word framework as a loose conceptual framework.

Re-reading these final reflections on my blog I now see the choice to write on the blog leads me to the decision to start writing a more coherent and accessible account of my research journal. It is from this point onwards I record my research and changing practice through articles, presentations, workshops and training sessions and this Chapter 8 critically examines my changing practice and research narratives through these different ways of opening my research to a wider audience.

5.0 Conclusion

July and August 2006 is a very proactive time in my research and the action part of my local spiral illustrates show how active through my use of the words: *logged, wrote, contacted, researched, registered, discovered, reread, started, downloaded, discovered, located, published, recorded and set-up*. It is interesting to note my last entry in my personal journal is to *'see if I have enough data to write meaningful articles for the appropriate journals'*. In the next chapter through articles, presentations, workshops and training session I critically examine why my *'Voices from the Past'* is not successful on the *'Trading Talents'* blog and why eventually I am drawn to the online authoring site of a wiki space.

I do despair about my ability to complete my research and gain the knowledge and skill to translate my experiences into a living theory. *'Do people understand these articles the first time?'* I ask myself and muse that *'it is a shame that to explain what you are feeling you have to put it into a language that needs translating into common sense'*. I know in this transitional spiral I am beginning to gain access to academic language and translate it into *'common sense'* but I am still uneasy that the audiences, I want to influence, will not connect with my experiences because my descriptions and explanations use language that does not have relevance to their practice.

I ask myself, *'Why do these researchers never give metaphors to explain difficult concepts?'* I am a visual learner and metaphors are an important way I access and understand new knowledge. I know my learning style is inhibiting the way I am absorbing academic text and I acknowledge that the feeling of alienation and vulnerability I am experiencing is probably common to all learners, *'Do the pupils feel like this when I explain things?'* Even though I do not realise it in the summer of 2006 I am on the first path to understanding the word equality through experiencing the vulnerability of being a learner and the word responsibility through challenging the working relationship I have with my pupils. The pupils are experiencing what it is like to be part of the learning process albeit at different stages in the learning. Attending a Futurelab conference, in October 2008, I have another moment of epiphany when I realised I am, in fact, a partner in the process of learning, where the pupils and I

are learning partners at different stages of that process. This insight was the clarification, of the relationship with my pupils I had been striving to gain through my research and changing practice in the summer of 2008.

The next chapter continues my research narrative and now follows my journey towards developing a community of practices. It narrates the time when my research and practice are beginning to work in harmony and I am able to theorise my practice, through my descriptions and my explanations to different audiences, into a living theory that claims my value system is influencing my choices, decisions and action thus validating my claim of creating new knowledge.

Chapter 8



My consolidating reflective spiral

Table 8.0
<i>Exploratory reflective spiral : April 2006 – July 2006</i>
<i>Transitional reflective spiral: July 2006 – August 2007</i>
Consolidating reflective spiral: September 2006 – April 2008
In the chapter I narrate my story from September 2006 to April 2008, through describing in different types of media, how my research is becoming my practice and my practice is becoming my research. In connecting with a wider audience, I am now articulating how the changes in my practices transform my perception of my learning process from a tacit experience to one that is explicit through my experience of developing a community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils.

1.0 Introduction

In this chapter (and outlined in Table 8.0) I am reflecting on the journey I make between the autumn of 2006 until the spring of 2008. This consolidating spiral describes how the choices and decisions, I make in the summer term and the summer holiday of 2006, set me on a sequence of actions, which ultimately transform my practice. This time in my research is so exciting to me because, for the first time in decades, I experience the real joy of being part of the learning process. In taking ownership of my own learning, I am identifying the ‘living contradictions’ in my practice, which initiates my journey. It is through this process of challenging my fundamental belief system by critically examining my core values- equality, individuality, and responsibility- that I am able to reassess and redefine my perception of my practice. This changing perception is part of the slow process of transformation my research is having on my practice.

In late 2006 and early 2007, I now want to tell everybody the story of my experiences but the reality of working, as a full time teaching Deputy Head, does restrict the dissemination of my research. Despite the main constraint of time I still *'aim to influence others people learning in a way that they could decide for themselves how they wished to proceed with their enquiries as they ask 'How do I improve what I am doing?'* (Whitehead and McNiff 2006: 117) It is never my intention to *'change people or their circumstances [but believe] people should make up their own mind'* (Ibid: 117). Through my actions in the consolidating spiral I intend to *'exercise influence in an educational way by offering ideas develop insights about the nature of their own ideas and practices and offering resources that would help them create their own way forward'* (Ibid: 117). I am, at this stage of my research and practice, writing the story of how I incorporate Web 2.0 technology into my practice, with the intention of influencing my intended audience by explaining, through my descriptions, the catalytic effect it has on me as the practitioner. In writing my story, I am opening up my practice to a wider more critical discussion.

Shulman and Shulman (2004) influence my thinking by giving me a diagrammatic representation of how I visualise my research story spreading and informing different audiences. In Diagram 8.1, I am at the centre of the diagram,

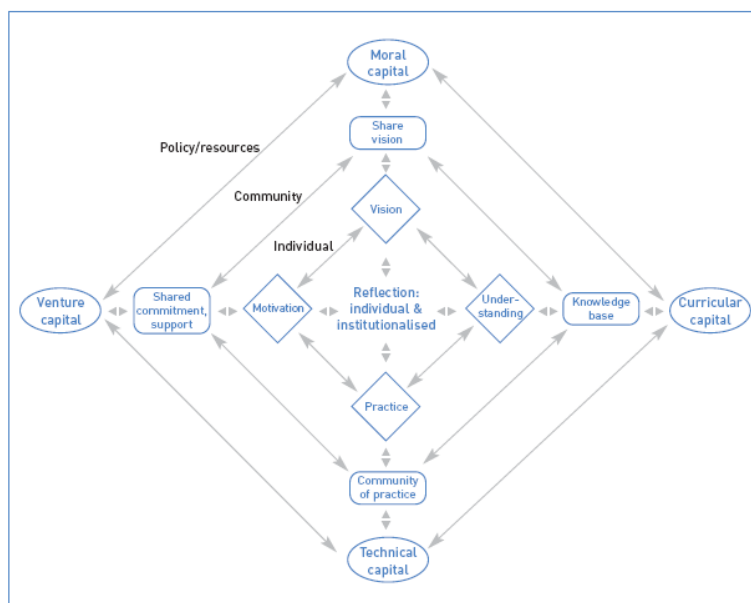


Diagram 8.1 Levels of analysis: individual, community and policy (Taken from Shulman and Shulman (2004:268)

the practitioner, reflecting on my practice. I reflect on my practice because I have a vision and understanding of why I want to change my practice and the motivation to achieve that change. I communicated my story to the wider community through my articles, presentations, workshops, and wiki work where I hope to influence different audiences with my descriptions and explanations. Finally, my story becomes one of many stories that will influence the policy makers. This diagram illustrates how my story influences a whole range of audiences. I make the decision to deliver my story through many media; setting up a wiki that is accessible to the world, writing articles for various publications, organising workshops, training days and writing a paper for a conference.

My research is now becoming my practice and my practice is now becoming my research. My consolidating spiral examines how I continue my transformation, through the process of learning how to theorise my practice. In using my descriptions and my explanations, of my experiences, I re-evaluate my perception of what my key values actually mean to me in my practice. I agree with Whitehead and McNiff that the stories I am embedding in my articles, workshops, and wikis are not only accounts of my actions but also accounts of my learning. These accounts show how I am intervening in my learning and how my learning influences my practices. My stories of learning emerging in this phase of my research become my way of theorising my practice and therefore articulate my own living educational theory. The accumulations of my stories, told in this chapter, are significant in that they comprise a body of knowledge that will have future implications for influencing new directions in educational research.

My consolidating spiral becomes a time when I am examining deeply how I can be equal to my pupils. I believe I have found a meaning of equality through my insight that we are both learners, albeit at different stages of a life long learning process, but both experiencing the vulnerability of 'not knowing' when tackling the unknown. I accept that I have access to more knowledge than the pupils do and because of this inequality of access, my pupils perceive me as the holder of knowledge and not as a learner like themselves. This perceived imbalance of

access to knowledge creates an inequality I am hoping to address as my changing practice starts working in harmony with my value system.

The consolidating spiral represents a time when I gain ownership of my learning through the transformative process of being part of a community of practices. Wenger (2004) states that learning transform who we are and what we can do. Learning is not just an accumulation of skills and information but a process of becoming a certain person and that, '*our identities are rich and complex because they are produced within rich and complex sets of relations of practice*' (Ibid: 162). In changing my practice, I am changing my identity. My research journey has transformed me into a certain person, a person I would not have become if I had decided to stop my professional development at my MA, and through this research experience and its associated learning process, I transform. Only in the consolidating spiral do I glimpse the results on my research journey and my new identity. Wenger expands this idea of identity as an experience and in this chapter I will tease out through my descriptions and explanations how I gain ownership of my own identity through my transformation as a learner.

In this chapter, I narrate the different ways in which I explain and describe my experiences through different media to different audiences. I visualise the different ways I address different audiences as a type of local spiral but rather than number them I name them according to the media I am discussing. Even though my story is the same, the different media suggest a different type of audience and subsequently this dictates the choices and decisions I make in the way I view and present my research. Table 8.1, (see page 184), covers a period from the autumn term of 2006 to the autumn term of 2008 and illustrates the chronological sequence of my output in this period. The output consists of all my articles I wrote, training sessions I set up, presentations I gave, wikis I set up and documentation referring to my practice.

Table 8.1	Consolidating spiral
Autumn 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the caedemon wiki space for Form 6 (2006-2007)
Spring 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blogs Wikis and Podcasting update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry: Satips • Teaching is such an adventure: Computer Education (Naace) • Making history on blogs, wikis and podcasts: E-learning Today • Postgraduate SSASHI conference: The wonderful world of wiki • OFSTED report for the ICT department in my school • Uploaded my PowerPoint presentations onto Slideshare
Summer 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't you get my blog miss? Embedding ICT in historical Enquiry: Computer Education (Naace)
Autumn 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the whitby wiki space for Form 6 (2007-2008) • Teaching History in the Wonderful World of Wikis: Satips • Autumn 2007: Wiki workshop: a Satips training session
Spring 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT in school training session: Creating a safe caring online community of practice:
Autumn 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up <i>sthilda</i> wiki for Form 6 (2008- 2009) • Attended Futurelab's <i>Learner Voice</i> conference

When reflecting on my experiences, I consider narrating my experiences of disseminating my work to the wider world chronologically but this proves difficult because in addressing different audiences through different media my story now becomes a story of my relationship with my audience. I therefore make the decision to view my actions through the media I use to describe and analyse my experiences. Table 8.2 (see page 185) lists my output through the media and names the types of audiences I am addressing.

Table 8.2	Local spirals: media and audiences
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Media	Audience
Print/pdf files	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blogs, wikis and podcasting ... the way forward <i>satips</i> • Blogs Wikis and Podcasting update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry: <i>satips</i> • Teaching History in the Wonderful World of Wikis: <i>satips</i> • Teaching is such an adventure: Computer Education (Naace) • Didn't you get my blog miss? Embedding ICT in historical Enquiry: Computer Education (Naace) • Making history on blogs, wikis and podcasts: E-learning Today 	<p>Local practitioners and myself</p> <p>Junior school teachers</p> <p>National ICT teaching community</p> <p>Wider educational and community</p>
Web 2.0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the caedemon wiki space for Form 6 (2006- 2007) • Set up the <i>whitby</i> wiki space for Form 6 (2007- 2008) • Uploaded my PowerPoint research presentations onto the networking website SlideShare 	<p>Form 6, parents and the world wide web</p> <p>The world wide web</p>
Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn 2007: Wiki workshop: a Satips training session • Spring 2008: A living theory presentation to the University PhD researchers • Spring 2008 ICT in school training sessions: Creating a safe caring online community of practice: • Spring 2007 OFSTED report for the ICT department in my school 	<p>Local ICT teachers</p> <p>PhD researchers</p> <p>The school community</p> <p>The school community, parents, educationalist and government agencies</p>
Conferences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2007 Postgraduate SSASHI conference: The wonderful world of wiki 	<p>Academic</p>

When unpacking each of my media reflective spirals, I am, through the process of explaining and describing:

- defining my identity through my practice,
- identifying the transformational nature of my descriptions and explanations of my practice,
- designing a space for the learning process to flourish,

- developing a community of practices, and
- exploring my influence on other people

I also link my experiences in these local media spirals to Bruner’s (1999) universal realities and Chase’s (2005) five analytical lenses in order to authenticate my narration as transformational, giving my stories validity, legitimacy, and moral authority.

2.0 Media: Print/pdf¹ files

I start the autumn term 2006 with a great deal of anticipation and excitement. In the exploratory and transitional spirals I had been very proactive but it was now the time ‘*to engage in the complex form of pedagogical and organisational practices needed to transform my vision into a functioning pragmatic reality*’ (Shulman and Shulman 2004: 259). I now want to share my experiences.

In Table 8.3 below, I divide and colour code into three strands my print and pdf articles depending on my intended audiences.

Table 8.3: Print/pdf files	Audience
<p>1. Blogs, wikis and podcasting ... the way forward <i>satips</i> (Porthouse, 2006)</p>	<p>Local practitioners and myself</p>
<p>2. Blogs Wikis and Podcasting...an update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry: <i>satips</i> (Porthouse, 2007a)</p> <p>3. Teaching History in the Wonderful World of Wikis: <i>satips</i> (Porthouse, 2007b)</p>	<p>Local: Prep school ICT teachers</p>
<p>1. Teaching is such an adventure: Computer Education (Porthouse, 2007c)</p> <p>2. Didn’t you get my blog miss? Embedding ICT in historical Enquiry: Computer Education (Porthouse, 2007d)</p>	<p>National: ICT teaching community</p>
<p>1. Making history on blogs, wikis and podcasts: E-learning Today (Porthouse, 2007e)</p>	<p>The wider educational and community</p>

¹ Pdf are the initials for the term portable document format and are used on web sites for document to be downloaded or viewed in situ.

I have colour coded the titles to reinforce the point that although the articles are describing the same sequence of events the different audiences I am addressing will shape the way I view those experiences.

2.1 My *satips* articles

Table 8.4 <i>satips</i> articles	Audience
<p>1. Blogs, wikis and podcasting ... the way forward</p> <p>2. Blogs Wikis and Podcasting... an update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry: Satips</p> <p>3. Teaching History in the Wonderful World of Wikis: Satips</p>	<p>Local: Prep school ICT teachers</p>

These two publications represent the last two articles in a trilogy I wrote for *satips*² my local support and training publication. The first article in the trilogy I title, *Blogs, Wikis and Podcasting... the way forward*, written in the summer term 2006; it describes my hopes, fears and reasons for exploring Web 2.0 with the intention of incorporating the affordances of this new domain, into my practice. I discuss this article in my exploratory spiral but it is important for my narrative to revisit this article in the context of the next two articles I write for *satips*. This trilogy of articles charts my thinking through my three main reflective spirals and subsequently presents an overview of my practice and research from the summer of 2006 to the autumn of 2007.

On reflection, I can see that when I am writing this article I am not thinking about an audience. I just want to tell my story to someone who might be interested in my experiences and '*get into the habit of writing articles*'. In the summer of 2006 I am nervous about opening up my experiences to a wider audience and do not have confidence in my research and practice and the way it is evolving and this first article reflects this uncertainty. I write the next two articles with one aim that I have a responsibility to myself, my pupils and my colleagues to complete the story I started and I see the act of writing down my experiences as an important element of a retrospective meaning-making process.

² **satips**: society of assistants teaching in preparatory schools

It is a process where my use of language and the structure set in my narrative will shape and order my experiences enabling me to go forward.

Table 8.5 below provides a brief outline of the story I narrate through the three articles.

Table 8.5	Brief synopsis of the three <i>satips</i> articles
	<p>In April 2006, I wrote the first article as a detailed description of my research aims for the following months. To support the aims I drew together knowledge from my early research and constructed a conceptual platform to justify the next phase. I was not sure which Internet facility would advance my research but had narrowed it down to blogs, wikis, and podcasting.</p> <p>The next article was written in the late autumn but published in the spring of 2007 and continues the story. In the September of 2006 I initiated a Form 6 historical enquiry called '<i>Voices from the Past</i>' where grandparents and parents were interviewed about their youth. I set up a blog called <i>trading talents</i> in order to discuss the questions we would ask the volunteers. The blog proved difficult so I set up a wiki space called <i>caedemon</i>. The wiki proved more successful and it was from this wiki space my research moved forward.</p> <p>The last article was written after a graduate conference at my university in April 2007 and its contents was a précised version of the paper I presented. This article details in depth how my research and practice had flourished in the <i>caedemon</i> wiki space and in using pupil examples from the wiki I was able to claim I had found my online community of practices, which offered collaborative and individual opportunities for the pupils to create their own personalised pathways to learning.</p>

I chose to examine these three *satips* articles first because they describe succinctly my research story from April 2006 to April 2007. The brevity of my descriptions and explanations, in these articles, reduce my experiences to a set of key words and phrases. Since the summer 2006, I am using key words and phrases, as a mental device, to filter out the white noise of life, so I am able to focus on the key elements I chose to explore in my research and my practice. In my transitional spiral, I revisit the filter to help me make sense of my research and my practice in the summer 2006. What I do not realise, but is clearly evident when reflecting on my three articles, is that through the lens of the key word and phrases filter device, my narrator's voice changes through the course of the three articles. I begin this phase seeing my research as an action adventure set within my school over one year. I accept that, as the narrator, I must have a story that breaches a canonical script and is grounded in time and actions (Bruner,

1999) but I also embrace Chase's (2005) view that my narrative convey verbal action because *'narrators' explain, entertain, inform, defend, complain, and confirm or challenge the status quo. Whatever the particular action, when someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality. When researchers treat narration as actively creative in this way, they emphasize the narrator's voice.* (Ibid: 567).

My last article for *satips* is shaped by the audience to whom I am addressing my thoughts; my *'narrative [has now become] a joint production of narrator and listener'* (Chase 2005: 657). Reflecting on these articles, I am coming to an understanding that my communication, with my audience, involves a communicator with specific intent and a receiver with a set disposition and the communication between the two having to be relevant and dynamic. I accept that this understanding is not new but here I am coming to realise its significance (and the possibilities inherent in it) in relation to my own teaching in its broadest term as well as to my actions and inactions within the specific e-learning context discussed in this submission. In short, I am becoming sensitive to the dynamic connection between the narrator and listener and beginning to view the relationship as being symbiotic where the narrator and listener are dependent on each other to keep the story relevant and dynamic. This insight is one that has an impact on how I now view my pupils; as an audience with a symbiotic relationship with the teacher to keep the communication between the two relevant and dynamic.

2.1a Finding my narrator's voice

In Table 8.6, (see page 190), the key words and phrases reveal how my use of words and phrases changes over the period April 2006 until April 2007.

Table 8.6	My satips articles: key words and phrases
	Blogs Wikis and Podcasting... the way forward
	Intriguing departure, exciting place, translating my enthusiasm, practical strategies, encourage, interesting, see possibilities, mastered, possibilities are endless, involve the pupils, gain their perception, potentially useful teaching tool, discovered, multiliteracies, non linear narrative environment, navigation can be problematic, making numerous decisions, make sense of experiences, make sense of the virtual world, interactive textbook, fluidity, dynamic nature of creating and altering information, wonderful chance for teachers, empower the pupils
	Blogs Wikis and Podcasting update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry
	Embedding, mastering, venture, challenge, focus, intrigued, educational magnet, meaningful, communication tool, educational aims, objectives, steep learning curve, underpin, historical enquiry, investigate, challenge, create, invited, relaxed, conversational, structure, thinking, collaborative authoring tool, personal knowledge base, empowered, contributions, level of investigation,
	Teaching History in the Wonderful World of Wikis
	Personalised learning space, individual pathways as learners, collaborative knowledge base, online authoring tool, opportunity to add, edit and delete content, create collaborative work, teachers and pupils learn together, closed community, design features of the wiki, critical and analytical skills of the historian, maelstrom of information, organising and managing information, online location for a collaborative conversation, resources that are multi-disciplinary and connected to the wider world, knowledge embedded in the wiki, emerging learning community, create new ways of learning, visualise it as a virtual classroom, scaffolding mechanism, personalised home page, ownership of their own research, visualisation of the familiar, personalised learning space, individual learning pathways, personalised network of information,

In describing my research adventure, I reveal a journey of change. In my first article, *Blogs Wikis and Podcasting... the way forward*, I have put the key words and phrases in italics and split them into three categories describing my sense of what I am experiencing in my research and changing practice at the time I am writing the article-

A sense of adventure: *intriguing departure, an exciting place, possibilities are endless, wonderful chance for teachers*

A sense of trepidation: *navigation can be problematic, translating my enthusiasm into practical strategies, make sense of the virtual world, making numerous decisions, make sense of experiences, see the possibilities, potentially useful teaching tool, gain their perception, creating simple narratives.*

A sense of hope: *involve the pupils, empower the pupils, dynamic nature of creating and altering information, mastered, discovered.*

My narrator's voice in this first article has, for me, an undercurrent of excitement. The sense of adventure is evident in the words I use to start my story: *exciting place* and *possibilities are endless* are two examples illustrating my thinking at the time. I admit I am excited after three years of being unhappy in my research; I believe that I have found the right path and I am ready for an adventure. The sense of trepidation and vulnerability I feel is evident in the actions I expect I have to initiate and understand. I believe the key phrase in the first article is, *'make sense'*. I acknowledge that I do not fully understand the world I am expecting to enter but know enough about my 'way forward' to realise that I have to set in place key strategies that will translate my enthusiasm into practical actions. For example, in this extract from local spiral 1 (see Appendix 6.1) I am planning a strategy to *'includ[e] the pupils, as co-researchers in the cyclical reflection process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on the most effective way to use the Internet'* so I can create simple narratives that will help me when exploring the Web 2.0 environment. A strategy that I hope will lead me to *'see possibilities'*, such as *'the pupils publishing on the web work they had researched'* (see Appendix 6.2). The key strategies I hope will help me *'make sense'* of how the multiliteracies function in a non-linear virtual environment and I describe this part of my journey in Chapter 6 through my reflective local spirals. This sense of trepidation does not dampen my enthusiasm; I believe the narrator's voice in this article has a real sense of hope with key phrases such as: *'empower the pupils'*, *'dynamic nature of creating'* and *'altering information'* and *'mastered'* illustrating where I am expecting my journey to end. This article is an accurate description of me as a practitioner reflecting on my new research aims in April 2006. I may have written this article for an audience of ICT teachers but on reflection now believe 'I' am the audience with whom 'I' am addressing and interacting. This first article is an example of the type of inner dialogue I was having in 2006; I am the narrator and the audience challenging my first actions towards change through an emotional debate ensuring I am emotionally robust enough to support all future changes I will encounter. In essence, I am convincing myself by using words that have power over me. In the second article *Blogs Wikis and Podcasting update: Embedding ICT in historical enquiry*, the key words and phrases change; they become more active.

There is a danger, in what I have written above, with me as author and as audience, that my ‘communication’ might become circular and hermetically sealed. To move forward I need to recognise the strength in the position I am beginning to take but also retain the reality that this inner dialogue speaks to my apparent audience as well as to me. In short, inner dialogue needs to be overt in an accessible way if it is to be useful to others than myself. This is true of my teaching also – the internal dialogue may be invaluable but it has to translate into communicated content that has relevance for my pupils.

My narrator’s voice in this article becomes more confident through my use of the action words.

A sense of action: *Embedding, mastering, venture, challenge, focus, intrigued, meaningful, underpin, investigate, challenge, create, invited, relaxed, thinking, empowered, contributions,*

A sense of purpose: *educational aims, educational magnet, communication tool, steep learning curve, historical enquiry, conversational, collaborative authoring tool, personal knowledge base, level of investigation.*

The action words indicate my growing confidence in my research and illustrate how this confidence is influencing my practice. My sense of purpose comes through the tight group of words. In fact, I use the phrase, ‘*educational magnet*’, which clearly highlights my confidence that my research is on the right track and all the threads of my early and current research are being drawn together into a meaningful construct.

In the third and last article in this trilogy, *Teaching History in the Wonderful World of Wikis*, my narrator’s voice is changing, becoming confident, more informed. I am now trying to open out my story to both an academic and non-academic audience. My narrator’s voice reflects: a sense in the ownership in the knowledge that is now weaving through my story and being in the right place at the right time. The key words and phrases describe my thoughts at this time.

A sense of being in the right place: *personalised learning space, individual pathways as learners, collaborative knowledge base, an online authoring tool, opportunity to add, edit and delete content, create collaborative work, teachers and*

pupils learn together, closed community, design features of the wiki, critical and analytical skills of the historian, maelstrom of information, organising and managing information, online location for a collaborative conversation, resources that are multi-disciplinary and connected to the wider world, knowledge embedded in the wiki, emerging learning community, create new ways of learning, visualise it as a virtual classroom, scaffolding mechanism, personalised home page, ownership of their own research, visualisation of the familiar, personalised learning space, individual learning pathways, personalised network of information,

A sense of ownership: *I am going to explain, for those who do not know*

My sense of being in the right place is clearly illustrated in the plethora of phrases I use, in describing the wiki space. These phrases become a comprehensive list of the affordances the wiki offers.

This list represents my joy and pleasure, through the narrator's voice, in pointing out the beauty of the landscape where my adventure is taking place. The sense of ownership comes through in the first few sentences in the article with, '*I am going to explain*', and '*for those who do not know*'. The last article in the trilogy does not herald the end of my journey but it does signpost the reader to a more knowledgeable and therefore more powerful story through the narrator's change of words and phrases. I view these three articles as powerful evidence of how I change between April 2006 and April 2007. In my articles, my perception, or my sense of where I am within my research changes, I gain confidence and the key words and phrases I use reflecting this confidence. I grouped these key words and phrases around a particular sense because it is at this emotional level I describe the way I am feeling as my research journey progresses through 2006 through 2007 and into 2008 :

1. A sense of adventure
2. A sense of trepidation
3. A sense of hope
4. A sense of action
5. A sense of purpose
6. A sense of being in the right place
7. A sense of ownership

These three articles illustrate the stages I experience, to gain a sense of ownership of my research, through the action of narrating my changes in my practice to an audience. The act of telling my story enables me to see through the words I use to describe and explain my experiences of how my emotions connect to the change process. In reflecting on my trilogy of articles, I can now see each article locates me in different places at different times on my research journey with the key phrases and key word the only evidence of my emotions when I am in those places.

My emotions play an important part in understanding my changing practice because they influence my choices, my decisions, and my actions, as, either a constraint or, a reaction to a possible change. This emotional connection to my changing practice will be different for other practitioners but, in using my narrator’s voice, I can only construct my reality. What my audience takes from my stories is shaped by my perception of that audience I am addressing, and it may or may not influence.

2.2 My *Computer Education* and *e-learning* magazine articles

I am delighted on the publication of my first *satips* article. It is my first published article and, although at the time, I do not recognise the small change in me, now on reflection, I accept this is the first step in the long process of me taking ownership of my research by acknowledging, to a wider audience, my unique voice within that process. At the beginning, I just want to tell the world my research story. This determination to spread my experiences leads me to write two articles to Naace³ and one to the education magazine, *e-learning*.

Table 8.7 <i>Computer Education</i> and <i>e-learning</i> articles	Audience
1. Teaching is such an adventure: Computer Education 2. Didn't you get my blog miss? Embedding ICT in historical Enquiry: Computer Education 3. Making history on blogs, wikis and podcasts: E-learning Today	The wider ICT educational community

³ Naace; national association of advancement in computer education

These three articles chronicle my choices, decisions, and actions throughout the autumn of 2006. The first article in this trilogy is the Naace article, *Didn't you get my blog miss: Embedding ICT in historical Enquiry*, and follows my experiences when setting up the Year 6 *trading places* blog as an online location for our history investigation, *'Voices in the Past'*. The second and third article: *Teaching is such an adventure* and, *Making history on blogs, wikis and podcasts*, takes up the story after I realise that my *trading places* blog is proving to be inappropriate as an online base for the Form 6 history investigation. In Chapter 2 I visualise my research, in the consolidating spiral, arriving at my online space and I am able to answer my core question of this spiral, How do I improve my practice by teaching historical enquiry in an online community of practices? Nevertheless, in reality when writing these articles I am still searching for an answer. The three articles cover two separate stages of my research: my *trading talents* blog experience and embedding the Web 2.0 technology into my history teaching.

2.2a My blog experience

My first article in *Computer Education*, *Didn't you get my blog miss? Embedding ICT in historical enquiry*, is a direct consequence of reading *Blogs, wikis and podcasting* by Richardson (2006), a book that intrigues me with the possibilities of blogging. Blogging is a new Web 2.0 tool in 2006 and by following the instructions in the book faithfully; I manage to set up an account on www.blogger.com. In my article, I state my aims for setting up the blog as wanting to: ascertain the educational potential and relevance of using this blogging tool in my teaching and use the blog to empower my pupils in terms of giving them some measure of control over their own learning. I argue that because the *'Internet is becoming the way people communicate'* and since pupils use these *'communication online tools'* they could become *'online authors'* in order to understand this new way of communication.

I view online authors as *'freed from age, gender, and race'* the egalitarian aspect striking a chord with what I had always thought as my core value of equality. Nevertheless, on re-reading the phrase, *'freed from age, gender, and race'* it is evident in using this global view of online authoring, I am trying to

establish in my mind what this core value actually means in general and in terms of my own research and practice in particular. I know the blog is a new teaching space where I have to *'stand back from a life time of teaching routines'* and *'allow the new teaching space to evolve in its own way'*. I acknowledge in the article that I am going to have to change my perception of how I relate to my pupils. I admit that *'changing my relationship with pupils that I had spent a professional lifetime building up: change it into something unfamiliar'* is *'frightening'* but I desire to be an, *'equal with my pupils in the pursuit of knowledge'*. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note, that it is not until I listen to Facer's delivering her paper; *'What does it mean to be an adult in an era of children's rights and learner voice'*(2008) that I gain a deeper and more relevant meaning to the phrase, *'equal with my pupils in the pursuit of knowledge'*.

Facer's exploration of the notion of adulthood, in an era of learner voice crystallises my thinking. In my research and as my articles illustrate I am consistently trying to understand my relationship with my pupils. Facer's modern view of childhood, challenges the dependent child and responsible adult construct. I realise, at the conference, that it is this construct of childhood my research and practice has been challenging. However, it is not until Facer sets out her building blocks of a new adult identity that I start the process of unpicking deeply embedded teaching routines.

Accepting the premise that I have to deconstruct my identity, as a good teacher, I establish a new identity that embraces a relationship with my pupils that allows them to perceive me as an equal in the learning process. It is a moment of epiphany; I knew I had changed. The key phrase that leaps out is, *'adults have to see themselves as learners'*. Sitting in the conference hearing that phrase I realise that I knew what equality meant to me in my practice and it represents the final piece my research jigsaw. Equality for me is now about respecting my pupils' rights (and my own) to be part of the learning community where we can work symbiotically within that community to develop practices giving us an equal of access to the knowledge and the skills giving meaning to our life long journey of learning.

The language I use to describe my actions is the same as that used in my *satip*'s articles. When setting up the blog I describe myself as '*nervous and childishly delighted*' because I believe I have the responsibility to keep my pupils as '*safe on the blog as being in the classroom*'. I acknowledge that in taking responsibility for keeping the pupils safe on the blog I am again controlling this new online space. I am reinforcing the tacit knowledge that I am in charge and, rather than becoming an equal with my pupils, I am establishing another tacit power structure. I introduce the blog to the Year 6 at the beginning of the term and start the history investigation '*Voices from the Past*'. Throughout the autumn term 2006, I identify six issues emerging when working on the *trading places* blog. It is important to examine these emerging issues because these issues influence my subsequent choices, decisions, and actions, which I make in the spring 2007 and continue in my practice on my 2009 wiki. In the following section, through the six issues, I describe and explain how I am trying to establish a way to communicate with my pupils by 'listening' to the emerging voice and living language my pupils are developing as they produce questions for the grandparents using the affordance of fonts to post their thoughts on the blog.

Issue 1: The use of grammar

This issue on the use of grammar is apparent from the start. As the administrator I have the power to edit any blog and, to be honest, I did do this at the very beginning but then I make a conscious decision not to interfere. I make this decision because I do not want my voice to intrude and I reason the blog is not the classroom. I am actively trying to distance and redefine myself and the teacher/pupil relationship found in the classroom – I am trying to stop teaching (in a directive way, at least). If I start correcting the blogs, I am tacitly telling my ten-year-old pupils this is really the classroom in disguise – I am retaining control. I want to explore a different type of teacher/pupil relationship in this new context – I am interested in enabling rather than teaching directly and I want their ideas not the way they write them.

For the text and *msn* generation, grammar is not part of their communication style. This may bring its own problems and I acknowledge it here but do not deal with it directly due to lack of space. When setting up the blog I hope I can

create a conversational style of communication that taps into the spontaneity of the stream of consciousness, which seems to characterise this form of communication and see if I can tease out any relevance for my teaching approach in this new context and, by implication, more generally.

Capital letters seem to be the first casualty but interestingly enough question marks, full stops, and exclamation marks remain. This suggests to me that the indicators of emotion or questions are important to the blogger, with the blog acting like a conversation. In a conversation, emotion and expressions become important indicators of the emotions underpinning what the pupil is actually saying. Even in this arena, I am aware I am sending out signals that I am the teacher when I contribute in grammatically correct sentences. I even think of subscribing to the general, 'let's forget capital letters view' but old habits are difficult to ignore. In many blog entries, my pupils try to incorporate grammar rules but my general impression is that the transfer of traditional writing skills is proving difficult and seems irrelevant to the pupils. I do not take issue with spelling mistakes because again I am interested in what is being said not the way it is written (acknowledging that spelling sometimes affects meaning – affects 'what is being said'). I want to retain the spontaneity of the blog and, as the term progresses it is obvious that the blog becomes a sounding pad for the pupils' thoughts. I rationalise, how the blog is written does not matter as long the message is clear but I do wonder if the rules of grammar are important to create a truer version of the message the pupils are telling me through the blog. In other words, did the grammar make the message more meaningful or does trying to meet grammatical conventions trap the true communication potential of the blog. I debate what a relaxed and spontaneous conversation would look like in text.

Issue 2: The use of font

The use of font is a very interesting aspect when writing on the blog. The pupils start using colour and type of font in a very clever and versatile way. It changes the blog into a personal communication reflecting blogger's feeling more colourfully and perhaps more sharply. In many blogs, the font changes, as well as the colour, several times in one entry. This is almost the equivalent of a voice

talking giving the listener clues to how the speaker feels through its changes of tone. Colour and font seem to depict the feelings and mood of the blogger. When looking at the blog I begin to get a sense of a community with different personalities participating. Aligning the font suggests to me that the question or information is central to what the blogger is feeling. In a spoken conversation, you are in a process of continuous change when you are putting into thoughts into words. The blogger is talking to an unseen audience so that process becomes visual: the changes of font and alignment suggest different thought processes going on.

Issue 3: The use of language

The use of language, by the pupils, on the blog is interesting. It is conversational in style and therefore informal but language that will be phrasing the questions for the volunteers coming in to the school and taking part in the *Voices in the Past* historical enquiry has to be grammatically in line with the work I am receiving in the pupils' exercise books. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the pupils are thinking seriously about the questions to ask the volunteers.

The questions posted are simple and reflect the type of question I would hear in a class discussion. The only difference is the permanent nature of the questions on the blog. In a class discussion, listening to other contributions is transitory but on the blog, the question is there for everyone to see and to be re-read. Blogger names were a mixture of their own name and pseudonyms. I begin to suspect that the bloggers using pseudonyms want to be someone else by constructing a new identity. On the blog, these bloggers are able to explore a different aspect of their personality, for example, low achieving pupils become avid researchers and contributors, and quiet pupils become enthusiastic contributors re-inventing attitudes to school and learning on the blog.

Issue 4: The questions to the grandparents

In the autumn term 2006 we start the *Britain since the 1930's* study and invite the grandparents to take part in the '*Voices from the Past*' investigation. The pupils start thinking about questions for the grandparents. The blogger's questions show a fascination for the feelings they hope to discover through the

grandparent volunteers' memories: fear, joy, embarrassment, friendship, and loss. It is not the actual events that interest the pupils but seemingly the feelings of the people who are involved in the events. I realise that the questions represent the voices of a new generation asking the fading voices of an older generation. The bloggers are trying to find a common link into the past through feelings and the historical events become secondary; this proves to be a significant point. I conclude that memories of actual historical events are 'remembered' in print, film but the social and emotional landscape in which those events take place are forgotten and the voices describing them are vanishing fast. The blog, in a way, represents a permanent record of 'forgotten' conversations or discussions.

Issue 5: Discussing the questions on the blog

I am disappointed with the questions emerging through the blog. I had initially set up '*trading places*' as an online platform to discuss the questions being posted by the pupils. The bloggers are happy to post questions but only a few post comments on other bloggers' suggestions. I start to put comments on the blogs but feel this action is slightly artificial. I begin to reflect on my role within the blog. When I make contributions I try to open up the types of questions suitable for the grandparents but stop when I realise I am moving back into a teacher pupil relationship where I am controlling and directing my pupils. I realise the blog is not the best place to discuss the pupils' questions for the grandparents so I introduce the wiki site to my ten-year-old pupils.

Issue 6: How will I develop the blog into a meaningful communication tool to enhance my teaching?

The blog has a linear anatomy with each blog entry set out on a time line: the most current at the top; in fact exactly like a conversation. The experience of working on a blog is similar to the introductory discussion at the beginning of a lesson or the plenary at the end of the lesson. The *trading places* blogs is full of new insights on how the class thinks and feels about the historical enquiry. It proves to be a useful communication tool and gives me an insight into how pupils communicate in different media. I decide to continue using the *trading places* blog as a conversational online location for my pupils' ideas: good, bad,

silly and clever. It is a safe arena but it is not the arena for my online teaching space. The affordances offered by the blog introduce me to a new language and the possibilities of a working relationship with my pupils giving me a deeper insight into an online landscape but I found the linear affordance of the blog limiting. To move forward I would require an online space that was more versatile.

2.2b: The road to my wiki

The next two articles, *Teaching is such an adventure* and *Making history on blogs, wikis and podcasts*, chronicle my journey from the blog to the wiki. My blog experience is very productive, giving me a deeper insight into what I now want in my online space teaching space. The two articles cover the same ground but in sending them to different publications, I am hoping to reach different audiences. Naace is an online community of ICT teacher, ICT provider and government agencies and I reason that my article is of value to this audience. The magazine *e-learning* is a print publication and I reason that although it may have potentially have the same audience it may attract the attention of people who prefer their information in print rather than online. These two articles have a different function to that of my blog article; they represent a 'How to do it' approach and describe systematically how to embed ICT in history teaching. The articles follow my choices, decisions and actions from the point when I realise my blog is not the ideal place in which to set my historical investigation up to the point when I embed my first wiki into my practice: I call the wiki space *caedemon*.

Once the wiki space is established, I link to a free podcast site on which to locate my pupils' recordings of the interviews of their grandparents' memories for the Voices from the Past investigation. I invite the pupils to join the wiki and once they accept their invitation to join, we start exploring the design features of the space together. It is an exciting time as we discover the affordances each wiki design features offers and what we can do with them. For example, the pupils set up imaginative hyperlink trails through the wiki space and through their Jarrow March hyperlink; they produce historical resources for future classes to use (see Appendix 5.4).

I believe I have found my online teaching space and want to link it into my practice. I discover a free web site facility for my ICT department and it becomes the portal accessible to staff and pupils for all the online ICT activities in the school. Through this site, my ten-year-old pupils can easily access the *caedemon* wiki from home and school. The three articles chronicle my choices, decisions, and actions leading to my wiki community of practices. In the next section I chronicle how communicate my story to my peers at a university conference.

3.0 My SSASHI conference paper: Teaching in the wonderful world of wikis

Table 8.8 Conferences	
Spring 2007 Postgraduate SSASHI conference: Teaching in the wonderful world of wikis (Table 8.9 page 204)	Academic

The act of describing and explaining my experiences clarifies my understanding of my research and its implications on my practice. This empowers me and in the spring of 2007 I am able to address an audience of academics about my vision when teaching my ten-year-olds historical enquiry on a wiki. This is important because as I address my story to different audiences I am describing my experiences with that audience in my mind and my story becomes more relevant and influential.

In agreeing to give a short presentation at a graduate conference in the spring of 2007, I am ready to open up my research to my peers at the university. The title of my presentation was *Teaching history in the wonderful world of wikis* and draws together all my research and practice for an audience of academics. My research and practice is evolving but I believe I am on the right path because through the action of describing and explaining my story to my peers I am able to articulate the conceptual landscape in which I am researching and practicing.

I start the presentation with a set of aims to explain my current research: I will explain:

- where my wiki study fitted into my PhD
- what were wikis
- why using history was central to my wiki investigation
- how setting up a wiki required me to visualise my classroom,

and by presenting these two case studies I will be able to illustrate how two very different pupils approach work on the wiki in two very different ways: personalised ways. I summarise my presentation in Table 8.9 to illustrate the way I am now describing my experiences.

Table 8.9 A summary of my SSAHARI paper

My study dovetails neatly in with the government's current e-strategy which aims to provide a 'good practice' framework that will encourage all educators to provide personalized online learning space for pupils. But what constitute good practice on a wiki? What works?

A wiki is an online authoring tool that gives users the opportunity to add, edit and delete content; it is usually used to create collaborative work on the part of several authors. Most wiki spaces are completely open to the world but in my study, due to the age of the pupils, I kept the wiki a closed community with only the Year 6's and myself as contributors.

The wiki space was therefore was ideal to conduct the historical enquiry: in this case researching Britain since 1930 focusing the Second World War. It would be the virtual space where the critical and analytical thinking skills I teach in history could merge with the wiki skills required when organizing and managing information from countless web sites. The knowledge embedded in this wiki conversational framework would then inform us, the emerging learning community how to collaborate to create new ways of learning; personalised ways.

A process I became very familiar with in this study. I then invited the Year 6's to join the wiki. I would be the administrator and manage the wiki space. To feel comfortable when working in the wiki I began to visualize it as a virtual classroom. By associating the wiki space with a physical space I was able to start the process of understanding the design features of the wiki in reference to the physical space that I understood: my classroom. I had anchored my actions in the familiar space of a classroom as I explored the virtual space of the wiki. Evidence started to emerge to suggest that the Year 6's were also using this visualisation process to scaffold their wiki experience. The concept that the *caedemon* home page as the starting point to the hyperlinked spaces we would work on collaboratively did not work.

Someone else editing their work was difficult to accept so I let them explore and use the wiki space in their own way. I had no preconceived ideas about how wikis should work develop. The wiki space was similar to a set of exercise books but with hyperlinked pages: it was a model that was working in our learning community. An exercise book is a very personalized learning space and by using it as a template for working in the wiki the Year 6's had personalized their learning space and thus creating individual learning pathways in this

collaborative space. All the personalised home pages with their personal network of links have now become the knowledge base about Britain since 1930: the wiki is collaborative but still retains the sense of ownership of all the contributing authors. The following two case studies will illustrate how two girls with different abilities have created different individual learning pathways.

Fiona's Story

Fiona loves working on the wiki and her homepage is an invitation to have an adventure: it has instructions on how to navigate through her hyperlinked pages and recommended pages she feels are worth a visit.

Fiona has become an independent learner who loves the freedom of the wiki space to create her personal network of researched information. Fiona is managing the information by creating a personalized network of information using different media to define what connects, what is important and taking a great deal of pride in the process.

Mary's Tale:

Mary's has developed a different learning pathway on the wiki.

Mary has a less developed network of hyperlinked pages and uses a different device to connect and manage the information. When investigating the 1930's Mary created a link called People and Events She then linked this to a new page called Abdication then another called Coronation and repeating the process through four more hyperlinked pages she arrives at a page with a newspaper clipping about her great grandfather who had been an ambassador at the coronation of George VI in 1936.

The presentation covers the same ground as my articles but in this presentation, I am fine tuning my research and justifying my new insights into my changing practice. I know my research is going in the right direction and in this presentation I am taking the first step in validating my new insight into teaching historical enquiry online as being worthy of eventually being called new knowledge.

In one year (April 2006 – April 2007), I have gone from writing a short article in as a vehicle for my inner dialogue to be heard to creating a dialogue with my peers in the academic community of which I was a member.

This presentation boosts my confidence because I perceive that my research is being acknowledged by my peers and I am now '*a member of a professional community who is ready, willing, and able to teach and to learn from his or her teaching experience*' (Shulman and Shulman 2004:259). I know that I am accomplished teacher but I am still challenging my perception of what is a good teacher in my context. I believe my articles and presentation encompasses the key words of Vision, Motivation, Understanding, Practice, Reflection, and Community, thus sets my descriptions of my experiences within the Shulman

and Shulman model, and link my vision with my community and the policy makers. This model does not incorporate my perception of what I now accept as a good teacher but it gives me a framework from which to test out my assumptions about my practice. In Chapter 9, I draw together all the facets I have gathered through my reflective spirals so I can give a definitive description of how the changes in my practice have re-defined my identity as a practitioner.

I am so empowered after my presentation to the SSHARI that I agree to conduct a workshop to an interested group of primary ICT teachers who had read my *satips* articles and provide another way of disseminating my research.

4.0 Workshops and training

Table 8.10 Workshops and training	
Spring 2007 OFSTED report for the ICT department in my school (see Appendix 8.11)	The school community, parents, educationalist and government agencies
Autumn 2007: Wiki workshop: a <i>satips</i> training session (see Appendix 8.8)	Primary ICT teachers
Spring 2008 ICT in school training sessions: Creating a safe caring online community of practice (see Appendix 8.9)	The school community
Spring 2008 A living theory (see Appendix 8.10)	PhD researchers

The last phase of my dissemination has me discussing my wiki research to three types of audience: a group of teachers attending a workshop, a presentation to a group of PhD researchers and a staff training session in my school.

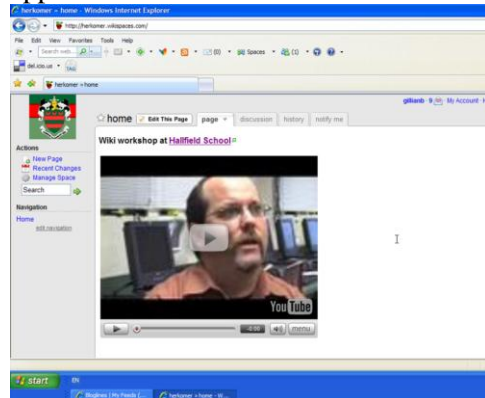
The wiki workshop for teachers

The workshop is organised by the editor of the ICT *satips* journal. Influenced by my research story he wants me to be part of a team who initiate a group of interested teachers into the mysteries of wikis and podcasts. I set up a wiki page

for the training session and set out a sequence of tasks that lead the group through the design features and the educational possibilities of those features. Table 8.11 below illustrates the wiki design feature or affordance that enable me to create a personalised set of hyperlinks which will encourage individual learning. This represents the way I now communicate with colleagues when introducing or reinforcing new skills or ideas into the school community.

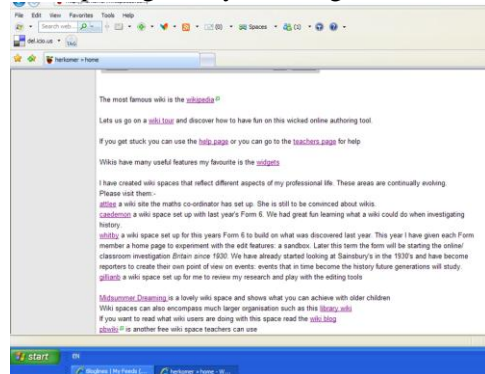
Table 8.11 The training wiki page: main headings

What is a wiki: I embed a video that discussed the term wiki and its possible applications in education and business.



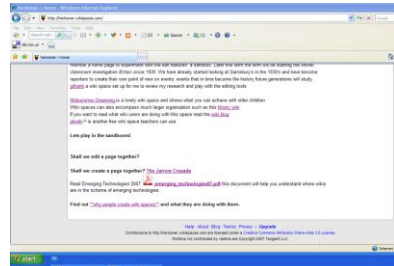
How to become a wiki expert: this is a set of hyperlinks **that** demonstrate how to use the wiki tools available on this specific site.

How I have used my wiki spaces: this set of hyperlinks to the Year 6 wikis and my wiki space give my teaching and research a context in which I can validate my training.



How other people have used wiki spaces: this set of hyperlinks leads to different examples of how wikis are used in different ways by a diverse set of people.

Let's play in the sandboxes: The sandbox is a set of hyperlinked pages on the training wiki where individual teachers can experiment with the tools in the session or at home.



What next?: This section hyperlinked to a government document discussing wikis

The hyperlink affordance in my training wiki creates a site that aims at informing the group of teachers on how to use a wiki in an educational setting. I colour code the hyperlinks to illustrate how the hyperlink affordances create a learning space where independent thinking is encouraged and celebrated (see Appendix 8.1). Through the wiki affordances, I am trying to achieve two outcomes with this group of teachers: demonstrate how to gain the basic skills to use a wiki and influence the potential use of the wiki in their practice by setting my teaching and research in a way that will make it accessible and relevant to their own practices. The hyperlink design of this training wiki gives a group of diverse and no doubt different types of learners an opportunity to experiment, explore and create within the training session, at school or at home as individuals or as a group.

I start the training session by setting my expertise in context with the use of a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix 8.2) describing how I link the use of wiki in my practice to my research. The inclusion of this presentation at the training session is important as it illustrates how I am articulating my thoughts to an audience of practitioners. In the training presentation, I keep my description of my research brief understanding that my story will only be influential if the practitioners see a connection between my experiences and their experiences. In trying to connect with the teachers, I acknowledge that the group are at the training session for many reasons and therefore my choices and decisions on how to use a wiki are limited. In accepting this limitation of my influence I design my training to be generic so that it can fit into many diverse contexts of my audience. I enjoyed the session and the feedback via *satips* (2008) was positive.

The wiki workshop for a group of PhD researchers

The presentation I plan to give to a group of PhD researchers, (see Appendix 8.3) illustrates how I am interpreting my research and practice in 2008. In discussing the nature of my living theory I am clarifying my interpretation of my living theory, in articulating that *'I am creating a living theory that reflects on and interrogates the process of change involved in my practice in order to germinate and nurture an online community of enquiry, equality and*

individuality. I am putting into words the thoughts that have been weaving through my mind for many months. This is the first opportunity I have to articulate my living theory to an audience of practitioners. It is these words in that combination describing my practice available to the world to be criticised, ignored or praised. The preparation for this slide presentation proves to be a useful exercise as it crystallizes my thoughts and helps to me to visualise how I am interpreting my practice in terms of my research.

A staff training session at my school

The last slide show in this trio has its genesis in the presentation I had planned for the PhD researchers. I did this to ascertain whether I am able to articulate my research in simple language understood by my colleagues. I call my school training session '*Creating a safe, caring online community of practice*' (see Appendix 8.4). In this presentation I tease out the pronoun 'we' to make my presentation connect with an audience I work with on a daily basis. In using this language, and implying a tacit relationship, I hope it resonates with my colleagues by suggesting a joint vision, '*we want to create a community that will work within the Internet environment.... to empower the pupils and staff that will keep them safe and knowledgeable when going online*'. I see my colleagues as potential members of my community of practices or, if not members, acknowledging that the community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils on the wiki is a viable location to which they refer to and accept as a part of the school. My audience is a diverse group of colleagues, including classroom assistants, Kindergarten teachers, form teachers and subject teachers who had a range of attitudes towards working online.

It is hard to judge the success of a training session but an ISI Inspection (2007) in April 2007 praises the ICT provision in the school with the following statements,

'...opportunities for pupils to use ICT have been incorporated into all aspects of the school's education. What was regarded as an area for development in the last inspection is now a strength of the school'. (2.3)

'Pupils show an outstanding confidence and competence in their use of ICT for a wide range of functions, giving demonstrations and making broadcasts for their own radio station'. (2.15)

'.....since the last inspection, the curriculum has been developed successfully to incorporate a wealth of opportunities for pupils' independent learning. Their ICT skills are now outstanding'. (5.2)

The time between the two inspections matches my research journey and my changing practice. These quotes vindicate, in my eyes, my research, and my changing practice. The ICT provision in the school between 2001 and 2007 is evidence of the changes my practice as my research progresses. At the 2002 inspection, the ICT provision is 'deemed satisfactory and a concern', this description coincides with the start of my research. Over the intervening years, my research influences me and changes my practice and those changes in my practice influences and change the ICT teaching in my school. My colleagues, watching my changing practice with interest or lack of interest, now view it in 2007 through this official approval. I cannot claim my colleagues all come on board with my vision of having an online community of practices embedded into their practice but a cohort of interested staff are starting to change their practice in their own way. It is interesting to note I start and end my three main reflective spirals deliberating on how my colleagues in my school view my research and changing practice through staff training sessions.

5.0 Conclusion

In my consolidating spiral, I gain the deep insight to how that my research becomes my practice and my practice becomes my research. In taking ownership of my learning, I am finally able come to terms with what my core value of equality means to me. I start the story in this chapter by opening up my research to a wider audience through writing a short article, which is just a continuation of my inner dialogue. The story continues as I gain confidence through the act of describing my story to different audiences. The act of describing and explaining allows my understanding of my research and its implications on my practice to mature and I am eventually able to address an audience of academics about my vision when teaching ten-year-olds historical enquiry on a wiki. The act of addressing my descriptions and explanations to a

diverse set of audiences ensures that my narrative emerges with the power to influence and help other practitioners embarking on a similar journey. In the next chapter, I draw all my insights together and explain how my narrative becomes my living theory.

Section 4



My journey ends- my living theory on the nature of change in my practice

Chapter 9



My living theory on the nature of change in a practice

Table 9.0

My Living Theory

In this chapter, I critically examine how in reconceptualising the explanatory principle and living standards, by which I judge my practice, I provide a new perspective on knowledge and validate my living theory on change in an educational practice. My contribution to knowledge is found in this new perspective of what is meant by a community of practices and the learning processes it generates with reference to teaching historical enquiry skills to ten-year-old pupils on an online authoring site called a *wiki*.

1.0 Introduction

In this chapter (and outlined in Table 9.0) I am drawing the threads of my story together. This submission chronicles my six-year self-study action research journey to develop an online community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils, when conducting historical enquiries, by critically reflecting on the changes in my practice I make to achieve this goal. This is a journey of personal and professional growth where I, in Polanyi's terms, (1958) make a, '*decision to understand the world from my own point of view as an individual claiming originality and exercising my judgement with universal intent*' (Whitehead, 2009: 107). To understand the world from my own point of view I use the metaphor of a growing tree to visualise my 'individual' journey to gain this knowledge. In using this metaphor, in this submission, I accept that my personal growth, as a researcher and practitioner will not necessarily be a logical process - it will be organic. Through the metaphor of my growing tree I visualise, the choices and decisions, I make, as a researcher and practitioner, as fine roots responding to different nutrients and obstacles with each choice and decision I strengthen my root system determining the direction, growth, and final shape of

my tree. This visualisation process gives me a continually changing perspective of who I am as a researcher and a practitioner and the opportunity '*to develop free, self transforming, relational and inclusive attitudes, and practice*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 86).

My research journey becomes transformational through the following actions,

1. I narrate the story of how I master and apply Web 2.0 technology to develop a community of practices for ten-year-olds, when conducting historical enquiries on the Internet, by creating a living experience on a wiki. I achieve this transformational stage of my journey only when in '*a moment of enlightenment ... I acknowledge the uncomfortable knowledge that I am telling my story, not the pupils' story; I now want the pupils, through their wiki work to be given the opportunity to tell the rest of the story of my changing practice*'. By giving my pupils the opportunity to be members of a community of practices and participants in a living experience, they develop a living language and a voice. It is in listening to my pupils' voices, through the practices emerging from the wiki, that I am able to transform my practice.
2. I critically reflect on the changes I require, in my thinking and my practice, in order to set up the living experience within my online community of practice on the wiki. To achieve this critical insight I construct a reflective spiral within a spiral thinking process that is fine enough to analyse the dynamic and transformative nature of my change because '*constant change is so much part of day to day engagement in practice that it largely goes unnoticed*' (Wenger, 2004: 94). I acknowledge Polanyi's (1983) influence when I accept that I possess a vast repertoire of tacit experiential knowledge and I am therefore the '*ultimate instruments*' of [my] *external knowledge*' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 15). In making the tacit knowledge explicit, and hence informing the changes I make as a practitioner and researcher, I am in a position to improve my practice. It is within my tacit knowledge that I am able to identify the contradictions existing in my practice. In making this knowledge explicit and subject to critical reflection I am able to

demonstrate that many constraints in my practice are hidden deeply within well-established routines that guard my perception of what I mean by being ‘a good teacher’ and a ‘good practice’. This example from my submission demonstrates clearly a tacit constraint hidden within a well-established routine in my practice becoming explicit, *‘In retrospect the use of the word classroom which at the beginning of this phase proves useful does become problematic when I am aware that the pupils are transferring my role as the teacher into the wiki space. I am not aware of it at the time that this is a constraint; in fact, I believe it is a strength.....It is only when I finally clarify my understanding of equality do I see that the word classroom is keeping my ‘good practice’ intact and with it my relationship with my pupils’*. The process of making explicit these tacit constraints is only made possible by my challenging my understanding of my good practice and my belief system with its core values of equality, responsibility and individuality

3. I identify the origins of my core values of equality, responsibility, and individuality and then challenge my interpretation of their use in my practice until I recognise their true meaning. The process of challenging my practice is not an easy process, as this example of my thinking demonstrates. *‘The thought of change always appears to be such a tiring process, my descriptions of my changes in my practice support this belief when I describe the energy I require when breaking free from the state of inertia years of well established teaching routines have imposed on my practice and subsequently my perception of myself as a ‘good teacher’.* *This state of inertia has its origin in my assumption that these well established and tested routines are celebrating my individuality but, I now, in retrospect, accept, this is an illusion of individuality and a constraint in practice’*. In breaking down these well-established routines I examine my ‘good practice’ many times, a process I still engage in because my research story does not end at this submission. At the beginning of my research, I ask the question, ‘How do I incorporate my values into my every day practice?’ but this proves difficult because my linguistic journey, one of the key threads in my submission, demonstrates

that my transformational journey was, *'a journey where many of the key words defining my practice change their meaning. Words such as control, equality, voice, meaning, responsibility, community, individuality, classroom, collaborative and authorship require me to challenge, re-define, re-evaluate creating new meanings so I am true to my value system. [This is] a value system that has the key words of equality, responsibility and individuality at its centre; words I have to clarify and understand if they are living standards of judgments informing my practice and research'*. I tackle the reconceptualising of my values later in the chapter.

4. I articulate my ontological values embodying my tacit knowledge, enabling me to, *'transform [my core values] into ontological standards of judgement and through [these] ontological values [I] transform the [the literature I chose to influence me] into epistemological values and standards of judgement. [In] articulating them [I am acknowledging the part that influence has] on the creation and testing of claims to knowledge'*. Charting my journey to epistemological understanding, in order to create and validate my new knowledge, becomes an important part of my research journey. Many authors influence me but the authors I chose to influence my thinking, on my research and on my practice, become my epistemological journey. Rayner helps me visualise my epistemological journey as taking place in a *'tapestry of space'* where the literature I encounter, through the experience of reading this literature, enables my self identity to evolve into *'my complex self'* (Rayner, 2004:1).
5. Describing Chapter 3 of my submission, my journey to find the methodology I believe will help me improve my practice in a way that reflects the values I identify through my early research experiences. The living theory, action research methodology, gives me the insight to identify the contradictions in my practice. I achieve this insight by constructing a reflective tool enabling me to make explicit my tacit assumptions about my perception of my *'good practice'*. This process, of

critically reflecting on my core value system, gives me the skills, knowledge, and understanding to produce my living theory on the nature of change in my practice. My reflective spiral becomes the analytical tool unpacking my narrative, allowing me to critically interpret my actions and, *'articulate of my own educational theory'* (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 117).

2.0 Ontological values and living standards

My practice at the beginning of my research is 'a living contradiction' (Whitehead, 2003) - a time when my values are not in harmony with my practice. This lack of harmony causes constraints because I know I am not teaching history using the Internet effectively because of my lack knowledge on how to use this online tool properly. In 2002 I want what, I then describe, as 'equality of opportunity' for both myself and the pupils when exploring the Internet. I want to promote individuality, so that my pupils and I can work within the parameters of our own learning styles, but a national assessment system keeps a tight control on the curriculum and how it was taught. I, through examining my own practice, and described in Chapter 5, come to realise my pupils are not given enough opportunities to be responsible for their own decision making and therefore being denied a sense of ownership of the learning process of which they are supposed to be key component. My core values of equality, individuality and responsibility are, seemingly, not in harmony with my practice and I asked two questions, *'Why am I unhappy with my practice?'* and *'How do I improve it?'* It is through answering the questions that I chose a self-study, action research, form of enquiry where I commit to improving my practice by using my core values as living standards of judgement when making any change to my practice.

When I started my research journey I see the connection between the Internet technology and my practice as the way I can improve my practice. This submission is then grounded in my actions I take to discover the connection between the Internet and my practice. It narrates the process of improving my practice by incorporating the affordances of Web 2.0 into structuring my online community. The action of implementing Web 2.0 technology into my practice

enables both the pupils and me to work together in a learning process that encourages their individuality, in a living experience, set within a safe community of practices (Wenger, 1998). The community of practices is located on *whitby* wiki, *'The whitby wiki is the second in a series of three wikis I develop to teach historical enquiry skills my ten year olds pupils and represents, for me, two years of gaining the experience and confidence I require to change my practice. It is through working on the wiki that I start to visualise and treat this living experience space as my online classroom'*. I have demonstrated, through my descriptions and explanations, in Chapter 5, that my wiki community of practices, when tested against Wenger's criteria for a community of practice, *'creates a living experience and can therefore be called a community of practice where emergent and planned learning merge become the 'way things are done' in the community. [I achieved this] by allowing the negotiated practices to evolve through using the different affordances of the physical and virtual learning spaces into new practices'*. The community of practices and a living experience on the *whitby* wiki become my unique perspective on my educational practice when conducting historical enquiries using Web 2.0 technology. By connecting all my choices, decisions and actions to my core values, I validate this new perspective on a belief system that is, and still is, continually realigning, reassessing and challenging tacit assumptions about those core values.

I accept that my new perspective is unique, *'because each of us is an original creation that has never existed before and never will again'* (Whitehead and McNiff 2006: 86) and I make an original contribution to educational knowledge and by engaging critically with others in relation to my practice and ideas. My ontological values become a personal connection between myself and others and these embodied values are made external and explicit through my practice and theory. I become *'committed to the idea of embodied¹ knowledge'* (Ibid: 86) and through the transformation process of my research I externalise my embodied knowledge into living educational theories. This is, according to Whitehead and McNiff, *'the nature of our work in professional education'* (Ibid: 87). I have the

¹ **Embodied knowledge:** knowing-how or embodied knowledge is characteristic of the expert, who acts, makes judgments, and so forth without explicitly reflecting on the principles or rules involved.

confidence at the end of my research to externalise my embodied knowledge as explicit clearly articulated theories of practice.

To articulate my values I accept that my values be understood and accepted as the skeleton of my living theory because they represent my living standards of judgement. My submission is the story of my transformational journey to gain the meaning and reconceptualisation of my values: equality, responsibility, and individuality within my research and practice.

3.0 Reconceptualising my values

3.1 Equality

Equality is, and still is, an important value to me, both as an individual and as a practitioner. Challenging my understanding of equality becomes the most transforming of my experience in my research journey and even at the end of my research I am still re-examining this value in terms of my practice and my relationship with my pupils.

I start my research with the aim to become equal with my pupils in the learning process but in the classroom, the concept of equality is clouded by the assumption that pupils are in a transitory space called childhood where they are presumed to be training to be an adult. This assumption denies the pupil the role of *'social agent who receives and participates in the educational process as pupils'* (James and James 2004: 120), and that they are *'social agents who themselves influence the shaping of childhood'* (Ibid: 69). To achieve some sense of equality, with my pupils, I look for a teaching place where a new learning partnership can be explored. In my submission, through descriptions of my experiences I discover that equality is a more complex concept than I had previously thought and that it has particular connotations in the context of an online community. To understand what I mean by equality in my practice I separate out different 'equalities', namely, equality of opportunity, equality of access to knowledge, equality of voice and equality of control of what to learn or how it is learnt. These equalities operate in different measures, for example the Internet provides a deal of equality in terms of access to knowledge but the constraints of the teacher pupil relationship still exert an effect, in relation to equality of control, over what is to be learnt and indeed to a lesser extent to how

it is to be learnt. This list is not exhaustive but illustrates the many ways I interpret this notion of equality throughout my journey as my interpretation of the word 'equality' reshapes my practice with each new insight.

My initial understanding of my core value equality was coloured by my experiences when training to be a teacher in the 1970's, where, through my descriptions in Chapter 4 of those years, I acknowledge I am not an equal partner in my own learning. *'In retrospect I now see my passivity as my tacit acceptance that the learning relationship between the knowledge holders and knowledge receivers is not equal and that I reinforce this relationship through the tacit expectation that my pupils mirror my passive behaviour. I did not see the inequality in my position as the learner accepting this transference of knowledge as the norm'*. This inequality I believe is a result of *'nearly drowning in a sea of new words, new knowledge and new concepts stripping my confidence and engendering a sense of inequality at this opportunity to understand and know the truths that were to be at the centre of my chosen career'*. This inequality is hard wired from the beginning of my teaching career and it therefore informs the relationship I have with my pupils for the next two decades. The tacit assumption, at this stage in my practice, is that the pupils will be passive learners in the transference of knowledge I deem appropriate.

This tacit assumption stays deeply embedded in my practice until I took control over my own professional development and go back to *'learn how to learn again'*. Only after making this decision did I *'overcome my sense of inequality and the vulnerability with its origin in my fear of drowning in a sea of new words, concepts and knowledge'* and my *'sense of inequality by drawing strength from the knowledge I am a good teacher'*. It is the tacit assumption that I am a good teacher, a perception that is rooted in my deep sense of inequality, which proves to be the key constraint in my practice. In challenging my values I am also challenging all the well-established routines defining my practice and ultimately my identity.

My changing understanding of the word equality can be seen in the following extracts from my submission, each signifying a change in my how I am viewing equality in my practice,

'I am not seeing my pupils as my equals or individuals, they are my collective charges and I have the responsibility for their education'.

'I acknowledge that my ontological perspective of equality is not working in harmony with my methodology. I accept the knowledge that I am researching my pupils from the outside and I now require an insider's view'.

I see a connection in the Jarrow March historical enquiry I want to conduct where the, *'lack of equality these workers endured and how, as committed individuals, they translate their deep responsibility for their community by walking to London'* and begin to see my own practice reflected in this story.

My early research identifies *'that the pupils and I were on the same journey and any future research had to be seen in terms of a partnership'*, but I am still describing myself as a teacher guide and facilitator. This description masks a well-rehearsed teaching practice consisting of a network of well-established routines defining and protecting my good practice and identity as a good practitioner. I think I am changing but my *'frustration hid a much deeper and rather negative mind set skilfully camouflaged by my apparent desire to listen to the pupils about the research. My actions appears to be moving towards equality in the research but here is a sense that I am still paying lip service to what I had thought to be this key value'*. It is not enough to use the word equality. I have to unpick the whole concept and discover how I define it within my practice. In challenging my understanding of the word equality, I am challenging not one tacit assumption but many interconnected assumptions that define me as practitioner.

I realise that the word equality bounds together other key teaching words and *'it is through working on the wiki that I start to visualise and treat this living experience space as my online classroom. My use of the word classroom does becomes an issue when I have to tackle my inability to define my core value of equality and I only resolve it by deconstructing the use of the word 'classroom' to clarify my understanding of a learning space'*. To gain ownership of the word equality I clarify the meaning of the words that connect to my perception of what equality means to me in my practice. To untangle the word classroom I start the *'practice of mixing the wiki with classroom practices merges two working*

environments into one multifaceted space' because I reason *'the pupils and teacher bring to the wiki many practices perfected by years of working and learning in a classroom'*. But with that assumption there is a danger that the inequality deeply embedded in my own 'good practice' will follow. This proves to be the case when I observe, *'I am aware that the pupils are transferring my role as the teacher into the wiki space'* and it is only by describing my experiences, when working on the wiki, do I start to challenge my use of the word 'classroom'. The insights I gain, from challenging the word classroom, enables me to make explicit the many tacit assumptions of control of knowledge, relationships and expectations that exist for both the pupils and me in the space I call a classroom.

I realise that I have been using my values just as words and as a result, they had lost their meaning to me and I have to acknowledge that I cannot change my practice unless I gain ownership of those words and reconceptualise their meaning. For example, when setting up my pupils volunteer meetings at the beginning of summer 2006 I preach equality but I am acting to the contrary, *'to be equal with the pupils and I had to create a space that merged our two constructs.....we should be on a level playing field'*. The volunteer meetings I organise do not represent an equal playing field and the pupils find it difficult to be themselves. Reflecting on these early volunteer meetings, with my pupils, I start to challenge my practice at a much deeper level and *'radically review my whole approach relationship to the pupils'* and *'I begin to challenge my understanding of the word equality in my practice'*. Whereas before I assume naively, that 'equality' is (a) necessarily a good thing, and (b) readily achievable in any context. I now become aware of the power relationships between the pupils and me in terms of access to knowledge, the validity of some kinds of knowledge as more significant than others, and finally, the way in which particular kinds of knowledge are learnt and subsequently assessed. In a moment of epiphany I see, through the pupils' behaviour, for the first time a true reflection of my teaching approach and realise that *'the problems of changing a practice kept intact by unchallenged routines with key words guarding those well established routines: classroom, individuality, equality, responsibility'*. I know I have to change my practice and *'to become equal I sense I will require me to*

unpick my relationship with my pupils and at this stage of my research I do not have the insight or language to achieve this target, but I now accept I am beginning to challenge my mind set'.

My lack of language and insight in my inability to define equality is frustrating but I at least identify the contradiction, *'that I am not practicing my key value of equality influences the way I introduce and explore many of my initiatives with my research volunteers'*. Ultimately, the descriptions of pupils' thinking and actions change my perception of my own research. I realise that the pupils are in no position or indeed do not have the power to change their relationship. I acknowledge, that if my pupils are going to communicate as equals, in any sense, in a joint pursuit to find an online learning space, I have to visualise how I will relate to them on their own terms: not as pupil/ teacher or even child/adult but as partners. Partners, connected through being members of the same community, accessing and using the knowledge, the community had collected, to inform our communal thinking. A community where all types of intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and learning styles are celebrated and individuality encouraged and harnessed. I set myself ground rules for working with my pupils by introducing key phrases dictating future actions: *'pupils being part of the equation'*, *'joint narratives that merge'* and finally *'engage with the child's construct of the world'* and I hope to start addressing some aspects of the inequality by changing the way we communicate.

It is only when I encounter my own equality of access to knowledge when trying to master the Web 2.0 technology do I start to *'debate inequality through my lack of knowledge and skills I possess when trying to understand the new technology'*. I ask myself the question, *'Is this how pupils feel when they are learning a new subject?'* and describe the sense of inequality I feel when I have, *'to fight the overwhelming fear of failure that accompanies any decision I make into a knowledge realm'*. My inequality, through my own lack of knowledge and skills, gives me a deep insight to the inequality that exists in my relationship with my pupils.

In continuing to challenge my understanding of equality, I now see the different types of equality within my practice. I gain the insight into redressing these inequalities when observing the pupils' fascination with mastering the new software I introduce in the summer of 2006. I notice a deep desire by the pupils, to tease out their individuality through voicing their opinions and having those opinions recognised and set within an appropriate platform that communicates that individuality to a wider audience. I note, at the end of the summer term 2006, *'In accepting the importance of individuality, I am re-defining my relationship with my pupils by accepting there is no one way to learn. I can offer a generic approach but must accept there are other ways to learn and my pupils must be given that opportunity. In accepting the importance of individuality, I am re-defining my relationship with my pupils by accepting there is no one way to learn. I can offer a generic approach but must accept there are other ways to learn and my pupils must be given that opportunity'*. In allowing my pupils' own learning styles to be acknowledged and for them to be given the opportunity to explore the possibilities, through the Web 2.0 technology, I gain a deeper understanding of how I can facilitate an equality of access to knowledge through an individual's own learning style. I note at the end of my summer journal that, *'It is an uncomfortable thought that the pupils are thinking at a deeper level than me but I acknowledge this because through this insight I can envisage and accept a working relationship with my pupils where the control of knowledge can be fluid'*. This insight makes me realise that, working with my pupil on the wiki, I have to acknowledge that the fluidity of knowledge and my control of access to that knowledge is negotiable. I acknowledge my pupils' influence on how historical enquiries evolve and accept that their use of the knowledge gathered on the wiki will be open to many different interpretations and uses by the pupils.

Challenging my own supposed good practice makes me examine deeply entrenched assumptions about my role as a teacher and as I leave my comfort zone, I start tackling the tensions of re-evaluating and subsequently re-aligning my personal value system with my changing practice. The core values of equality, individuality and responsibility, which I thought to be at the heart of my belief system, and represent the essence of how I define myself as a good teacher

are now changing their meaning within my practice. My summer journal illustrates how deeply cathartic this time of self challenging my 'good practice' is for me as a learner through the words I use to describe the experience, *terrified, vulnerable, difficult, obstacle and battle* and I sadly observe that the *'words that had given me comfort over years of teaching now became strangers, I hardly recognised them'*. I *'acknowledge that my perception of being a 'good teacher' is deeply linked to the classroom and by leaving it I was feeling very vulnerable'* and in reinforcing the phrase, *'I know my trade', I am in fact doubting that certainty as I begin to challenge, 'all those factors' that define my expertise.'*

This stripping away of many years of being the expert in my learning community and being reduced to a state of 'not knowing' makes it possible to empathise with my pupils. I am their equal in lacking access to knowledge. I realise that by putting myself through all this angst and by making myself into a naive learner I had a better understanding of the dynamics of learning with this understanding leading (a) to a realisation that a 'good teacher' is not what I think it is and (b) to an appreciation of what I need to do in order to make myself more effective as a teacher. I had to 'stop teaching' or at least temporarily suspend my actions as a teacher and let the learner take the lead in the teaching and learning context. The e-learning environment on the wiki enables that kind of re-positioning. It is in the wiki space that a repositioning of both teacher and pupil takes place and the pupils' perspectives become – in the 'natural' course of the artificial environment – transparent.

To gain a deeper understanding of equality I *'stand back from a life time of teaching routines'* and *'allow the new teaching space to evolve in its own way'*. I admit that *'changing my relationship with pupils that I had spent a professional lifetime building up: change it into something unfamiliar'* was *'frightening'* but I am driven by the desire to be an, *'equal with my pupils in the pursuit of knowledge'*. It is not until I attend the Futurelab's 2008, Challenging Learners Voice conference, and listened to Facer's paper: 'What does it mean to be an adult in an era of children's rights and learner voice' that I gain a much deep insight into the meaning of my claim when writing that I wanted to be, *'equal with my pupils in the pursuit of knowledge'*. It is through Facer's exploration of the notion of

adulthood in an era of learner voice that I am able to finally crystallise my thinking on the meaning of equality. In my research I have been trying to understand my relationship with my pupils and it is not until I acknowledged that my notion of childhood is still tied to the dependent child and responsible adult construct that I realise that it is this tacit construct my research kept on challenging. When Facer set out her building blocks of a new adult identity, I finally acknowledge the link between my identity and perception of myself as a good teacher and the deeply embedded routines in my practice that accepts the dependent child and responsible adult construct.

To gain ownership of my core value of equality I deconstruct my identity as a good teacher by establishing a new identity that embraces a relationship with my pupils that enables them to perceive me as an equal in the learning process. It was a moment of epiphany; it is the moment when I know I have changed because it is the moment I understood what equality means within my practice. Equality, for me, is now about respecting my pupils' rights (and my own), to be part of the learning community, where we can work symbiotically within that community to develop practices that give us, the learners, the skills to access and use the knowledge, in our own individual ways, and an integral part of our life long journey of learning.

3.2 Reconceptualising my understanding of responsibility

Responsibility is an important value weaving its way through my narrative, causing me, on several occasions, to reflect critically on my actions when one part of my value system was in conflict with another part. My responsibility, as researcher on the one hand and as practitioner on the other, did not always work in harmony. It is my responsibility for my school community that starts me on my long journey of professional development, *'I remember saying to the Head Teacher at the time that there is a need for someone, 'to go out there' to train as the ICT co-ordinator. The phrase, 'to go out there' reflects the sense of alienation with the academic institutions promoting the ICT initiatives at the time; the creation of this new knowledge occurring not in schools but in remote academic institutions. Despite my misgivings, a deep sense of responsibility for my small school community persuades me to become the ICT expert.* The journey

I take, to gain a deeper insight of my value of responsibility, is not as challenging as the one I took for equality but the journey to understand my responsibility within my research and practice become a contradiction and a constraint.

In 2005, I believed, as the teacher, I am a facilitator and with that perception my sense of responsibility *'as [the] teacher I had to be aware of all the skills needed to use a particular tool. You must know your territory. The pupils may follow your well sign-posted route but there are those pupils who will leave the path and explore. It is the function a teacher to see where they are going, know what it means and uses it as a basis for accelerated skills development or deepening of knowledge.* My sense of responsibility, on reflection, was my tacit desire to keep my practice intact, I think I am being responsible to my pupils when, in fact, I am being responsible for keeping my practice, and my identity unchallenged by absorbing all the possible changes into my framework of routines. I believe I am protecting the pupils from the horrors of unauthenticated knowledge when in fact I am masking my own lack of conceptual understanding of the Internet by accepting the tacit belief that it is my responsibility to keep the pupils safe. In selecting web sites I believe I am a responsible teacher in providing an approved knowledge base from which the pupils can explore the subject matter safely. I am the facilitator: a role I am familiar and happy to adopt. This value of responsibility hid a tacit fear I had about being *'drowned in a sea of new words and concepts'*. I masked vulnerability of not knowing the answer by tightly controlling the way the pupils became more e-literate when it was evident that I was not e-literate myself.

I think I know what I mean by personal responsibility, to me it is all about taking control of my life; understanding that my choice, my decisions and my actions have consequences. Responsibility is a value I want to impart to my pupils and therefore I see my responsibility, as a practitioner, to make the online space I research a safe learning environment, empowering the pupils to move between offline and the online communities making decisions for themselves (independent of me) and understanding their consequences. The pupils find taking responsibilities for their actions an ongoing challenge when working on the wiki. The value of responsibility flourishes when all members of a

community respect the contributions of all members by celebrating praise worthy work, through the recommended page, writing positive comments on individual pages or acknowledging, by setting up a rules page, the responsibility of the community to a wider audience. The wiki community develops rules that define their interpretation of responsibility on the online space by members making explicit the behaviour they believe is acceptable.

My understanding of my value responsibility changes over the years as I gain more insight from my descriptions and explanations of my changing practice. I have a deep sense of responsibility for the way my practice changes because it is my sense of responsibility to my school community that starts my journey and it is my deep sense of responsibility that continues to ensure I keep challenging my practice.

3.3 Reconceptualising my understanding of individuality

My values of individuality and equality are closely linked so when using the word individuality I acknowledge that I want my pupils to explore their own learning styles and the opportunity to explore the possibilities offered by those choices. *'In accepting the importance of individuality, I am re-defining my relationship with my pupils by accepting there is no one way to learn'*. The pupils' desire for individuality gives rise to the many initiatives that both inform and direct my practice and research. For example, I notice a deep desire, by the pupils, to be given the opportunity to tease out their individuality through voicing their opinions and to have those opinions recognised and set within an appropriate platform communicating that individuality to a wider audience.

Individuality, in my practice, supposes deep respect for different opinions, religious affiliations and an ability to listen actively to different voices no matter what age, gender, or culture. I believe that my pupils should grow as individuals and that individuality be celebrated and should challenge an education system that has become, *'the tool to be employed to eradicate differences between children'*. Different learning styles, intelligences, and personalities require different individual approaches to promote effective learning and good practice. In my research journey I come to realise that to have a practice that is

underpinned by my value of individuality I have to reassess my concept of my own individuality and my relationship with a class of individuals. The living experience of the wiki allows individuals to celebrate their individuality but it is through the act of writing this submission that I am able to reassess my individuality and understand my relationship with my pupils.

4.0 Moral accountability

When describing my value system as being central to my thinking in my research and practice, I assert that I am morally accountable for the actions I take within my research and practice. To achieve this aim of moral accountability I explain, through my narrative, the reasons and purposes for my actions using examples of how my value system of equality, responsibility and individuality validate and legitimised my research. To ensure this moral accountability I test the validity of my claims by asking myself questions throughout my research journey. The questions give my values an arena to exist, as they are absorbed in to my actions, for example:

- Do my pupils feel safe when working in an online authoring site and do I give them the opportunity to express their opinions about what makes them feel safe?
- Is my need to be in control of my teaching at odds with my core value of equality?
- Do I teach my pupils in a way that promotes the feeling that they are a community of practices when working online and respect their decision if they choose not to?
- Do my pupils know how to be safe when working on the Internet?
- Do I give my pupils enough opportunities to be individuals online?
- Are we, as a community, sharing our experience in order to create an emergent knowledge base?
- Have I communicated my journey to the wider educational community the values and how they inform my actions?
- Has my research impacted on my institution?

These questions, demonstrate the way my values are informing my changing practice, with each choice, decision, and action within that change, becoming

morally accountable through my inner debate about how these values are be absorbed into my practice.

5.0 Reconceptualise my identity as a good teacher

When I start this research journey, I am a set of living contradictions; I am uncomfortable in my practice because I do not understand the nature of the emergent learning the pupils experience when working on the Internet. To become a more effective teacher I believe it is my responsibility to learn how to use the Internet when teaching historical enquiries. I hold myself accountable for all the choices, decisions, and action I take on my research journey to change my practice because those choices, decisions, and actions are informing by my values. I come to understand my role in my practice through my journey to understand what my values of equality, responsibility, and individuality mean to me. I challenge my perception of my good practice and the set of well-established routines and tacit assumptions I have about my practice and through this deeply reflective process I transform myself and my practice.

The action of writing my narrative is transformative because it transforms me but I do not assume that it will transform another practitioner. I can only influence other practitioners with my story by showing how I change my practice, through my story, first by identifying what I believe to be my core values then challenging them as I realise that using those values to guide my choices, decisions, and action is a far more complex process. The story of how I challenge my values, in my description and explanation, therefore becomes my standards of judgement when making my choices, decisions, and actions.

I realise the potential of my research lies in contributing, through my transformative story, to a deeper understanding of why practitioner find change challenging in their practice. Change does not occur through the process importing a template of good practice, my experiences, I describe and explain in this submission; demonstrate change is an internal process that challenges tacit assumptions about a practice.

6.0 The potential of my research

In this section, I claim what I achieve and what I believe I can legitimately argue that I have learnt in my six years of research. I also state what I believe is the significance of my practice at a practical and a theoretical level.

The following is what I believe I can claim to have achieved at a practical level.

- I continue to challenge my values of individuality, responsibility, and equality in my practice.
- I enable my pupils to take ownership of their own learning by developing an online community of practices on a wiki.
- I contribute to improving subject knowledge through the pupils engagement with applying Web 2.0 technology when conducting historical enquiries
- I contribute to the transformation of my institution through transforming my practice.
- I influence different audiences with my descriptions and explanations: local, national and international.

The following is what I believe I can claim I have learnt at a theoretical level.

- To reconceptualise my own practice and influence others to reconceptualise theirs through my articles, workshops, good practice, and work on the wikis.
- To develop the capacity to make judgements about the quality of what I am doing as a practitioner and researcher and influence others to do the same by discussing my experiences with my colleagues and wider professional community.

7.0 My claim to knowledge

I claim, in this submission, that I identify, re-evaluate, and realign my educational values in my practice and use that new knowledge to develop an online learning space, and living experience, on a wiki space and a community of practices for my ten-year-old pupils to conduct historical enquiries.

I also increase my critical awareness by visualising my thought process as a reflective spiral within a spiral with an internal capillary action that allows the voice of the practitioner and researcher to inform each other becoming the single voice that narrates my transformative story.

I am claiming that I am contributing to my pupils' content knowledge by giving them access to knowledge, through the skills of Web 2.0 technology to: recognise, explore, accept, and celebrate their individuality in a wiki. This learning space enables them to access to the content knowledge and the skills giving them the opportunity to gain ownership of their own learning through being able to negotiate where and what they learn.

The dialogic practice I put into place on my wiki finds resonance in the way I am now communicating with my pupils in the classroom and collaborating with my colleagues.

I acknowledge that my methodology is not a template for other practitioners but through reading my explanations and descriptions of my journey of change, I aim to influence what a practitioner decides to learn from my narrative. I want my narrative to give a practitioner the opportunity to make that choice.

In developing my living theory of practice I reassess my values and with that my perception of what constitutes a good way to practice. My identity as a person is bound tightly within that perception of my good practice and in challenging my understanding of my core value equality I address deeply entrenched tacit assumptions hidden in words I took for granted all my professional life. These key words define my perception of myself and in making explicit the inequality that exists in my practice, through challenging these key words I am challenging, not only my practice, but also my identity within that practice. This process does not stop with the end of my research and in accepting that learning is a life long process I will continue challenging my assumptions about my practice. My educational influence, in my workplace and the wider domain, will be judged by the good practice that I now have put in place and describe through my articles, workshops, training, lectures, and this submission.

I claim my contribution to the domain of educational knowledge is through transforming my own practice and by showing how such change can be effected, specifically within the domain of the Internet. I did not set out to do this in 2002, I just wanted to be more effective as a teacher, but in transforming my practice, through the changes I make to have my practice, by aiming to be in harmony with my values, I give a new perspective on change in an educational setting.

8.0 My claim to knowledge at the level of theory

I offer, as my new perception on educational knowledge at the level of theory, my descriptions and explanations of my journey of change I experience in order to improve my practice when teaching ten-year-old pupils historical enquiries on the Internet. This new perspective contributes to the development of educational research and educational practice through my descriptions of how a wiki can become a community of practices and a living experience that encourages, through the pupils ownership of the learning process, meaning that is not only relevant within the school but engages with the wider world. This process of challenging my core values and changing my practice to establish my community of practices on the wiki generates my unique living theory of change.

9.0 My potential contribution to new forms of educational theory

'All research is taken with social intent' (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006: 45) when beginning my research I focus on my classroom but as I become a more confident critical researcher I am able to claim originality through Polanyi's notion that I can only understand the world from my own point of view. In writing my submission I am not only describing my own original story as a living theory I am also testing my own original story as my living theory of education in my practice.

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¹ The grammatical error in the title appeared in my article but has been corrected in the text.

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² The grammatical error in the title appeared in my article but has been corrected in the text.

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Appendix

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Appendix 4.1

Extract 1: 2002- Research aims for my preliminary study

1.1 The concern:-

What was actually meant by the term 'digital literacy'? This lack of clarity was a constraint that was inhibiting effective teaching when using the Internet.

1.2 The aim of my preliminary research

To deconstruct the term 'digital literacy' with reference to Key Stage 2 pupils achieving independent learning skills when identifying, locating and retrieving relevant information

1.3 My hypothesis

By observing and analysing the way pupils used the Internet to search for information: -

I would be able to identify the key skills and how they interacted with the pupil when identifying, locating and retrieving information.

This new understanding would enable me to develop effective strategies when examining historical sources of information on the Internet.

1.4 My research question at the time

What do I, the teacher, need to know about the child's thinking, about my own pedagogy and understanding of the nature of the subject [in order] to help me be more effective in helping the child use the Internet in historical enquiry.

1.5 The controlled Internet search

To answer my research question I put at the centre of my Preliminary Study a controlled Internet search by volunteers from Year 6.

Appendix 4.2

Extract 2: 2003- 2004-My Preliminary Study

2.1. I have always prided myself on being able to communicate effectively with the pupils I teach but I had felt that even in my most successful lessons I was being constrained by factors that I could not easily identify.

2.2 To give my research the tight focus I selected a teaching tool that highlighted the type of communication constraint I was experiencing when teaching history. The Internet was the emerging teaching resource and tool and I was intrigued by its potential. I selected it because the pupils and I were both using the Internet to locate and use information but this does not presuppose a common understanding of the medium. There was a need to understand how the Internet worked as an educational tool and to examine its impact on school knowledge. I felt the relationship between the pupil, teacher, subject and new digital teaching tools was lacking clarity. The government agencies had established a working definition of 'digital literacy' in their publication 'Transforming the Way we Learn (DfES: 2002) but it failed to provide the practical framework necessary to maximize the potential of this particular resource. Further studies and reports, especially the excellent ICT in Schools Research and Evaluation Series: No 18 (DfES: 2003), have tried to rectify this lack of clarity.

2.3 I was particularly concerned by the constraints I encountered when using the Internet when teaching Year 6 history. Using the Internet as a resource and teaching tool was different from teaching using textbooks, videos, tapes and artefacts. I felt constrained by my lack of understanding of the Internet and the 'digital literacy' needed to use it successfully.

2.4 I made a decision to address these concerns by deconstructing the teaching context where the Internet was used as the main teaching tool. I hoped to identify the constraints and then design strategies that would remove the constraints and making communication between the pupil and teacher more effective.

2.5 The beginning of my journey

In the governments publication All Our Futures (DfEE: 1998) it states that the priorities in education would be literacy and numeracy plus providing an education framework that would give our children an edge in the coming decades. The edge, in my opinion, was its focus on the use of ICT to deliver the core subjects. This focus manifested itself in the government initiative Curriculum Online and a National Grid for Learning. In the publication underpinning these strategies: Transforming the way we learn: A Vision of the Future of ICT in Schools (DfES: 2002) digital literacy was identified and linked literacy and numeracy to help create an e-literate population.

2.6 This new definition of digital literacy gave little guidance or insight into the complex decision making process that was required by pupils when working on the Internet. The Internet is a digital domain where traditional knowledge barriers are weaker with information moving away from the domination of text towards that of multi-media presentations. Digital literacy should be seen as an umbrella terms for the skills of the emerging 'multiliteracies' with their shift of emphasis from language (speech and writing) to that of 'multimodality'. Kress and Leeuwen's (2001) explanation of multiliteracies underpins the complexity of literacy on the Internet 'Students must understand how communication varies across media and how different grammars, whether grammar of text or the grammar of visual design combining to express meaning... They have to learn various types of electronic literacy... They have to learn the types of genre and rhetorical structures that are used I in a particular media (p162)

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These multiliteracies require multimodal skills and have to be identified and understood if the Internet wants to be an effective tool for learning. Modality refers to the non-linear narrative structures inherent in these different types of media: visual, sound, film, music etc. To decode these frameworks requires their unique form of literacy. By identifying these multiliteracies pupils and teachers would then be able to establish effective strategies for information gathering, assessing and evaluating in open non-linear learning environments such as the Internet. Understanding the learning environment afforded by the Internet was important starting point for my research.

2.7 In the early use of the Internet I had encountered many difficulties when using it as a teaching tool. In my experience it was: time consuming, had badly designed web sites, was not reliable, littered with safe but educationally unsuitable web sites and the type of information being referred to and downloaded varied in its relevance and quality. I could see its potential but there was little research, at the time, available exploring the Internet as an effective teaching tool. I had been particularly interested in a study by Hill and Hannifin (1997) who was investigating the different cognitive strategies adopted by adults when navigating on the open environment of the Internet.

2.8 I used this study as a starting point for my preliminary research but believed that the factors used by Hill and Hannifin were not finely tuned enough to the teaching context I was researching. I developed my own 'digital literacy' definition by identifying the five key skill points of reference, in my opinion, a pupil would access to navigate successfully when using the Internet

These key five skill points of reference would form the skills matrix or the code I would use when analysing my video and audio data. Each skill was subdivided to incorporate all the sub-skills I felt were necessary to search the Internet. In my research I will refer these key skills as 'threads'.

2.9 My preliminary research conformed to a classical 'scientific' model.

My preliminary research sought to be systematic, controlled and empirical way: this is an account of my preliminary research.

Appendix 4.3

Extract 3: 2004 - Reflection on my preliminary study: doubts set in

3.1 To simplify the decision making process I decided on simplicity, each decision within the key skill thread would have four stages: assessing the information, identifying a solution, initiating action and evaluating the decision. I surmised that the numerous decisions that were made in the searches would involve an excess amount of information being processed with the pupil trying to process and make sense of this information.

3.2 I observed that these skills threads were weaved tightly together to form one complex decision-making thread that charted the pupils searching on the Internet. The transcripts of the search, when teased apart into the five key skill threads revealed that each thread had a definite structure. I concluded that the pupils were forming 'narratives' (Bruner: 1996) to help them when searching.

3.3 Each narrative thread told a different decision making story. Each narrative emerging from the pupil pairs were at a different skill stages. The narratives of each pairing had evidence of 'intersubjectivity' (Bruner 1996) about them indicating that the narratives were shared. Intersubjectivity is another term used by Bruner to describe the ability to know what another person is thinking or perceiving when working together. These narratives, I concluded, would become 'routines' (Altrichter, Posch, Somekh: 1993) and would then become an integral part of how future search tasks were accomplished. I concluded that these narratives drew on the skills that had their roots in different literacies: visual, iconic, and textual and would become part of the pupils' perception of the task. The pupils' lack of understanding of how to decode these digital literacies was reflected in the type of narrative that emerged. Strong narratives moved between the different media comfortably while other narratives struggled.

3.4 Evidence from the narratives indicated that the pupil, to navigate through the non-linear landscape of the Internet, had to create a shared narrative with their partner. Intersubjectivity is a very important skill to develop when searching collaboratively but the pupils to be successful on the Internet had to understand their own thinking process. Metacognition is an important skill when searching but in my study it was the metacognition narratives threads that were short and not fully developed. By viewing an Internet search in terms of narrative threads a teacher will be able to identify and understand the strengths and weaknesses of key skills and adopt appropriate strategies. To make this type of strategy successful, it is not enough for the pupil to be thinking about thinking, the teacher has to be part of the process.

3.5 I concluded that each key skill thread needed to be understood. The perception of what the Internet will differ between that of the teacher and that of the pupil. In the classroom with its emphasis on text based literacy targets the teacher will tend to use the search as an extension of those literacy based criteria but the pupil navigating the Internet will be encountering different types of literacy and each type of literacy will have different criteria for processing the information.

3.6 I believe that an understanding of subject knowledge is a key feature of effective teaching (Turner-Bisset: 2002) I believe that it is important to see the conceptual frame of the subject and how that links with generic skills on the Internet. All the key skill threads that twine around the search questions create a temporary knowledge base for the time span of the search. The subject knowledge thread then becomes linked to the skills used to locate it and analysis the information. This temporary

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knowledge base becomes part of the permanent understanding of a subject. The subjects taught at school are in essence thinking tools for the pupil when they go out into the adult world.

The evidence I have collected from my data suggests that the teacher should have a deeper understanding of each skill thread and be aware of all the learning outcomes the search question is generating.

3.7 Using the Internet is not the same as using a book. Teachers understand books and their potential. The Internet is not a book: it is a non-linear interactive multi-media environment. My Preliminary Study revealed that the pupils were more confident when dealing with the text based tasks such as skimming and scanning and using the word processing program but less confident in the non linear multi-media format of the web sites. The Internet is rooted in the emerging multiliteracies and a strategy that is as comprehensive as the National Literacy Strategy has to be developed to make it an effective tool for teachers.

I also begin to question the role of the teacher in this learning context.

Appendix 4.4

Extract 4: 2005-Interviews with the pupils reflecting on their practice : a little voice is heard at last

4.1 The interviews were conducted after the searches. The interview questions were designed to paint a more detailed picture of the pupils reflecting on their own practice. Teasing apart their 'routines'. The analysis of the visual and verbal responses clearly indicated that pupils were constructing their own individual learning environment. I needed to identify how the pupil thought in an e-lesson to inform my planning. I concluded in the Preliminary Study that the decision-making narratives emerging were unique to the set of factors in play when the e- lesson was taking place. The problem was that I was saw was a fragmented narrative but the pupil narratives, which gave meaning to the lesson, were not being heard by me.

4.2 When transcribing the interviews I began to realise that my observations and analysis of the video and tape evidence differed significantly from the pupils' perceived experience. I found it hard to keep objective when the data from the interviews gave me a different perspective of the searches. The interviews could not be used within the framework of my 'scientific' objective methodology: they were subjective and contained too many variables. The teaching model I hoped would emerge from my research had to take into account what was actually happening when the Internet was being used by the pupil and teacher as a teaching tool. I believe pupils and teachers have differing perspectives, points of view, experiences and skills but in researching a teaching context both the participants should have a 'voice' in that research process.

4.3 The word 'voice' in this context represents the power to articulate a view of the world experienced by the pupil or teacher. I believe that the teacher and pupil should be on the same mission of giving meaning to the teaching context: they should be partners in the teaching context. Each participant will have different constructs of the world. The pupils who have been part of a prescriptive educational culture for years, have had their power to invest in the mean making process restricted to 'following instructions of powerful others' (Reason and Rowan 1981; P118). Pupils will therefore appear to be unequal and their 'voices' ignored. The interviews indicated that the pupils' do reflect on their practice and have opinions on the Internet as I reflect and have opinions on the Internet. The interviews made me realise that the pupils' and I were on the same journey and any future research had to be seen in terms of a partnership.

4.4 This preliminary study informed me that my teaching practice was not finely tuned into the reality of my pupils' lives and that I was unable to hear their 'voices'. The pupils, I felt, were 'existing' (Ibid: p118) but in a teaching context where true communication was not taking place. I was reflecting on my practice, but not allowing the pupils to reflect on their practice a process which would allow them to discover the 'routines' that were inhibiting their growth towards self-actualization (Ibid: p118) and be partners in the learning process.

If I was to develop as a reflective practitioner, it was necessary to redress the balance and identify the deeply embedded constraints and routines that combine to inhibit the communication process I adopt when teaching.

4.6 To discover the constraints and routines that were embedded in my use of the Internet I needed to research the interconnection between the subject, teacher, pupil

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and the teaching tool but this could not be achieved from being objective. To achieve this new insight I needed to establish a methodology that was sympathetic to my research aims and to do that I had to go back to the literature and establish what I actually thought about the key issues.

Appendix 4.5

Extract 5: 2005/2006- The interpretive paradigm: which way now?

5.1 I had changed in the process of conducting the Preliminary Study and this journey of reflection now needs to be an integral part of my research. I was still looking at the same concern in my practice but from a different perspective.

*5.2 **The Interpretive Paradigm:** The interpretive paradigm is an umbrella term but its main features are worth noting because they will be the foundation on which I will validate my future research. Cohen, Manion, Morrison (2000:21 – 22) give a comprehensive list of the main features found in the interpretive paradigm The interpretive model of Action Research with its cycles of planning, acting and reflection was ideal for my journey, it encapsulates the way my concerns about my practice could be resolved. A central aim of action research is to empower individuals and require participants to question and challenge values systems. These aims are also at the core of my research.*

*5.3 **The Interpretive Paradigm: criticism** Researching social reality using the interpretive paradigm models does have its critics. The social reality situations that are central to interpretive research do not exist in isolation. (Bernstein 1974). It is therefore important at the start of the research to understand the context in which the researcher is doing the research and avoid the ‘double hermeneutic’ with the truths that emerge become hermetically sealed from the real world. This reflection on the context of my practice is also fundamental to my research.*

*5.4 **Research Aims:** If I was to continue to develop as a reflective practitioner, it would necessary to redress the balance and identify the deeply embedded constraints and routines that combine to inhibit the communication process I use when teaching. The Preliminary Study had identified the constraints and routines that were embedded in my using the Internet when teaching history enquiry. To develop an effective strategy that was in line with my own reflective journey as a practitioner I needed to establish a methodology that was sympathetic to my research aims. My research aims are: -*

- A realisation of the nature of my practice that will also examine the symbiotic relationship that I, the reflective practitioner, have with my practice and the context in which I teach.*
- A reflection on the use of the Internet in my practice. This will be achieved by deconstructing the teaching context where this teaching tool is used. This process will involve researching: the Internet, historical sources, the pupils and me, the reflective practitioner. By teasing apart the ‘iterative interactions’ (DfES: 2003 p25) that make up this symbiotic relationship I hope to establish a ‘conversational framework’ (Laurillard et al 2000) or what I term collaborative narratives where ‘conceptual learning can occur and that can be applied at any learning to occur’ (DfES: 2003 p25) which will afford both the pupil and teacher the opportunity to maximize the potential action the learning context offers.*
- A demonstration of the impact this reflective research has on my practice by accounting for and presenting my thinking, learning, and description of and critical reflection on my practice using a number of different genres.*
- Ensure that my investigation follows the process of how I, the reflective practitioner, was changing. It is this changing of my perception of my practice that is at the core of my contribution to educational knowledge.*
- My research will be a record of the systematic way in which I transform my*

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concerns about my educational values into educational standards of practice and judgement into an educational theory and I hope to produce original research relevant to the academic and professional knowledge base of education.

Action research would be the research tool I would use to achieve these aims.

Appendix 4.6

Extract 6: Action Research: 2006- the right methodology at last or is it?

6.1 Action Research as an improvement at local level: *In essence, action research is a powerful tool for change and improvement at a local level (Cohen, Manion, Morrison 2000:227) and is therefore a popular research approach for researchers who are interested in making changes. The belief underpinning action research is that it will gain better understanding of problems that arise from everyday practice, but also it will set out to alter things and to do so, as part and parcel of the research process.*

6.2 Three perspectives of worthwhile knowledge: *Kurt Lewin the founder of the action research saw action research 'as a way of learning about organisations through trying to change them' (Robson 2002: 216).*

Since the work of Lewin researchers have viewed action research from different perspectives. Habermas (1972) constructed a definition of worthwhile knowledge and modes of understanding around which the model action research can be constructed. Three distinct approaches emerged but Habermas's description of action research in these terms has its critics. Keats (1981; 67) argues that there are a multitude of interests and ways of understanding the world and it is artificial to reduce them to three. I agree with Keats, this definition is simplistic, but it does show that action research, as a research tool, needs to be examined so that the criteria, that will guide my research, are understood.

6.3 Action Research: a cyclical process *Action research is a cyclical process of action and reflection distinguished by a systemic process of reflection on action with the purpose of improvement and change. At the core of this approach is the cyclical model of collaboration and participation, planning, acting, observing and reflecting. I have complete the first cycle with my preliminary study and am now reflecting on the next cycle.*

6.4 Action research as a useful starting point: *Kemmis's view on Action Research is a useful starting point because he uses a definition that tries to draw together all the elements and establish a set of criteria that would be useful to potential action researchers.*

Action research, according to Kemmis and McTaggart (1992: 22- 5) include the following characteristics

These criteria establish action research as an approach that is capable of having an impact on practitioner's theories and practices and suggests that it is also an: -

('approach which would involve practitioners themselves in researching the relationship between theories and practices' Kemmis and Taggart: 2001:91) and defines action research as:-

'self reflective, self critical and critical enquiry undertaken by professionals to improve the rationality and justice of their own practice their understanding of these practice and the wider contexts of their practice'

(Carr and Kemmis 2002: 122)

This is a definition that is in harmony with my research but is more a guide line because by following a set of criteria rigidly, as Webb (1996) observes when exploring this issue, action research can become codified and rather than be a guide to the researcher, they become 'the way to do action research'.

6.5 Action Research as Collaborative: *In my research the term 'collaborative' aspect of action required clarification: Kemmis and Taggart (1988) see: -*

' action research as a form of collective self-reflection inquiry undertaken by

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participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices and situations in which the practices are carried out'.

This use of the term collaborative did not sit comfortably with my interpretation of a reflective practitioner using action research so I needed clarification. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (2003 p 20 - 21) description of action research clarifies my role as individual researcher in action research: -

[it] involves informed, committed and intentional action. These elements turn practice into praxis. Action research is first person research (ibid: 20) the emphasis on the living person and shows how individuals can take responsibility for generating change.

Appendix 4.7

Extract 7: Living Theory: 2006- home at last

7.1 Action Research as a 'Living Theory': *The first person type of Action Research is called 'a living theory' approach. This type of Action research has a clear intent to intervene in and improve one's own understanding and practice and to accept responsibility for oneself. You ask the fundamental question 'How do I?' because action research should be about your action not the actions of others (McNiff, Lomax, Whitehead: 2003 p.19 - 20)*

7.2 Action Research as Living Theory: description: *Lomax (1994:14) an advocate of the 'Living Theory' approach to action research reinforces my choice when she suggests that educational action research is also research done by people who practice education I also embrace Lomax's belief that action research is self-developing which enables the researcher to produce their own form of 'living theory' through questions of the kind 'how do I improve my practice'*

7.3 Action Research turning practice into praxis: *Using McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead's (2004 p 21) definition of action research as being: -*

Informed, committed and intentional action I will turn my practice into praxis. To achieve this I must establish where 'I' am in my research. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead: (2004 p 20 - 21) elaborate by locating the 'I' in three distinct areas. This form of action research aims, not only at improving outcomes and improving the self-understanding of practitioners, it is also assisting me to arrive at a critique of my social or educational work and work setting, by providing a relevant set of criteria to frame my research, where I am the subject and object of my research, producing a dialectical engagement with the world

Whitehead's conception of a living theory comes from the unification of theory and practice in the experience of educational practitioners, as they evaluate past actions and imagine future actions, in response to particular learning relationships and context in which they enact their values in practice. Whitehead's conception of living theory is a dialectical engagement with the world that challenges the traditional philosophy of educational research that is based on a disciplines approach to education. (Hartog: 2004) Therefore coming to know myself as an informed, committed and reflective practitioner who will initiate action will be the central theme that will link all aspects of my research.

7.4 Becoming the reflective practitioner

My PhD is now a self study of my practice located in the field of educational action research and this thesis will be constructed as a living theory account where 'I', the educational practitioners, will develop a conception of 'what works' drawn from my practice experience. The research will include ideas and beliefs about my educational practice drawn from theories of education that other practitioners can apply or draw into their practice. Whitehead sees this interpretive view of social reality as a living form with the practitioner at the centre questioning their practice.

7.5 A self-study: key values *This self study will be conducted as a systematic discipline of action and reflection in which cycles and spirals of enquiry have enabled the research to evolve. I hope to develop skills of reflection and a critique to my own practice. Hartog (2002) identified key values reflecting my own values I believe in and hope to aspire to and underpin my practice when working with the pupils*

7.6 Know myself as a reflective practitioner: *In my research I will place myself at the centre of my research as I create and validate my own living theory contained in the description and explanation of my practice. By framing my research journey, through*

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cycle of action and reflection in a dialectical engagement with the world, I will explain the development of my thinking in this inquiry from the early stages when establishing the 'I' in my inquiry until I came to know myself as a reflective practitioner able to develop a critical understanding of my practice.

7.7 Making tacit knowledge explicit: *To keep in line with my values my future research has to be collaboration between: the pupils, my colleagues and myself. The first step of the next stage will be the setting up of a small research group comprising of volunteer pupils and teachers.*

7.8 My contribution to knowledge

My contribution to knowledge is be an understanding of the journey I made as I reflected on the process involved which affords the construction of collaborative narratives or conversational frameworks in the creation of temporary knowledge bases in this specific teaching context.

Appendix 5.1

Extract 1: Why this lesson is important to me?

When planning the e- lesson I was drawing on old skills, new skills and skills that I needed to identify to make the experience on the web sites meaningful. I was thinking in a completely different way [not classroom bound] to that of the text based lesson.

It is pointless paying lip service to the technology. The technology has to be part of the thinking process on the part of the teacher when planning the lesson. Pupils using web sites as part of the history lesson, like the teacher, will use old skills, new skills and skills that have still to be identified.

Observing pupils working in this new e-learning environment is essential if teachers are to fuse subject teaching with the technology to achieve the desired learning outcomes. I personally feel that history is an ideal subject for web-based investigation. Critical thinking skills that are central to the historian are essential skills that are needed by anyone locating and assessing information on the Internet.

I know why I teach the Jarrow March. It is central to the way I view the pre-war years. Why would I use the Internet when I have successfully taught the lesson using other resources? The Internet, in the future, is going to be the way most people gather information and this information has to be [scrutinized in] the same way that a historian would look at [evidence]: it has to be questioned rigorously and the interiority of the sources have to be established and I would use the Internet to demonstrate to the pupils what happens when history is let loose in hyperspace!

Appendix 5.2

Extract 2: Why use this new e-tool?

The anatomy of a lesson

I have taught the Jarrow March lesson for years but it does not mean that it is the same lesson. Each year new factors have to be considered: -

The chemistry of the class - a very important factor.

New resources available that can be used: text books, videos, tapes, worksheets, facsimiles, artifacts, on-line resources, CD ROMs, Internet web sites.

New delivery systems: whiteboards.

Changing teaching strategies to meet the need of a specific class.

New knowledge available in the subject.

Time restraints in the timetable

Changing emphasis in the cross curricular links, for example: -

Mathematics: *reading and analysing the unemployment graphs.*

Geography: *Charting the march through all the towns.*

English: *Reading and listening with critical understanding and presenting the information to a specific audience.*

ICT: *Understanding how to locate, retrieve and present the information.*

Music: *Recognise the importance of the marchers' harmonica music on their spirits.*

Drama: *Acting out the march to understand the emotions and motivation of the marchers and their family.*

When planning this one lesson I am seeing it in the context of all the other subject skills that have to be developed. Cross-curricular links are a central part in the planning of the lesson.

[In this section I am exploring the reasons for choosing the Jarrow March as a point in history that will have significance to the pupils and can be linked to their own lives].

What is the point of the Jarrow March lesson?

The core of this particular lesson is the critical examination of the photographic evidence. How these photographs are introduced into the lesson changes: the text book, part of a video, a poster, using the OHP, a photocopy, a CD Rom, the internet. Each method used dictates the teaching strategy. The properties of different resources will allow certain actions and produce specific types of behaviour unique to that particular type of resource. To use resources as an effective tool its affordances must be understood. Tools, no matter how clever and useful, are useless in the hands of people who do not know how to use them or understand what they can actually do.

The resource tool chosen effects the way the pupils respond and subsequently the flow of ideas and questions. It is the questions and answers that create the atmosphere where pupils start to understand the message the primary sources are hiding. The excitement as ideas and connections are made when the pupils begin to hear the past talking to them can only be achieved if the tool you are using is really understood by the teacher. What happens when a new resource tool is used?

Appendix 5.3

Extract 3: What skills were used in this e- lesson?

What skills were used in this e- lesson?

To make this e- lesson successful all the possible skills that a pupil may need will have to be identified and seen in context.

In my Pilot Study I identified six different types of decision-making threads when pupils were tackling a web site exercise: -

Information gathering decisions

Systems knowledge decisions

English decisions

History decisions

Metacognition decisions

Motivational and emotional decisions

The separate threads could be subdivided to finer decisions linked to particular skills.

In the study these threads were teased out of a complex maze visual and verbal data.

I coded the separate decisions that were linked to a specific skill.

The behaviour expected from the pupil when completing a web-based exercise will involve them using these decision threads. There will be six journeys in any exercise.

The systems journey where the physical manipulation of the computer will produce the windows and pages when required. The information-gathering journey that helps the pupil locates, assess and retrieve the information. The literacy journey that make it possible to decode the whole process and make a record of the journey. The history journey that gives the critical thinking focus that will test the information and system. All these journeys will require the pupils to critically think for themselves and most importantly feel motivated to complete all the journeys.

The e-lesson is not a history lesson using the Internet. It is not an ICT lesson using history as a resource. It is not an English lesson that is reinforcing literacy skills or information gathering skills. The e-lesson is demonstrating what the delicate interaction of the different skills that will be used when handling information in the future. The pupils will each have a different experience dependent on their individual skill levels and they will in there own way make sense of the journey.


Appendix 5.4

Detective 9: Jarrow March hyperlink trail

gibank · My Account · Help · Sign Out · wikipedia

page · discussion · history · notify

Hi Im detective 9 and welcome to my page on the Jarrow Crusade.(As you can see in the picture)



The Jarrow Crusade . This picture shows how many people marched in the Crusade and actually how many men were willing to walk 291 miles to get employment.

FACT FILE The Jarrow Crusade:

Name?- The crusade was given its name as it started in Jarrow in the North of England.

What was it?- The Crusade was one of the most famous **hunger marches** When in History was it?- The Jarrow Crusade started from October 1936.

What was the reason for the march?- The reason for this was because in about the 1930's there was almost suddenly no real money around, and there were about 28.3million people unemployed from 1930 to 1946. All the big factories closed but the very few who didn't lose their jobs were jobs like doctors,teachers and shop owners .The marchers walked from Jarrow to London where at 10 Downing Street they handed to the Prime Minister a petition with 11,500 signatures on it to try to get them some employment.

What was done to help?-Actually not a lot was done and most rich and privileged people couldn't care less. The only tiny thing that was done was called **Dole money**. The unemployed recieved about £1.50 from the government a week.

How much money did the so called "kind" government give them?- A family recieved 32 shillings a week.

How far did the people march?- In horrible cold,wet and muddy conditions the marchers walked 291 miles total. Their **route** was from Jarrow in the North of England to London.

How many people marched in the J.Crusade?- Roughly 200 unemployed men marched in the Crusade.

Did anyone help along the way?- Yes well wishers and sympathisers often joined them.One of the most memorable was **Ellen Wilkinson** a labour party MP. Also other unemployed people from different areas joined the march. Finally people who had heard about the marchers gave them food and barns to sleep in along the route.

In the end when the Crusade party reached London what happened?- Sadly when they got to Downing street the prime minister **Neville Chamberlain** refused them.

The next job all 28.3million unemployed men had was in about 1939 when the 2nd World War happened and they all got the same job, as SOLDIERS!

Other interesting things about the Jarrow Crusade are:

- The J.Crusade gallery
- A J.Crusade video clip [[D.9 The Jarrow Crusade vido clips]]

Some interesting websites to go on if you want to research more yourself are:

[BBC the Jarrow Crusade](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

[Jarrow Crusade website](#)

Also go to my page for //easy exam remembering.facts// This was a wonderful hyperlinked journey. You have obviously worked hard. Well done. Mrs P.Please go back to my History homepage to learn something new about a different period in History.....

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Appendix 6.1

Local reflective spiral one

Actions	Reflections									
<p><u>April 2006</u> My progression meeting was daunting but I accepted all the criticisms. I spent time reflecting on the advice and completed the summary of my progression meeting.</p> <p><u>The summary of my progression meeting</u> The purpose of the research was to understand the skills the pupils use when carrying out an historical enquiry search on the Internet.</p> <p>Data was collected by: recording, then transcribing, audio and video sessions of pairs of Year 6 girls conducting an Internet search.</p> <p>Analysis of the data initially involved using a coding system that related to the skills I had observed. Additional data was obtained through interviews with the pupils: this gave supplementary information about the Internet search process.</p> <p>The findings suggest that the pupils were creating narratives to make sense of what they had been doing. Therefore the pupils' perception of what would be an effective Internet search task would form an important part of any future research.</p> <p><u>Waiting for a decision from the university</u> I had to wait for several weeks before I was informed that I had progressed to the next stage of my research. In the meantime I decided to formulate a timetable that would structure my actions for the next few months. I set out a summer research timetable.</p> <p><u>Research Timetable</u> The objectives and actions had their origin in my progression meeting.</p> <p>Summer 2006</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Objective</th> <th style="width: 60%;">Action</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">✓</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Keep a detailed journal of the summer activities</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside a time each week to write up research activities </td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Read associated literature</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on a few key book a and journals </td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Objective	Action	✓	Keep a detailed journal of the summer activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside a time each week to write up research activities 	✓	Read associated literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on a few key book a and journals 	✓	<p><u>Reflection on my progression meeting</u></p> <p>My progression meeting was a painful but necessary stage I had to go through because:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite three years of studying and thinking I had not really crystallized my purpose. I knew the answer I was seeking was there, but, I was still in the 'can't see the woods for the tree' scenario • I realised that I still get very tongue-tied when I am unsure or even worse I tend to 'babble' hoping the truth will emerge unexpectedly: which it does sometimes! • I needed this time to reflect about completing my PhD. It was a perfectly good time to admit defeat but I was surprised how deeply I wanted to completed my research • It helped me tease out and clarify my thoughts and direction by asking to write in one sentence my reflections on the last few years. Couldn't do it in a sentence and it took me many hours and numerous versions before I could put my thought suitably simple language. The exercise cathartic. <p>I had to send a reflective summary to the progression supervisors:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am not the same person who started on this research journey. The process of initiating and conducting research required a different perspective on education from that of a practitioner. The dynamics of working within these two perspectives changed my thinking on many levels and influenced decisions I made in my preliminary research. This growing awareness of the importance of my thinking process has produced a new dimension in my research that has to be investigated to understand its significance. To achieve this I need to record how my thinking process evolves as my research progresses. 2. The role of the pupils has changed: their perception of the strategies I am developing has now become an important part of my research. <p><u>Proposed action</u></p>
Objective	Action	✓								
Keep a detailed journal of the summer activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside a time each week to write up research activities 	✓								
Read associated literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on a few key book a and journals 	✓								

Appendix 6.1

Local reflective spiral one

Meetings with supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a couple of meetings for this term • Set the agenda • Discussion document for each meeting 	<p>It was decided to undertake the next stage of the project by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including the pupils, as co-researchers in the cyclical reflection process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on the most effective way to use the Internet was agreed. • Collecting data using instruments that will include: focus groups, observations, journals and video/audio recordings. The analysis of this reflective cycle will form the basis of the next stage of research. • Continue to investigate a teaching approach that will set out strategies for teaching the most effective way to use the Internet when conducting an historical enquiry. • Writing an account of the reflective journey that will record my process of thinking as I move through the different phases of my research. • Setting out a timetable to structure my actions was agreed.
Write articles clarifying Preliminary Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article to SATIPS • Article 3-13 • Article Action Research • Article Naace 	
Organize an Inset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Inset on Enquiring Minds • Follow up Form Teacher's Meeting to finalize framework 	
Organize Research Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to BD : staff research volunteer • Send letter to parents of volunteers • Set a focus group timetable of meetings • Set agenda for meetings • Record meetings 	
Research Wiki's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Down load instruction manual • Design activities for pupils to explore 'wiki' skills. • Organise Internet session exploring the possibilities of the Wikipedia 	
Writing up research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe recorded data • Analyse data • Completed research of this stage • Write an article about the research • Send to appropriate journal 	

Appendix 6.2

Local reflective spiral two

Actions	Reflections
<p><u>Writing articles....well it's a start!</u> I decided to overcome my reluctance to open up my research to a wider audience; I would plan to write several articles. To start with I would start small with SATIPS and progress to the journal Education 3-13.</p> <p>SATIPS I have written and sent a short article to a local prep school support and training magazine. I did this to get into the habit of writing articles. I will be interested in any response: good or bad.</p> <p>My article to 'satips':-</p> <p>Blogs, Wiki's and Podcasting.... The way forward The Internet is such an exciting place at this moment. Blogs, wiki's and podcasting offer such an intriguing departure from the usual Internet work. But translating my enthusiasm into practical strategies which will encourage our small but enthusiastic staff to come on board is going to be as interesting as introducing these tools to the pupils. I am in the early stages of researching ePals: Blog with a small group of staff who can see the possibilities of blogging as part of the school curriculum. I hope to be blogging by September. In conjunction with the blogging initiative I have been working through the wikipedia web site tutorials. Once I have mastered editing on Wikipedia my Form 6 girls will be let loose on the site. The possibilities are endless. Podcasting I think I will leave until later in the next academic year. I will probably have to buy an iPod first and experiment with iTunes. I can already imagine Radio St. Hilda going online!! How much success I will have in these initiatives depends on many factors but I feel for the ventures to be successful it will be essential to involve the pupils at all stages so that I can gain their perception of how these new Internet tools are introduced and used. Why am I so excited.....?</p> <p>The Internet is such a potentially useful teaching tool. I use the word potential deliberately. In my own research I have discovered that pupils working on the Internet have to navigate through different literacies with their associated grammars: visual, aural, sound, film, design etc. These multiliteracies exist in a non-linear narrative environment and navigation can be problematic. This navigation involves making numerous decisions that cross these multi-literacies. The pupils then have to make sense of the experience by creating simple narratives. These narrative journeys create routines that eventually become the 'way it is done'. The routines the pupils adopt do not make sense of this virtual world but reflects more the way the</p>	<p><u>Writing articles....well it's a start!</u> Reading the Naace article 'It's a WikiWiki World out there? The a 'Wiki article, an essential for educators' by Gareth Honeyford (2006), was very exciting and struck a chord in my mind. I went onto the websites suggested in the article and began to see the immediate value of the wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page for my teaching. I was beginning to realize that to understand the benefits of the Internet would require me to be more proactive and interactive and this seemed to offers such an opportunity. How could I make this wonderful site a natural part of my teaching? It was not going to be easy. I didn't want a gimmick I wanted to have the pupils publishing on the web work they had researched. The idea was thrilling.</p> <p>I realised that the confidence I needed to continue my research and be able to articulate my thoughts coherently I required a wider critical audience to review my work.</p> <p><u>Reflections on the Naace article: 1</u> When I was writing this article I began to join up the dots from my preliminary study. Admittedly I was still finding it hard to put my preliminary research into a well structured narrative. Why?? I must try and imagine explaining to someone what was happening for the first three years of my research. I still feel emotionally tangled in the whole process.</p> <p>I feel this article is important and I will make a determined effort to complete it by the end of the April. Writing this article has helped me see the Internet in a different way.</p> <p>The Internet has several key affordances and in my preliminary study I was investigating just one of them: searching. I think the affordance I should be investigating is communication. Communication and how we master it will be the key skill pupils of today will have to master in order to function in the coming decades. Communication is to wide a term. What do I mean?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with another person or communities?

Appendix 6.2

Local reflective spiral two

teacher sees the Internet: an interactive textbook. The Internet at one level acts as an interactive textbook but at another, more important level, it does not just hold knowledge it is a place where knowledge is created. Textbooks are static with the information approved and authenticated but on the Internet the information has: fluidity, a short life-span, it uses multiliteracies and in many cases authorship is unauthenticated. We, as teacher, should be affording the correct opportunities for the pupils navigating the Internet by giving them experiences that will develop skills that will help them understand the nature and origin of the information that appears on web sites. Any tool that gives the pupil the opportunity to be part of the dynamic nature of creating and altering information has to be good.

Blogging, wiki's and podcasting are a wonderful chance for teachers and pupil to work together to develop skills that will empower the pupils when navigating and working on the Internet and ultimately make it a more informed experience.

I will be keeping a diary of my experiences.

Wish me luck.

Gillian Porthouse

ICT Co-coordinator

St. Hilda's School, Bushey

April 2006

Useful websites

<http://schoolblog.epals.com>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Introduction>

<http://www.bluwiki.org/go/EduWiki>

Honeyford Gareth 2006 It's a WikiWiki World out there! – 'Wiki Essentials for educators
Computer Education Issue 112 Naace

Education 3-13

I have started a more academic article for Education 3- 13.

I haven't got far but it is a start: the title **Practitioner Research The tale of the two identities**. I sent for a copy of the journal to see how the articles are structured.

- Communicating ideas?

I really don't know the Internet that well to be able to give an informed answer. To understand the complex communication network that incorporates wiki's, blogs, and podcasting they will have to become part of my life. I have to get inside the technology and think the way the software programmed. Only then will I **know** the Internet.

The pupils will be an integral part of the phase of my research. I can't pretend to be leading. I can help them as the facilitator but I need their unique view as a child with their own constructs on the world. I have to break down the pupil teacher relationship: but how?

Appendix 6.3

Local reflective spiral three

Actions	Reflections
<p><i>INSET: April 25.4.06</i></p> <p>The staff Inset was titled The Enquiring Mind. The Enquiring Mind is research funded by Microsoft (web site). This research focuses on the use key competencies and having the pupils as co-researchers</p> <p><u>My notes for the Inset</u></p> <p>The reasons for using this research for a staff Inset was to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a climate in the school where different teaching approaches and thinking about what is valid knowledge is being encouraged. • Introduce the key competencies that reflected the types of skills pupils would be expected to master to be informed and in control in a rapidly changing information laden world. • Explain that the staff have no idea what pupils will require in terms of knowledge and skills in the future therefore any competencies have to be generic and focusing the researching, authenticating and communicating information. • Explain that the Enquiring Minds research is using the skills of the future while teachers teach and think using the skills and understanding of knowledge of the past. • Use the language of the research. • Introduce the idea that teachers and pupils can be co-researchers • Linking these competencies to curriculum framework that exists in the school. • Identifying the pathway to the Enquiring Minds Model and recognizing the restraints that make it difficult to implement. • Create a framework that incorporate the key competencies into the existing curriculum framework • Discuss current research and encourage them to investigate it further. • Introduce my own research in the context of the Enquiring Minds research. • Have discussion groups explore the competencies and in the plenary identify restraints and commonality with the research. 	<p><u>The school term starts</u></p> <p>I have been asked to organize an INSET on independent thinking teaching strategies. I feel this would be a good opportunity to voice my own opinions about the way education is moving towards the enquiring minds model.</p> <p><u>Reflection on my SATIPS article: 2</u></p> <p>I was rather pleased when I saw this in print. It had helped me clear my mind and set out a research agenda for the summer term. It also: expresses my feelings about this initiative online technology, its potential in the classroom and the way I teach. I have had no response from anyone about the article. I will write another later this year following up the tasks I have set for myself. I am definitely going to incorporate blogs wiki's and podcasting into my Form 6 teaching time.</p> <p><u>Reflections on my article to Education 3- 13</u></p> <p>Haven't got very far with this article. I felt I needed to write up my summer research before I will be in a position to produce a meaningful article that would demonstrate where I was in the research process.</p> <p>I think as the summer progresses the focus of this article will change. My preliminary research was one identity but my new identity has yet to emerge. I think this article when it emerges will represent a chapter in my thesis.</p> <p><u>Reflection on the INSET: April 25.4.06</u></p> <p>I was nervous about this INSET because I felt so strongly about teaching pupils' skills or competencies for a life for which we have no concept. I was aware, from experience, that some member of staff might be mental 'luddites' and their passive</p>

Appendix 6.3

Local reflective spiral three

	<p>resistance to change could be draining.</p> <p>I was proved wrong. The staff proved to be enthusiastic and thought my ideas were relevant and useful thus making it an informative Inset and felt they had gained a great deal from discussing the issues. The Junior department felt the issues we raised linked very closely to the Independent skills initiatives that had been the focus of the form teachers meetings in the year.</p> <p>A core group of staff were very enthusiastic and encouraged the less sure members by ensuring that this was a joint venture and there would be plenty of support.</p> <p>It was agreed that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The junior school department, in the next academic year, would have an afternoon set aside to adopt the Enquiring Minds approach.• At form teachers meeting the staff will: continue the Enquiring Minds discussion, set the foundation for a framework that will identify the key competencies by linking teaching aims and objectives to the research.• The final framework for the investigation afternoon still has to be finalized but it was decided that the investigation afternoon would be on a Friday and would serve several functions: -<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Indirect training for the staff as they explores and experiment with new cross-curricular links.2. Discovers new ways of teaching in a non threatening environment.3. Identify the competencies that work in our school which can then be slowly integrated into the main curriculum <p>I was very pleased by the general reaction because it was allowing the timetable to incorporate exciting new initiatives.</p>
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Appendix 6.4

Local reflective spiral four

Action	Reflections
<p><u>Staff co-researcher</u></p> <p>A member of staff member agreed to be part of my research focus group I am setting up with the pupils.</p>	<p><u>Reflection on finding a co-researcher from the staff</u></p> <p>The staff co-researcher is my co ICT co-ordinator. She is very enthusiastic when working on the Internet and is open to new ideas and initiatives. I made her co ICT co-ordinator because she is one of the few members of staff who shared my vision of ICT education within the curriculum.</p> <p>She is also excited by change and willing to jump in at the deep end</p> <p>Although this is first-person research I had learnt from my preliminary research that I, as a practitioner researcher, cannot exist in a vacuum because in Judi Marshall's words (2001)</p> <p><i>I work with a multi- dimensional frame of knowing: acknowledging and connecting between intellectual, emotional, practical intuitive, sensory and more knowing and The assumption I use, repetitions, patterns, themes, dilemmas , key phrases which are charged with energy or that seem to hold multiple meanings to be puzzled out (p432)</i></p> <p>There has to be a sense-making process to draw out of the stream of enquiry. I had tried to clarify my thoughts with the use of key words. I was intrigued by Marshall's use of inner and outer arc of attention to distinguish between the personal first person self reflective experiences and those that reached out into the wider community. The inner arc was personal and the reflection happened instinctively but the outer arc was involved the researcher reaching out deliberately to engage with other people.</p> <p>The process of working between the two arcs of attention will be a juggling act as I seek out an</p> <p><i>Alive interplay (that is) generative: appropriate combination and dynamic (Ibid p434)</i></p> <p>I am not sure how I am going to differentiate between inner and outer arc and how my key words fit into this process.</p> <p>I feel I can work and relate well to my colleague but my relationship with the pupils as co-researchers is going to be a different matter.</p>

Appendix 6.4

Local reflective spiral four

<p><u>Pupil researcher</u></p> <p>My preliminary research the pupils were used as a tool to find the truth but in this cycle of research the pupil would be playing a more central roll. I discussed with the Form 6 Pupils why I wanted volunteers and then sent a letter home to their parents.</p> <p>2 May 2006</p> <p>Dear Parents</p> <p>As you may be aware I am studying for a PhD in Education. The main theme in my current research involves an investigation into the strategies used by teachers and Key Stage 2 pupils using the Internet when conducting an historical enquiry. I have completed my preliminary research and am now planning the next stage of my investigation. My research at this stage will involve the co-operation of Form 6 pupils. I require a small group of volunteers from Form 6 to assist me. This group of volunteers will be part of a small research focus group that will: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and work with me as I explore strategies for using the Internet. • Work on the Internet: these sessions will be recorded. <p>These activities will be at lunch times or after school. I do not envisage many meetings: plenty of notice will be given to the girls and parents when the volunteers are required. These activities will not interfere in anyway with Form 6's timetable or involve any extra work on their part. In fact I hope they will gain from the experience and be able to work on the Internet in a more informed way. To ensure confidentiality, volunteers' names will not be used in my research notes. The data collected will be stored securely and will only be used for research needs. The data will be destroyed at the end of my research. I hope to make this research experience a positive and enjoyable experience for the pupils. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any worries and about my proposed research arrangements. All volunteers are free to withdraw from the research if they are unhappy with the arrangements once they have started.</p>	<p><u>Reflections on working with pupils as co-researchers</u></p> <p>This aspect of my research was a real leap into the unknown. I had concluded in the preliminary research that I needed to hear the 'voices' of the pupils: but that was easier said than done. I was determined to find a way to listen to the pupils in a way I was yet to discover...interesting.</p> <p>On reflection I realised I will have to unpick a great deal of personal and professional routines. In the summer term I would have to re-establish a different communication style with the pupils if they were to be my co-researchers.</p> <p>The pupils had to be actively involved in the research, but, I was yet to understand what that would involve. They are not equals on many levels but that does not mean that there would not be platforms where we could meet as equals.</p> <p>I did not want them to follow through my ideas and assumptions, as I did in the preliminary study, but bring to the table their view of the research. I was very influence by reading 'Constructing Childhood' by A. James and A James (2004). The ideas which were discussed in this book reflect my own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childhood is a social construct • A child lives in a world that is full of to meaning to them therefore it is important to listen to their voices • Children have all the characteristics of a minority group • They lack power • Children are agent of social change <p>I like the way they distinguished between the child, children and childhood.</p> <p>To be equals the pupils and I had to create a space which merged our two constructs. A common space where a new framework of reference is created. In that case we would be on a level playing field.</p> <p>This difficulty of separating my research from my school activities became obvious from the beginning.</p>
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Appendix 6.4

Local reflective spiral four

<p><u><i>The pupil volunteers</i></u></p> <p>Twelve girls volunteered. I arranged an initial meeting. This proved difficult because of the school timetable many of the pupils had commitments at the suggested times. In the end I had to organize two meetings.</p> <p>Before the meeting I gave the volunteers three questions to consider when thinking about the Internet.</p> <p>Question 1: What things can you do on the Internet?</p> <p>Question 2: What things would you like to do on the Internet?</p> <p>Question 3: What things should you be able to do on the Internet?/////</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about these questions on your own or with a partner.• Next week I will have a meeting where we will discuss your thoughts.• I will tape the meeting• I will give you a research journal so you can write down your thoughts if you think you will forget them.	<p>I hoped to use: school council meetings, ICT lessons, lunch time sessions, after school ICT sessions as locations for my research with the pupil volunteers. Each of these locations represented the different ways I interacted with the pupils. This would help me tease out a commonality that would help me identify the type of relationship would help define my research.</p> <p>In the letter I sent the parents I was trying to assure parents that this was not going to be extra work but in reality I was not sure how it was going to develop. It was starting point, but, in reality I was yet to find one.</p> <p>These questions were a loose framework. I was very conscious by giving the questions I would be controlling the groups because the pupils would be at the meeting to answer the questions. The questions were just a starting point and giving a structure to a group that had yet to establish a relationship with each other and a purpose.</p>
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Appendix 6.5

Local reflective spiral five

Action	Reflection
<p><u>Research Group 1: 15.5.2006</u> GP : me AM RB AP RL PP : Year 6 pupils</p> <p>GP <i>what I am proposing to do is introduce different things the Internet can do over this term and I want you to be helping me sometimes..... I will put you little groups and say can you just do this and you just do that..... I am not worried if you make a complete mess of it... I just want you to have a go</i> <i>There were three questions what were they?</i></p> <p>KN What can you do on the Internet..? What would you like to do on the Internet and what should you be able to do</p> <p>GP <i>Let's start with the first one... what should we...</i></p> <p>AP When you go on the Internet you can find pictures and information about whatever.</p> <p>GP <i>is that the only thing you do on the Internet</i></p> <p>RB Another thing you can do is relax</p> <p>GP <i>Oh yes games... pictures information and games</i></p> <p>RB links to web sites</p> <p>GP <i>oh you mean going onto other web sites and find out different things on the web sites</i></p> <p>KN you can revise</p> <p>GP <i>Oh revise oh I bet you have been doing that recently</i></p> <p>RB oh you can down load stuff</p> <p>GP <i>Oh yes download ... who has ipods</i></p> <p>RB I have</p> <p>PB I have a mp3</p> <p>GP <i>when we do the Internet radio when we get this radio station going we could have a little programme that we could download and load it into your ipods so you can listen to it going along</i></p> <p>Group... oh yes</p> <p>GP <i>I am getting quite excited about it I will probably have to do that after school...</i></p> <p>AP yes</p> <p>GP <i>would there be any problem to coming after school</i></p> <p>AP no</p> <p>GP <i>you see it is so difficult in the day to do things</i></p>	<p><u>Reflections on Research Group 1: 15.5.2006</u></p> <p>Group 1 were very interested in the aims of my research. I was finding it hard to get the research group together. Lunch time was the only time available and that was proving difficult with the numerous lunch time activities that take place. My initial idea of having a quiet relaxing half an hour was reduced to a 10 minute slot which I managed to squeeze in.</p> <p>I was unsure how to handle the meeting because I was still unsure of the relationship issue. The girls would be part of the research team from the beginning and therefore be treated as equals.</p> <p>That may have been the theory but in practice the discussion the pupils look to me for guidance and approval. I realised as the meeting proceeded that the dynamic was still entrenched in the pupil – teacher mind set. It was hard for me to change a deeply entrenched relationship in one short session.</p> <p>I knew I had to rethink what was going to be the working relationship between myself and the pupils. This was not going to be easy and I was rather disheartened but I knew that you have to experience it several times while unpicking the components and reflecting on what is there and how it can be reassembled.</p> <p>I would take my time</p> <p>The pupils will have to part of a process that I am still learning about. We will all be learning together and their views on the process will be as valid as the staff researcher. I cannot dismiss anything because to hear their voices I have to listen: to what has not been said or interpret half formed thoughts and actions.</p> <p>In this group meeting I was interweaving my plans for the summer into the discussion and loosely setting an agenda. I steered the discussion towards msm and personal communication and introduced the term ‘blogging’. I wasn’t sure myself were I was going but I knew the key word communication was directing the way the discussion developed rather than any conscious strategy on my part. I was facilitating</p>

Appendix 6.5

Local reflective spiral five

on the other side of the world

GP *were they chat rooms*

PP *yes*

GP *are any of you are in chat rooms*

AP *msm*

GP *you have a small group of friends that you connect to..... we will continue this conversation. What we will do is try to do is and have a session when we could look on the Internet. The first thing we will look at is the wikipedia and also the Internet radio and maybe blogging and podcating. We will be looking at all these different things and how we can actually use them in the classroom don't want it to be extra I want it to be part of the lesson and I want to teach it next year, How would that be put into a lesson how would it be part of the lesson. How would it be like the pencil to make your lesson go*

The pupils are exploring the possibilities of the technology they know and how it could be adapted to the future.

I am teasing out possible communication targets for the term. I am thinking as I am talking. I am trying to articulate the sense of what has been said into workable propositions: being the facilitator again.

Appendix 6.6

Local reflective spiral six

Action	Reflection
<p>Transcript 2 Research Group 2: 19.5.2006 CP You can find out about holidays GP <i>Has anyone got life Space (I interrupt) it's on msm messenger</i> AR I have msm messenger but I have to up date it CP The trouble with my e-mail it takes a year to get my email laugh GP <i>Why is that?</i> CP Well my computer is very slow but now we have split up the half of my uncles computer GP <i>Well if you could think of other things as we go along</i> AM You could GP <i>Order (I interrupt)</i> AR Yes order stuff GP <i>What would you like to do on the Internet</i> AR I would.... GP <i>there are a few good search engines</i> CP Yes Google has loads of stuff GP <i>What would you like to do on the Internet</i> CP I would like in ICT lesson to make a web site but the box just came up to make our web site GP <i>We are working on presentations at the moment but we could work on web sites towards the end of term although this my space on msm is like a mini web site you set up yourself...anything else</i> AM ...if you want to set up yourself GP <i>we could even dabble in it at the end of term and start with the 5's next year</i> DB is that how Mrs Crowe does it..... GP <i>no she uses Front Page she is very good but is something you learn</i> AR my family has a web site but it has not been updated for ages GP <i>well that is something would you like to some research on that</i> GP <i>I have the idea of Wikipedia that is an online encyclopaedia where you add your own comments and you can then own bits into it so that the whole world can see it but if you want to want to as part of my research set up your own web site This little group could be looking at that I was thinking about the Internet radio</i></p>	<p>Reflection on Research Group 2: 19.5.2006</p> <p>Decided to think of this meeting more as a conversation. I felt, even if the pupils did not realise it, I wanted the relationship to change.</p> <p>I had been very impressed by 'Wikipedia' and really wanted to start setting it up the 'research' focus. In the Internet session I hope with the pupils as co-researchers to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the 'Wikipedia' through completing the tutorials • Edit an entry • Create our own entry that will have been researched and discussed <p>The school council, as a result of the last meeting, had been discussing the possibility of using an Internet radio format to give out council news. The school council was largely comprised of Year 6 pupils so the research groups were drawn to the possibilities of Internet Radio. I realise especially in this second meeting that the pupils were not going to take up my suggestion of looking the 'Wikipedia'. Realising this I moved the focus in my mind from the 'Wikipedia' to 'podcasting' and 'blogging'. I would weave my way back to the possibilities of Wikipedia later in my research.</p> <p>The second group was arranged in a very busy schedule. The meeting lasted 6 minutes. In this session I feel I have a different, less sympathetic, listening style. The pupils were very reluctant to discuss and I felt I had to prompt them to contribute.</p> <p>I wanted this to be a more conversational type meeting, so I didn't use the questions as a frame but let the discussion flow.</p> <p>Still thinking I can use 'Wikipedia' but realized my research focus needed to be wider encompassing communication in general and not a single Internet facility. Talking to the pupil is helping me to clarify my thoughts through the filter of their perception of what the research entails. I realised that the wikipedia was what I wanted to research but it was the pupils who were showing me the way to go and I was really reluctant to let go of my idea. The pupils were initiating change in a way</p>

Appendix 6.6

Local reflective spiral six

<p><i>There are things we could be in our sessions</i></p> <p>CP I have just thought of a few questions in the corridor Are we using the computer by questions or does someone tell us</p> <p>GP <i>me?</i></p> <p>CP YES</p> <p>GP <i>it is going to be how I teach and learn just jumping in the deep end and you press buttons until you work out what it does then you go to the instruction manual because that is how I learn. I don't know if anyone else works that way? If you notices when I teach who ever gets it first becomes the expert. for the moment ...but that is the way I learn</i></p> <p>CP If someone told you how to work something and you told someone and so on</p> <p>GP <i>on the internet it is a lot of people playing I don't think it is a case of being told somebody wanting to be able to do something if you want to do something you learn how to do it.</i> <i>so we want to make our own web site</i></p> <p>DB are we going to do it as a group</p> <p>GP <i>I have a series of thing I want to do in session after school we can start looking...you want to look at web sites I could start looking at something you could start looking at something we could be looking at different things. There are a couple of things I</i></p> <p>AR yes we could set up a web site</p> <p>GP <i>that is what we could be doing looking at different web sites and that could get into the wikipedia that I am quite interested in. So this little research team wants to look at web sites</i></p> <p>CP/DB/ AR yes</p> <p>GP <i>how to make a web site</i></p> <p>AR What are the other group doing</p> <p>GP <i>they haven't decided what to do yet but we have to se tit up how does it work and what do we put on the site</i></p> <p>CP could we have a lot of games and quizzes</p> <p>GP <i>do you like games and quizzes</i></p> <p>CP I don't really like games but I do like quizzes but some children do like it</p> <p>AR Yes finding out about yourself</p> <p>GP <i>Well lets start looking into it and see if we can get there and even if we haven't got it by the end of term at least you will have started your own research but you doing the research is what I want. You research and I will be watching you and</i></p>	<p>that made sense to them: I had to listen to them</p> <p>I discussed learning styles to illustrate that I was not expecting a 'right way' and that I was genuinely wanted their help.</p> <p>Talking to the pupils has been a positive experience but what do I want them to do exactly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a sounding board for my ideas • Research communication possibilities over the Internet • Help me discover how I can listen to their 'voices' and understand what they really trying to say. <p>Again I don't want to be prescriptive by opening up the possibilities myself. I am trying to access what part of the Internet would excite them.</p> <p>Interestingly until I had written out the transcripts I had forgotten most of what Group 1 had discussed. I remembered most of Group 2's contributions. Interesting.</p> <p>I was not happy with the Group 2 discussion: my input appeared to be impatient and controlling. The group was passive and needed more verbal stimulation than Group 1. Am I hearing and seeing in print my conversational style and that is that what the pupils are reacting to??</p> <p>Am I voicing my ideas and the pupils are just picking up clues from my body and verbal language? I want a conversation but all the signals are saying I am giving a lecture and therefore defining our roles in the discussion</p> <p>I realized that the pupils could not be equal in a discussion where I was present. This need thinking about.</p> <p>What am I trying to achieve by having the pupils as part of the equation?</p> <p>I think I want a joint narrative that merges the need of the pupil with the needs and expertise of the teacher.</p> <p>How do I engage with the child's construct of the world?</p> <p>What am I listening to?</p>
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Appendix 6.6
Local reflective spiral six

<i>working with you and I will be videoing you</i>	What do I want the pupils to tell me?
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Appendix 6.7

Local reflective spiral seven

Action	Reflection
<p><u>Journal entries</u></p>	<p><u>Reflections on the new initiatives</u></p>
<p><u>May</u> I have been keeping a journal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated Internet time with BD. • Started Wikipedia tutorials. • Downloaded Internet Radio ‘audacity’ and had a tutorial with BD. • Gave out questions about the Internet to my research group and discussed about the aims of my summer research with the girls. Set times for meetings and Internet sessions • Registered with Schoolzone to be an evaluator and consultant • Start making notes about ‘think e-literate be e-literate • Produced a diagram which will encapsulates journey towards being e-literate by creating a virtual teaching space • Internet radio: Discussed issues with the School Council. Research team volunteers in council to be technicians and the rest reporters. Downloaded audacity and started tutorials ready for the research teams. • Downloaded audacity on the computers in the ICT suite. Started to use the software in Form 6 lesson: PowerPoint audio files of children’s voices • Set up two after school sessions for F6 to complete ICT activities. Use the sessions to start research on Wikipedia, podcasting etc. • Taped first research session group of five. Positive feedback. I aim to transcribe the tape at half term • Discussion with the web manager possibilities of using audio on web site: winners of poetry competition • Ipods the pupils seem to have them. Download audio work • Discussion with BD possibilities of emailing English speaking pupils: Moscow and Arizona • Form 6 still completing view of the school using the school camera. AP organized the order and location of the pictures. Send as an attachment to South Korean ePals with the Robin Hood/Author power point presentation • Internet affordance communication that is where my focus should be when planning my Form 6 tasks in ICT. 	<p>I am excited about the prospect of introducing this new technology. It feels so right and fits in beautifully in with the communication affordance I am focusing on this term.</p> <p>Podcasting: Internet Radio The school council had received literature about communicating their ideas and decisions through a school radio station via the school web site. The idea was discussed at a school council meeting and it was agreed to try and set up a school radio station by the end of term. To succeed audacity software would have to be downloaded and mastered. Once that stage was completed the podcasting technology would have to be tackled.</p> <p>WebBlender Several pupils were keen to understand how to create a web site. I downloaded free trial copy of WebBlender and in the after school session two pupils researched the software.</p> <p>e-pals BD was very keen to link all the Key Stage 2 pupils with e-pals. The aim was to link up with pupils all round the world and share ideas and work. To develop a wider community that would eventually impact on the curriculum</p> <p>Wikipedia The Wikipedia is an ideal medium to use for the next stage of my research. I want to afford the pupils opportunity informed action when on the Internet. To conduct a successful historical enquiry pupils need one key competency; the ability to view the information they have located as valid.</p> <p>The Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia where you have the ability to edit the entries. This skill will inform the pupils that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is open to change and should not be taken at face value • The pupil has the power to create knowledge that can be viewed and edited

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Local reflective spiral seven

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea: historical enquiry: Investigate the use of audio and film evidence in NC unit Britain since 1930. ‘Voices from the past’ • Second group meeting. Enthusiastic but listening to the tape I talk too much and am not actively appearing to be listening still controlling the session. Group wants to know how to make a web site. Must get the software • Renamed the ICT suite and library as the Learning Resource Area. Staff enthusiastic apart from one: another pointless initiative. Library text based resource ICT room digital learning resource. By joining these two rooms transferring two subject skills areas into generic learning skills – linked to framework competency framework • Must link more actively all computer skills to subjects • A meeting with ICT, English and Upper school coordinators to subjects • Videoed school council meeting. Discussed the features which will be in the radio programme. This programme will be put on the web site or downloaded into iPod if children have them • iPods good idea, one member of staff feels they should only be a home piece of technology. We are trying to do too much. I feel it is not an extra but part of what we are doing • Email initiative ‘gaggle’ and ‘ePals’ progressing despite a few problems • By thinking about Internet activities and aiming the class activities power point and images of school as emails to Korean pupils • Informed the pupils that after half term I will be in the ICT suite leaning resource area Wed, Thurs, and Thurs until 4.45. It is the only time I can do research with the pupils. The time factor is a big issue • Half term will be intense tutorials so I can get ahead of the pupils: wikipedia, blogging, podcasting, write an article for 3-13 • Select software to design web site for pupils, order childhood book • Opened up the ICT room Tues, Wed and Thurs for research or ICT activities of their choice • Having trouble streaming audacity files using MEG lame software doesn’t seem to work. Will have problems podcasting at this rate. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>June</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BD developing the e-mail to Australia, Korea, Moscow, Arizona and all the 	<p style="text-align: center;">by others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Blogging</p> <p>I was very keen to start this but it has been rather problematic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School web master was not keen and discovered that the web site would not support the facility <p>I have made a decision about the location of the practical session they will be in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT lessons • After school sessions • Lunch sessions <p>I decided that it would be impractical to tape or video the pupils in the practical sessions. I would just introduce all the new initiatives and let the pupils go with the flow. I would keep detailed notes and reflect.</p> <p>My overall impressions of both research groups, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • were very enthusiastic • had plenty of ideas • had a deep desire to understand the technology that controls their ability to communicate. <p>I have decided that the pupil volunteers would not be based on the two initial discussion groups but would be a combination of the pupils who had volunteered.</p> <p>The practicalities of how I would record my action in my journal was going to be a masterpiece of creative thinking.</p> <p><u>Reflections on my journal entries</u></p> <p>I realised very early on that keeping a journal that noted all the ways I was going to engage with my inner and outer arc of attention was going to be difficult.</p> <p>I have a busy timetable and as deputy head I have many administrative duties. I had, at the beginning of the summer term, decided to try and frame my experiences by</p>
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Appendix 6.7

Local reflective spiral seven

<p>US girls now have e-pals and are sending messages to each other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group which did not go on the French trip started to make a radio station • Think in sound and images • Trial webBlender in response to one of the research group wanting to know about how to set up a web site • Research AP, DB PP MS want to set up a radio station ; Radio St. Hilda's by producing two shows to go onto the web site to be downloaded via an iPod and podcasting • Research very excited • I downloaded the educational software from BT Internet radio for school will give to the show hosts • I must think in e-literacies find the solution on the net • Must start looking at wiki's and blogs • BD writing up experiences of producing a radio station when I was in France • Encouraging the research team to keep a diary of their experiences. • In France took digital photographs and sound extracts to produce a PowerPoint but Also to be used on the web site • Think audio and visual solutions • Training myself up on PowerPoint and all its possibilities • Also training up on webBlender may try Front page in summer holiday • After school ICT groups very interested in audacity and WebBlender. • School Council arranging interviews for next week • Investigating podcasting. • Sound bites on the web site but not in meg format but wav. Too much memory. Must find a solution • Investigating Perl – need to look at a case study • Research group after school focusing on different things; DB working on WebBlender, PP worked on her radio show investigating tracks and working between them but still focusing on being a DJ, AE very interested in audacity wants to download it and play with it at home and produce her own radio show, AP French project editing and working on sound, MS working on the Internet, CP inserting sound from audacity didn't work must find out why PP rainforest to send to Korean school as an e-mail. 	<p>being sensitive to the key words: communication, the past, facilitator, collaborator, agents of change and reflection.</p> <p>I realise that that the teaching space I was looking for to develop my strategies was going to be virtual. This meant I had to unpick a lifetime of routines which defined who I was as a person and as a teacher in a 3D world.</p> <p>Writing down short entries was not ideal but I began to realise that reflection was like a microscope. If you are examining close enough you will only see the individual cells. As the microscope pulls away different patterns appear until you can see what you are examining.</p> <p>My notes are the cell stage and only time and several different reflection stages would determine the pattern that would eventually emerge. The reflection at this stage is an initial filter. I will revisit my summer journal later to tease out actions and initial reflections that will have more significance as my narrative unfolds.</p> <p>I have yet to tape or note any discussion with BD. I have not really had the time to set up a session. I have taken notes of what we have discussed but I have not yet taped a meeting. A taped session would reveal hidden nuances of our relationship and I think that would be very helpful.</p> <p>We are now connected by msn messenger.</p> <p>There is a general feeling that all this new technology, I am discussing and introducing, is a gimmick and I am trying to get the pupils to do too much. Maybe I am at the moment but I feel deeply that this is not an add-on to teaching but the way it will be in the coming decades.</p> <p>It is hard for a text based literate person understand the e-literate world of the virtual teaching space.</p> <p>It is also hard to discuss a virtual world I am only beginning to comprehend.</p> <p>I am definitely going to become e-literate. (this is laudablebut seems to be becoming a theme of the narrative ('a teacher's journey into an e world')</p>
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Appendix 6.7

Local reflective spiral seven

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent NAACE article <i>Talking the Talk</i> to BD ordered the book <i>Blogs, wikis and podcasts</i> by Will Richardson from Amazon • Research links from the links from the article at the weekend • AP went back to editing and now is focusing on sound transferring skills we have been focusing on. • AR loves making web sites wants to get her own site. Need to see if we can link to school web site • Topic of discussion copyright too much focus on music on the net • DB very enthusiastic webBlender, and has downloaded audacity, • Research groups have thinned out after school, too many activities at this time of year • Taped one group gave them a list of topics to discuss. The research groups had to discuss using the ICT activities this term and how they could help me teach Form 6 history next year. I left them alone to discuss the topics. One group was taped the other videoed. • The research groups loved the whole experience. They loved interviewing each other, one group started to bring interviews together but ran out of time • Still having problems saving on MP3 format. • Solved the problem took a lot of playing to solve that problem • Put a few snippets' of recorded work on school web site. Problem it take up too much web space • Reading NAACE online newsletter followed a trail for appropriate software but need a friendly nerd. • Found a friendly nerd but may research radiowaves¹ to see if I can solve podcast problem myself • Designing own web site: lost interest • Going into school to set up the radio station in the summer. Use school council interview • Working on the timetable afternoon for independent activities, ICT club Tuesday and Wednesday to develop and encourage pupils interest in radio station setting up own web pages • Side effect to all this interviewing: diction and clarity of voices has 	<p>According to BD the pupils who were using audacity when I went to France really enjoyed trying to set up a selection of interviews.</p> <p>I have noticed the pupils really love using the audacity recording software. There appears to be a deep desire to communicate their thoughts and opinions.</p> <p>I am trying to master PowerPoint. I am pleased with my progress. The pupil researchers have been playing with the new software. I have not set any conditions on what they do. I did not want my perception of what should be happening to interfere with their way of exploring and experimenting with the software.</p> <p>What am I looking for in the practical sessions?</p> <p>By giving no sanctioned focus or endorsing a particular activity will they loose interest?</p> <p>Am I asking too much?</p> <p>Several pupils are very influenced by radio DJ's and learnt how to use audacity by being DJ's. Others wanted to interview and took time to organise interview sessions. I gave information sheets but most were happy learning through playing and experimenting.</p> <p>One side effect on the pupils recording has been the improvement of their diction when talking. In one case a rather dramatic improvement.</p> <p>I am continually amazed by how focused the pupils are when they are interviewing their friends and then listening to the results. There seems to be a real desire to listen to each others views even on the most simplest of subjects.</p> <p>The pupils lost interest in the WebBlender because the online instruction although excellent was not immediate enough. I could see the value of the software but the pupils in these sessions wanted to be more hands on with immediate results.</p> <p>I agree that in order to create a virtual learning space communication has to be</p>
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¹ **Radiowaves:** is a safe online network for children to publish blogs, podcasts and articles about items of interest

Appendix 6.7

Local reflective spiral seven

<p>improved, articulating thoughts become more concise</p> <p>Diary entry July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with the ICT co-coordinator to discuss next year. Focus on developing Internet : ePals, gaggle email all children have an email accounts, research radiowaves and develop as school radio after playing with audacity for a term., • Correlate the school council recordings and make into a podcast • Read <i>Blogs, wikis and podcasts</i> by Will Richards and then will pass it to BD. • Looked at a couple of sites mentioned in the book. • Discussed the educational use of blogging: writing for an audience that will comment felt this will focus and motivate • Touch typing to improved writing skills do not want text writing • Wikis I will investigate myself • Set out target for summer research for ICT co-coordinators: radiowaves, Flickr and Eblog. Produce an ICT diary for pupils, continual assessment and target setting. • I am go to set up my own web site to develop my own understanding of the skills and thinking required • Asked BD to write down her impressions of the things she has done this term with the focus on e-emailing: PowerPoint, messages and developing links with different communities. • Ideas for next term: links with Google Earth mapping skills • Must do the tutorials : radio waves, wikis and blogging • Must have the Internet ready by September with radio station • Idea radio station with oral history historical enquiry. Sent out request in newsletter for grandparents who were baby boomers and evacuees to be interviewed by the Form 6 girls. Develop our own historical resource • Read the books I ordered • Start thinking about writing my articles for: NAACE computer education, action research • Must get to Hatfield to get Education Action Research Journal, also read Learning and Teaching and TES. Read and outline possible articles 	<p>immediate. Web sites are okay but they have a time factor. To have the dynamics, I want the pupils' thoughts be published immediately and discussed with other invited into that space. You can not become e-literate until you are working and thinking in a virtual space using the tools that work.</p> <p>It has to have the fluidity and the dynamic nature of speech</p> <p>Nothing is easy and if there is a problem I will find it. I can't seem to get the recordings onto mp3 format. This is vital if I am going to publish any podcasts.</p> <p>Am I looking for quick solution from 'idiot's guides' because I want to be passive in this process of changing my mind set from being literate to being e-literate?</p> <p>If I am to understand and know the Internet I have to fight the overwhelming fear of failure that accompanies any decision I make into a knowledge realm, which at times, makes me feels like I am in a foreign land using a foreign language.</p> <p>Is this how pupils feel when they are learning a new subject? Not at the beginning when it is all exciting and new but when you have to build up a conceptual understanding of the domain?</p> <p>It makes my brain hurt!!</p> <p>Loved the suggestion from the book '<i>Blogs, wikis and podcasting</i>' by Will Richardson that the pupils are the 'natives' and the teachers are the 'immigrants' when working on the Internet. If you live in a country you learn the language and culture.</p> <p>This book has given me the technological scaffolding I need to complete my journey. I am nowhere near being e-literate but I now feel I can achieve the status but now I have been given a good phrase book to work in this foreign land.</p> <p>All the traditional arena's for observing pupils (classroom) are not adequate. I need to engage and develop a narrative in a space which will empower pupils by combining their desire to communicate with the opportunities offered on the Internet: blogging??</p> <p>I wonder if this is how children feel when they are given the appropriate academic</p>
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Appendix 6.7

Local reflective spiral seven

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jumping in at the deep end and set up a blog site. This will be the forum from which I will conduct the rest of my research. I will conduct with the pupils on the Internet a Historical Enquiry using the blog to collect, discuss and finally publish our findings.• Must go to more professional meetings and voice my opinion on issues• I have to record pupils thoughts before the end of term	<p>support to leap into the unknown but knowing they can achieve the goal.</p> <p>In the world of text a great deal of your thinking is done internally. You discuss with your inner voice. It is a comfortable state of affairs. In the e-literate world your thoughts are open and the inner voice has been replaced by a world wide voice.</p> <p>The thought is frightening and exhilarating.</p>
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Appendix 6.8

Local reflective spiral eight

Action	Reflection
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Transcripts of pupil researchers discussions at the end of term</u></p> <p><u>Research Group: audio summary 27.6 0</u> AE RL CP MS MF</p> <p>rl we are here to talk about audacity.. what does M think ms I think audacity is really useful it help records your thoughts and words rl A ae you can make up your own thoughts and have a bit of fun rl C cp think it is very good even record with any sized group I think it is very good because you record your thoughts rl now what do I think about audacity I think it is very clever because when you do record you can see all the little things with your voice travels it's very clever I think.. it is very fun MF mf I think audacity is very useful like M it helps you clear your thoughts rl has anyone done WebBlender.... no.. none of has done webBlender rl e-mail what do we think of email cara I think it is very useful because rl normal e-mail cp yes normal email rl not ePals cp I don't have any other email rl I have email I have just deleted all my emails I have 62 now I think it is very useful because it is a way to talk to each other and it is quite fun ms another type of email is not called email it is called msn. I think it is quite useful because it is like instant and if you have some worries your friends can hopefully reply really quickly. ae Like M I think msn is better because you can just chat to your friends. ms it is kind of dangerous as well because you can on a person or something.. it is good if you can type in the right address rl you know msn well its because some people have screen names you can not actually recognise that is why I always ask who is speaking ms I think msn and email is very useful but with either of them you have to be careful</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Reflections on pupil researchers</u></p> <p>The two transcripts were the result of my desire to draw some conclusion from the pupil researchers. I was determined that I would not be present in the there because I wanted their views without any verbal, physical or subconscious signal indicating what I wanted.</p> <p>I did give them a list of all the things we had done in the term and posed a simple question to help direct their thoughts and suggestions.</p> <p>Question: Thinking about all the things we have done this term (list of the activities) how do you think you could help me teach the present Year 5's next year in their history lessons.</p> <p>I used this question to try and clarify their thoughts and direct their discussions towards history. I had not directed any of the practical sessions towards any subject because I felt that would make them feel I was 'teaching' them. I introduced it now in the form of a request.</p> <p>I was asking their opinion. I did not have the answers and to be honest I was genuinely interested in their response. I was tired and harassed and I needed their help.</p> <p>To be treated like an equal you have to regard their opinion as equal to your own.</p> <p>The two groups loved the sessions. The first group used a tape recorder and the second used the video camera. Not all the original research volunteers took part in these two sessions. It was voluntary. Several wanted to finish ICT projects that had started: editing their 'ghost' films and completing their PowerPoint's that were to be sent to by e-mail to Korea.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Reflections on Research Group 1: audio</u></p> <p>I was pleased to hear the pupils refer to their thinking and how the technology was helping them clarify their thoughts. I have been reinforcing the message that I want</p>

Appendix 6.8

Local reflective spiral eight

<p>rl school council radio oh Alex what is it like doing the school council radio</p> <p>ae oh it just really trying to record some interviews and put it onto the radio thing we are doing.. we haven't got very far but are trying to do our best</p> <p>rl also on PowerPoint I think that like that it is very clever it is very, very nice to look at and if your friends like, we are doing Robin Hood and King Arthur stories think it is very nice because of the different effects that use.. well that is my opinion</p> <p>ms Power Point and my opinion.... it is very useful and it is very nice looking at thing but if you are at a seminar it can get kind of boring is someone is saying what is on the PowerPoint if you are doing a presentation you should be saying something different from the PowerPoint and refer back to bits of the PowerPoint not just the whole thing.</p> <p>ae I think PowerPoint is very useful and you can do very clever thing on it and going onto sound bites from the school.</p> <p>group ... we haven't done that</p> <p>ae oh sorry I think PowerPoint is very useful, you can go on it anytime you want...what are the things you can swing on.?</p> <p>mf images</p> <p>ae oh yes</p> <p>cp you get it in the end. I think PowerPoint is very clever sometimes it is annoying when you put things on and it doesn't work on some of the computers</p> <p>ae PowerPoint is a good thing to do for presentation you shouldn't refer to it is just something for the audience to look at. and its quite fun doing it</p> <p>rl we are trying to help Mrs P with the history. With all the things I think the easiest way well not the easiest but to help would be PowerPoint you can show how they lived and kind of discussed it</p> <p>ae timelines</p> <p>cp you could make a recording of your homework</p> <p>ms but PowerPoint is more colourful and more attractive</p> <p>rl yes you can make it attractive but you shouldn't just refer back to the PowerPoint</p> <p>rl in class 6 we have been doing editing which has been very good fun because I have never done editing before... also it should have a title, scene, links music the end and credits. My group has got the title scenes we haven't got music yet or the end and credits but it is very good fun because we are going to take it home on disc and our parents can see it a memory of St. Hilda's</p> <p>ae history how can we change it how can we make it more fun</p> <p>mf we could make sound bite like a bomb</p>	<p>their ideas and that there is no right answer..</p> <p>A great deal of the term has been focused on using audacity recording system.</p> <p>I am interested by the way the pupils are drawn to the instant facility of msn. The immediacy of the facility is akin to talking using an emerging form of text. These new words and phrases are developing their own meaning. They are becoming a sort of short hand for an experience the others in the group can identify but will be meaningless to those unfamiliar with the terminology.</p> <p>The pupils are aware of the dangers of these open social networking spaces spaces. I will have to reassure the parents if I am going to introduce this in the autumn.</p> <p>The recording has been problematic and I am going to streamline the process if it is going to be natural part of what I trying to teach. I was very disappointed that we had run out of time to set up the Internet radio and podcasting.</p>
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Appendix 6.8

Local reflective spiral eight

<p>ae with Mrs D we are going to e-mail to Korea English stories Robin Hood and King Arthur</p> <p>cp or the rainforest</p> <p><i>General discussion about PowerPoint's to Korea</i></p> <p>ae also with Mrs D (<i>BD</i>) we are doing ePals</p> <p>rl I think ePals is very, very brilliant...its very cool, you can chat to people all around the world see what they like and how they live and how they like going to school and there interests and all that I have two girls from Australia called Gretne and Rachel</p> <p>I think ePals is great because it is a safe way to talk unlike msn... it is a safer way to talk to people because</p> <p><i>chattering not listening general</i></p> <p>I think it is a safe way because of the teacher, you send a message to a person and the teacher looks at it and says I have two people.....</p> <p>How would this help history.....</p> <p>we could email people and ask them about their countries history</p> <p>gp and see what the themes would be... see what we are doing and see how it would link up</p> <p>am we could use ePals by email from around the world and asking about their country and their countries history and their themes and dramas</p> <p>rl it would be interesting to see what it was like in the war for them</p> <p>ms or their countries wars</p> <p>ae maybe they didn't have war</p> <p>rl if their grandmother was in the war</p> <p>group yeh</p> <p>rl if they had an Anderson shelter</p> <p>ae that is more English... British ...my epal in Korea is doing the Greek's like us</p> <p><i>Chattering</i></p> <p>ae has an epal and she is doing a lot in history so we could find more about that and see what they think of it</p> <p>cp we could ask our ePals and email them and ask them what they are doing in history and how they are doing it to give us some ideas</p>	<p>The pupils in the autumn term had produced their own ghost film which they had spent many session editing. These could have been published on the web...just a thought for the moment.</p> <p>Year 6 study World War II in the spring term. It always fascinates them. We do a re-enactment of a bombing raid using the school Anderson shelter and the gloomy basement. The creative writing is great. So I was not surprised by their focus on bombing.</p> <p>I like the suggestion about using the school radio (when it is up and running!) as a vehicle for communicating historical information.</p> <p>It is evident they are warming to the idea about producing their own way of communicating the history.</p> <p>The pupils know the capabilities of the facilities and having played with the skills involved the pupil realise what is possible and they can control the activity.</p> <p>The idea that e-mails could be used to create an audience in which to discuss and explore historical themes in common was exciting and started me thinking about all the possibilities. There are many themes that we could link up with connected to the NC study unit: Britain Since the 1930's.</p> <p>We could interview people and publish the podcasts on the Internet. I like the idea!!</p> <p>Beginning to realise the common themes that could link different learning communities. Develop a discussion forum where specific groups can join in a discussion and contribute. The space would need to be safe but open.</p>
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Appendix 6.9

Local reflective spiral nine

Action	Reflective
<p><u>Research Group 2: video summary notes</u> DB RB KN</p> <p><i>Noisy room</i> <i>Looking at the sheet I had given them</i> <i>Discussing audacity:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • db. we could pretend we were in World War 2 • rb. we could do a documentary like • db. the thing about audacity is that we could say how we feel... we could do it from the German side • rb. PowerPoint we could do a PowerPoint about the world war • kn what we learnt • rb about Hitler <p><i>Too much noise to understand what is being said...</i> knis confused about how she can help the Form 5 as she is leaving. The group suggests emailing them giving them advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • db. on the sound bites for the web site we could put facts each week • rb they would take part more because they would be on the web site • rb on the web site with the sound bites we could put a video of ... when we went down in to the shelter we could record like the hippy day to give to the Form 5's • db. with audacity we could be 'conronated' and we could pretend we were there • kn we could do one with our grandparents • db for webBlender we could make a web site for them • rb we could make a web site... page that children could go onto when they want help with their history and learning about world war two • db we could do a web site with the German side and British site and compare them how did they feel how the German feel and the British feel • rb a comparison using audacity • kn on the web site you could have different links to the British site and the German site and on that site you could write down what homework they had just in case they forget 	<p><u>Reflections on Research Group 2: video</u></p> <p>This was not a complete transcript because the room was very noisy. It was shame.</p> <p>This group misunderstood what was asked on them. They didn't read the sheet properly and thought that they had to think of actual activities in history that would help me teach the Year 5's that term. Despite this confusion their ideas were interesting and could very easily be adapted as practical exercises in history.</p> <p>This group were very interested in getting the other sides views. This is a recurring theme through the pupils' discussions: a place where they can voice their opinions and hear what other opinions are out their.</p> <p>The pupils realise that every event in history has different points of view and these views are important and need to be discussed with a variety of audiences.</p>

Appendix 6.9

Local reflective spiral nine

- **rb** the PowerPoint you could two things on the PowerPoint on from the German side and one from the our side then you compare them so a comparison on audacity and on the school web site
 - **kn** not with PowerPoint
 - **rb** oh the webBlender then you could put the two sites
 - **rb** we could do a recording of each class for sound bites
 - **kn** everyone could say one fact
 - **db** to make a web site we could email everybody with power points on World war 2 and everyone has to see it but they have to make their own web site
 - **rb** you mean
 - **db** the year 5's we email them
 - **rb** we are already epaling Argentina
 - **kn** it's a good idea and we can add it to our web site and sent it to our ePals
 - **db** some people may say the British hate the Germans
 - **rb** not now
 - **db** in world war 2 we could get someone who was German doing a PowerPoint and we could have a competition
 - **rb** a competition for the form 5 maybe the form 4 would be interested
 - **bd** what are the facts you have learnt from the fact we have given you, what have you learnt from these facts
 - **rb** on the school council radio when we went into that shelter someone could have been taking a video and put it on the web site
 - **db** how we felt
 - **kn** still confused about helping the form 5 suggestions
 - **rb** we could something now
- Group still thinking of them helping the form 5 not me.
- **rb** we could do something like the horrible histories they could be on the school funny and gory facts
 - **db** we could do all that with the sound bites on the school web site
 - **kn** you could do a newspaper article after you have collected all the facts... we could have a competition.
 - **rb** we don't have to email the school we could email our countries saying what our history is about what world war and say we have the competition

Appendix 6.9

Local reflective spiral nine

we could send out the newspaper who ever is won saying this is all our history have you learnt anything from reading it

- **db** if they have this before Mrs P talks to them they will understand it better
- **db** we could give then half a power point that they have to finish facts we have given them
- **rb** on audacity we could record what people were thinking about the competition
- **db** we could ask them if they were in world war two at that moment what would they feel like or we could ask them what would it be like to be their father fighting against the Germans
- **rb** we could put on the school radio a history day, rock and roll track with Elvis come in costume

Appendix 7.1

Local reflective spiral 10 - actions

Actions

August

The summer holidays had arrived and I now had to draw all my thoughts together and create the autumn stage of my research.

Setting up my blog: 'trading talents'

- I took the plunge and set up a blog site using Richardson's book Blog, Wiki, Podcasting as my 'bible'.
- Logged onto www.Blogger.com and followed the instructions on how to set up a blog site.
- Called my blog 'trading talents'
- Wrote my first blog and invited two friends to blog with me.
- Contacted 'Radiowaves' far too expensive must find a cheap way to get podcasting facilities.
- Researched podcating site with the word 'free' attached to them
- Discovered what RSS feed meant. Really Simple Syndication
- Registered with Bloglines to understand RSS facility. See what feeds I cab send to my blog
- Read several articles in the Independent about the dangers of these virtual social networking spaces
- Reading Constructing Childhood by A. James and A. James
- Rereading chapters from Reason and Bradbury's Handbook of Action Research.
- Registered with www.Flickr.com and sent my holiday photographs there. Use them to experiment with sending them to my blog
- Downloaded www.itunes.com software in an attempt to see if I can navigate through the free software to create free podcasting at school.
- Register with www.OurMedia.org and with a bit of difficulty I really should read instructions. I think I have found a way to publish podcast's free on the Internet.
- Start to think about a timetable and structure for the next stage of this phase of my research.
- Discovered the free Internet publishing spinXpres linked to Ourmedia . Yet another password to remember.

Timetable of action for the beginning of the autumn term 2006

- Continue to understand the technology found in the 'trading talents' blog site
- Registered with the wikipedia
- Develop my 'voices from the past' as an historical enquiry using podcasting and blogging to investigate oral history of the post war years. Publish conclusions on the wikipedia
- Set up blog on Bloglines site so that I can publish my research diary entries No:1 'Locating a virtual teaching space'
- Record the introduction to my summer research as a podcast
- No:1 'Locating a virtual teaching space' onto audacity and save in mp3 format
- Publish the podcast on Ourmedia using spinXpress
- Linked the podcast on Ourmedia with 'trading talents' blog
- Continue to understand the technology
- Discuss my research with the head and show her the letter to the parents
- Write a letter to the Form 6 parents informing them of my 'Voices from the past' research and inviting them to look at the 'trading talents' blog listen to the podcast on Ourmedia and read blog on Bloglines. Get permission for the pupils to blog on the 'trading talents' blog
- Proof read the summer journal again.
- Show the pupils the 'trading talents' blog. Discuss with the pupils the 'voices from the past' investigation and what I want then to do as co-researchers in the enquiry and my research
- Invite pupils to blog on 'trading places'
- Write a summary of this stage of my research for: supervisors, podcast, blog : 'Finding my virtual teaching space'.

Appendix 7.1

Local reflective spiral 10 - actions

- Write a letter to parents, grandparents about 'voices from the past' historical enquiry and my research aims.
- Keep a detailed autumn term journal
- Set up meetings with BD about email and msn video links with school in USA. Link my research to the wider learning community
- See if I have enough data to write meaningful articles for the appropriate journals.

My first action was to compose a letter to the Year 6 parents

Dear Parents,

As you may be aware I am studying for a PhD in Education. The main theme of my research involves an investigation into the strategies used by teachers and Key Stage 2 pupils using the Internet when conducting an historical enquiry.

I have completed my preliminary stage of my research and in the summer term started the next phase which focuses on understanding the potential of the Internet as a communication tool within an historical enquiry. The communication tools that interested me were: blogging, podcasting and wiki's. In the summer term, with the Form 6 girls, my co-researchers, we investigated one of them: podcasting. Over the term we explored the possibilities of setting up a podcasting service which would be used to create the basis of a school Internet radio.

This academic year I intend to continue this research with podcasting and start blogging and using wiki's. These communication tools would be central to an historical enquiry I am planning. The historical enquiry I am planning will be called 'Voices from the Past' and will be part of the Key Stage 2 History Unit of Study 'Britain from 1930' covered by the girls in Form 6.

'Voices from the Past' will involve me setting up a series of interviews throughout the year which will involve volunteer parents, grandparents and if possible great grandparents talking to Form 6 girls about specific times in their life: being an evacuee, rationing, growing up in the fifties, the swinging 60's etc.

The interviews will be recorded using the audacity recording system and then published onto the Internet as podcasts. I am then going to locate all the interview podcasts on a blog site I have set up for this purpose. The blog site I have set up is called 'trading talents'. It will be on this blog site that Form 6 and I will discuss:-

- What we hope to achieve by doing this enquiry
- The type of questions we will use
- Listening to the interviews through links on the blog to the podcast publishing site Ourmedia
- What we feel the interviews are telling us and what it all means.
- What we will be publishing on the free online encyclopedia wikipedia as our contribution to knowledge about the post war period.

The 'trading places' blog will represent a virtual teaching space and with any teaching space the pupils' safety is paramount. I am aware of all the bad press associated with social networking sites: *bebo's* and *myspace*. The 'trading talents' blog can be viewed by anyone but the contents can only be generated by the invited contributors. The pupils' and staff I have invited will be the only people who will be able to write a blog. The girls will only use their first names and there will be nothing else to identify them or the school. The pupils will be invited to join the blog through their home email address.

If you are not sure about what is involved please visit the 'trading talents' blog I have set up. I have published a podcast of my thinking behind this stage of my research and if you want to listen to it just click 'podcast' on the 'trading talents' blog. If you don't want to listen to the podcast I have blogged the same information on my personal blog.

1. 'trading talents' blog site:

Appendix 7.1

Local reflective spiral 10 - actions

<http://ghildaport.blogspot.com>

2. My blog 'Locating a virtual teaching space'

<http://www.bloglines.com/blog/gillianlouise>

3. If you are interested at the place we hope to publish our findings do visit the wikipedia online encyclopedia:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Appendix 7.2

Local reflective spiral 10 - reflections

Reflections

I really like this suggestion about opening out the investigation into a wider learning community. It was also pleasing to see the pupils were linking up the different communication tools and how they can be used to promote a meaningful investigation.

I also like the implication that by doing this investigation there would be knowledge generated that would change their perception of the world.

There thinking is muddled and fragmented but I was 'listening' to what they were telling me.

Reflections on setting up my blog: 'trading talents'

Initial thoughts

Talk about jumping in at the deep end. The language and background concepts are all alien. Using *Blogs, Wiki's, Podcasts* by Will Richardson as my bible. I logged on to www.Blogger.com and my new e-literate life starts.

I am a blogger!!....gosh I feel rather: up to date, grown up and young and in touch and terrified.

The site was user friendly but even so I felt very vulnerable. I called my blog 'trading talents' because the school is named after an Anglo-Saxon princess who preached that everyone should trade on their talents. I felt this would have meaning to both the pupils and me. We, as a learning community, where trading on our talents to produce a new space to learn. I wrote my first blog. This proved difficult. Even though it was very short I was aware that it would be viewed and judged. I decided to keep my audience very limited but did invite BD to comment on my blog. Her comment was short and friendly. I feel I have passed one obstacle.

I was surprised how difficult I found it to decide what to say on my blog. This is important I had to think about this reluctance. In fact I needed to do a great deal of reflection before the start of school in September.

I wanted to get to know the space and experiment with all the functions.

I needed to reflect on this new space.

How could I use it?

How did it fit in with my research?

How could I use this as a virtual teaching space?

I wanted to bring my podcast into this space so that became my first target.

After reading an article in the Independent on the danger of social networking spaces I decided I needed to outline a letter to the parents so, in the autumn, when I invite the pupils to blog with me on my site have will be happy in the knowledge that it will be as safe as being in a classroom at school.

In my initial stages I want the blogging to be as secure as the classroom experience until we, as the small learning community, understand the space we are working in. When that mastery has been achieved I will open up the experience to a wide audience. More than likely that will be in a safe blogging space like Eblog.

I discovered what RSS meant well the initials (Rich Site Summary). It is interesting to note that I know what it is supposed to but I don't know what it does. I think I will have to play and experiment with this facility until I **know** what it does. My 'bible' recommended I register with the Blogline web site to play with the facilities it offers.

The Bloglines website has giving me the confidence and practice to understand how this social bookmarking facility functions.

Flickr is fun but again, like my blog, I my keeping my photos private until I get to know the space and the facility it offers me as a teacher and its potential as a teaching tool.

I really enjoyed reading *Constructing Childhood* by A James. I had been intrigued by their theories about childhood since I stumbled onto them when investigating Nesta's Enquiring Minds Research project.

Still playing with my blog and reflecting on how I will link all the pieces of the puzzle together.

I am pleased I have downloaded the iTunes software

It was battle to find the out on OurMedia how to locate the free podcasting publishing facility I feel I am now becoming more tuned into what it is like to be thinking and making decisions on the Internet.

I feel at times it is a battle and the temptation to walk away is great at times.

I cannot relax. I have taken up doing the crossword so that my brain is in a constant state of alertness.

Is this what it is like for the children or is it more their natural state?

Am I learning what it is like to be outside the safety of routines?

I have decided to go back to reread articles from the Action Research journal I read at the beginning of the

Appendix 7.2

Local reflective spiral 10 - reflections

summer to help me put my experiences and reflections into some sort of theoretical framework.

- *About feelings in action research* Hanne Heen Vol. 3 (3) 2005
- *Narrative development* Caroline Ramsey Vol. 3 (3) 2005
- *New forms of knowledge production and the role of action research* Vol. 1 (2) 2003
- *Living systemic thinking* Judi Marshall Vol. 2(3) 2004

I have also decided to go through yet again the Reason's and Bradbury's book. I do feel like the remedial researcher at times.

Do people understand these articles the first time? I do feel it is a shame that to explain what you are feeling you have to put it into a language that needs translating into common sense.

Why do these researchers never give metaphors to explain difficult concepts?

Do the pupils feel like this when I explain things?

I think I am ready to now plan my next stage creating a virtual teaching space.

Thoughts as the summer progressed

Reflections on creating the virtual teaching space

I was not sure at the beginning of the summer holiday whether to locate my virtual teaching space on a web site or a blog site. In a classroom setting, and I define a classroom setting where I interact with the pupils in the same physical space, I know my trade. I could list all the factors that make me an expert teacher and interacting with pupils is second nature to me. I **know** my trade and the numerous decisions I make in a lesson are almost instinctive. I admit I am comfortable in this space and to leave it to find one that was alien was terrifying.

I knew I would have to create a stable space on the Internet. I needed to create it in the summer holidays so that I could get familiar with the key features. Reading the book 'Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts' by Will Richardson (2006) was an inspiration. It was almost the idiots guide to using the Internet as a powerful communication tool. It is still my bible.

Setting up the blog site 'trading places'

After reading the chapters Weblogs: Pedagogy and Practice (ibid: p17) and Weblogs: Get Started (ibid: p45) and I decided to set up a blog. I called my blog 'trading talents'. I was very nervous and childishly delighted by successful completion of this simple task.

I was very conscious of all the bad press circulating about the social networking and blogs sites such as bebos and myspace. I know I will have to reassure the parents and make sure my safety guidelines are strong. To achieve this I choose to keep the audience that could view the blog site limited to the pupils and member of staff at the school. This would give the intimacy and familiarity of a classroom space.

In September I will write a letter to the parents outlining the next phase of my research and asking for permission for the pupils to use the blog site to conduct an historical enquiry.

Towards the end of the summer term it became evidence that podcasting was a favourite with the pupils. It wasn't quite podcasting at this stage because uploading onto the school web site was proving difficult. I needed the summer term to solve the problem. I had discovered that the pupils gravitated to the technology that gave them an opportunity to communicate their thoughts. They loved giving their opinions and loved interviewing anyone and hearing other peoples' opinions. I was determined to incorporate podcasting into the next stage through the type of historical enquiry that would reflect this desire to communicate via the Internet. This desire to share opinions and views would also fit into BD's emailing initiatives to schools around the world.

Using the pupils' love of interviewing I concluded that the historical enquiry would be an oral history based on the National Curriculum Unit: Britain Since 1930.

The blog site would become the forum for discussing the progress of the enquiry.

When the enquiry was completed the pupils summaries would be published on the wikipedia under the sub titles: being an evacuee, rock and roll etc.

Reflections on my timetable of action for the beginning of the autumn term

It has been a very busy summer break. I have drawn together all my notes and written my journal and have reflected on all my actions. And I had set myself the task of learning how to create a blog and a podcast.

I spent hours and hours weaving through web sites following instructions using language that meant little to me. I felt vulnerable and at times I felt that I had bitten off more than I could chew. I had little choice. I could not afford the package deal for podcasting offered by Radiowaves so I had to follow all the free offers.

Appendix 7.2

Local reflective spiral 10 - reflections

In a way I glad I had to master the technology. If I was going to use a virtual space to create my classroom I had to know that space. I had to build a conceptual space in my mind. I had to understand at a conceptual level the affordances of each tool I was going to use. It has been a painfully slow journey and I am the first to admit I am on a very steep learning curve. I am teaching myself because I want to know the journey: know the pitfalls and feel what the language means. I can read the words that describe a process and I can explain what it but I don't know what it means. I can't visualise the process. My conceptual understanding of the landscape I have chosen for my next stage of my research is slowly being revealed to me.

I have been getting to know my blog space: playing with the java script: changing setting etc.

It took me longer to get to terms with my podcasting and I am really grateful to the Year 6 because I was half way there by the beginning of my quest to have something published as a podcast.

Battling through I managed, by reading the instruction several times, to find spinXpress and eventually to publish something on the Internet.

I chose my introduction to my summer research 'locating a virtual teaching space' deliberately. I had WP the introduction and was going to leave it at that but I wanted to podcast something and I was reluctant to choose a Year 6 recording from the summer term, so I chose my work.

Recording the introduction proved interesting. It didn't make sense and I had to make several changes before I was happy. I published it and after listening I realised it could have done with another set of changes. I made the changes on my WP copy and decided to publish the better version on my Blogline blog.

I was pleased with both my blog and podcast because I was now working in the domain that my virtual teaching space would be located. I was experiencing the reality: the doubts, the possibilities, the excitement.

When 'locating a virtual teaching space' was published I felt vulnerable and satisfied. I was beginning to feel more in control and more confident that I would be able to translate this into a workable and hopefully successful historical enquiry.

I began to see the possibilities of creating a meaningful space on 'trading talents'

- record the voices of people who had a story to tell about the past
- collect all the 'voices' as podcast's
- discuss the oral data
- create new knowledge that could be published

I could also see the application for creating an Internet radio station using a blog linked to the school web site which would have all the school council podcasts and other creative oral work.

I decided to set out my agenda for the autumn term

Reflections on the letter to the Year 6 parents

I was nervous about drafting a letter to the Year 6 parents because I really need their support. It was a difficult letter but I eventually completed it. I showed it to the head for approval who thought it was a brilliant idea.

This letter will go out in the first week of term after I have chatted to the Year 6 girls. I am not having a separate group of girls researching. I want this to be part of my practice and one of my strategies for teaching history. If the parents are unhappy I will work through the problems.

I want this to be a positive experience and the start of an exciting journey that the pupils, BD and I will do together. This is a joint venture. I have no idea what will happen but what we learn will enrich our understanding of a domain that is changing all the time.

I will start another journal for the autumn and that will focus on how we, the research team, work in this virtual teaching space. I intend to keep three types of journal:

1. the word processed version: a personal and detailed account of my actions and reflections.
2. the podcast: a summary of each stage
3. the blog: the written version of the podcast

I am using these different types of journals to clarify my thoughts and hopefully get feedback.

I will also keep a WP version of these podcasts and blogs.

I need to think carefully about the summary 'Finding my virtual teaching space' that will link up my introduction 'Locating a virtual teaching space'. This will represent my Reflection filter: stage 2

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Local reflective spiral eleven- blog entry

The purpose of this summary is to reflect on my summer research at the next level: Filter stage 2. This stage will involve me reviewing both my actions and reflections at Filter stage 1 and tease out broader themes.

It is important to examine the genesis of my summer journal. It was a journal that slowly evolved over the months. Initially my diary entries were fragmented and located in several places and it was only in the summer break that all I was able to locate the data in the one place. This lack of cohesion at the beginning was basically because I really had no idea how I was going to document and reflect on my actions. I started by keeping written notes which began very detailed but turned into notes then just key words. My summer journal was not perfect but it does illustrate how I am slowing beginning to make sense of my actions and reflect in a more informed way.

I knew that recording my actions at this stage of my research is going to be interesting and, to avoid the whole thing becoming unmanageable I used the strategy described in my introduction: Locating a virtual teaching space. I needed those key words to guide me and give a structure to a data gathering. I do not pretend it was perfect but it proved to be an adequate tool for the task I had set myself.

The design of the journal was important: I decided to split my journal into two columns. The first column would represent my actions on the second column would be my reflections on those actions.

The definition of the word action was, again, an evolution in creating a meaning for a word. My reflections could be described as inner actions and I did grapple with that dilemma. I could be, reflecting afterwards to inform my next action or reflecting on those actions as part of my daily reflective practice as a teacher. All these types of reflections are an integral part of actions. I realised that understanding the term reflection was going to be a big part of my research. I can't say I had an epiphany and I was never quite happy with the way my actions narrative linked to my reflective narrative. My definition of an action does change through the summer journal but I saw that as a process in itself that I had to reflect on at each stage of my research. Towards the end of the summer journal I was defining my actions as being the more mechanical events that involved my active input to make it happen. I know that as my research develops my understanding of the two words: action and reflection will evolve and ultimately define my research.

The key words were important and proved to be a crude but effective way to bring to the front of my brain data that was spinning in the ether of my life as teacher. They were, if I can use a simple metaphor, like a candy floss machine that spins and draws threads together to form a recognisable structure. This is not to say that the key words did not draw all the relevant data that was out there to be collected. I am not a machine and the data I collected was enough for this stage of my research. I realise I will have to revisit my model through the autumn research. That will be one of my research aims.

I have deliberately not looked at my research summer journal for a couple of weeks so that I can reflect on the impact it has on my thinking. I have decided to structure this summary on the key words I used in my introduction. I have done this because I feel that the first part of this research should have symmetry about it. This summary is only the next stage of a long reflective process. It will also have the other function of being the introduction to the autumn research which will put into action those decisions I made and reflected on in the summer. I see my research conforming to the classic action research spiral: each cycle informing the next cycle of actions and reflections.

Key word/phrase reflections: Filter: 2

1. Pupil co-researchers

Key phrase: **agents of change**

I have started this stage of reflection with my pupil co-researchers because it was this aspect of the summer research that gave me most concern. I realised from the beginning it was going to be difficult. I have a very good relationship with the pupils I teach and I felt that the type of relationship which would evolve when these same pupils were acting as co-researchers may be different. At one of the first meetings with my pupil volunteers I realised that the teacher/pupil dynamic was too deeply imprinted into our working relationship to change with words and sympathetic body language. I

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realised that the pupils were in no position to change as it would confuse their relationships with other teachers who are very happy to keep the status quo. I really needed to reflect on this dilemma because my research on the Internet would require the pupils to communicate as equals in our pursuit of knowledge creation. In another meeting I imagined we were having a conversation rather than a formal exchange of ideas. I felt that if I saw the pupils in my mind more informally it would help but it didn't work because it was too artificial and I had issues with my own conversational style: a style that did not translate well into this type of meeting. I had no answers at the beginning of the summer but became very aware when talking to the pupils and slowly change my approach as the term progressed: my communication style became less intrusive and more sensitive to what was actually happening at research sessions.

Reading *Constructing Childhood* by A. James and A James was pivotal in the way my thinking began to change. I began to see how I could relate to the pupils on their own terms: not as pupil/ teacher or even child/adult but equals.

This equality would not be achieved in the physical space of the school. It had to start with my own perception of the role of the pupils in my research and as co-researchers. The affordance key phrase 'agents of change' was central to this process.

If I wanted the pupils to be co-researchers I had to see their input to be equal to mine. I had to value their contributions and make no judgements on where or when it happened. I had to listen, observe and make notes. I knew what I was looking for would not be found in formal lessons, although I did not entirely exclude them, but in those informal times when the pupils were free to explore and experiment on their own.

I had started an ICT club for the Year 6 pupils to explore and experiment with the new Internet technologies. I had decided not to structure these club sessions: I did my investigation and the pupils did theirs. We compared notes and helped each other out. I made brief notes and reflected on them. I was making myself more sensitive to the ways pupils were viewing their own challenges and how they were creating their own perception of the Internet tools we were investigating. I was determined not to impose my views or solutions. At times I did feel that the session were not very focused however, when, looking at my notes I began to see that the pupils were very focused but the challenges they were exploring were set within their own reality not mine. My pupil co-researchers were researching, but in their own way using their own criteria. They were giving me valuable data and it was not until the end of session tapes were transcribed that I realised how thorough and 'professional' they were in their role as co-researchers. I felt that if I hadn't used the key phrase 'agents of change' as a focus every time I listened or observed the pupils, I would not have been sensitive to pupils' actions. It was only on reflection did I realise how much the pupils were changing me and my perception of my own research.

The volunteer pupils had been very enthusiastic and within the confines of the school structure had taken my request seriously. In their own way they had been equal to the task and by the end of term had made me completely reassess what I was doing. This made me, very reluctantly, change my focus and direct me on the correct path. I did not use the word correct lightly. I was so determined at the beginning to have the pupils researching wikis but they were drawn to the communication tool of audacity and podcasting and would not leave it. I was continually drawn back by the pupils' fascination for voicing their opinions until I realised what they were saying to me. Childhood is all about children listening to others and what I just couldn't see was their deep need to be listened to as equals. That was my epiphany. That was the genesis of my 'Voices in the Past' idea for the historical enquiry.

I decided not to have a special group of volunteers to be co-researchers for my autumn research. The whole Year 6 will be co-researchers. I respect the unique state childhood gives the child and will continue to improve my listening and observing skills when it comes to translating what is actually happening when we are working together. I have told my new Year 6's that they are all my co-researchers but what their role will be in my research will continue to evolve.

At the beginning I was not sure how to be equal with a child but by the end of this cycle I am beginning to realise that equality is a term that requires deeper thought on my part.

2. Staff co-researchers

Key phrase: **collaboration**

I was so focused on establishing a working relationship with the pupils that the staff co-researcher did not feature a great deal in the reflective process over the summer. This did not mean that I was ignoring

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her. It was very difficult to arrange set times to meet and when we did it felt artificial and this was not what I wanted. I decided to let this aspect of my research evolve slowly. On reflection I now realise that my staff co-researcher played a very big part of my summer research.

We both have the same vision and enthusiasm for teaching and ICT. This deep connection meant that I felt comfortable discussing all my ideas without the fear of having to defend or explain. It was not because I was afraid to defend or explain but rather I wanted the freedom to explore, make mistakes and have someone who understood that joy and frustration of trying to understand the ever changing technology found on the Internet. It is very comforting to have someone to 'play' with. It was out of this 'play' that I was able to make many connections and move my research forward. It is hard to cite examples because in many cases it would involve no more than a shared joked or both of us independently discovering something and communicating via the net about it. We had different interests: I was interested in the audio and visual communication possibilities of the Internet and she was very interested in e-mailing and connecting with the wider learning communities. It was through her determination to link up with schools all around the world that helped the pupils see the possibilities of an historical enquiry being communicated to a wider audience. Many of my decision on reflection have been influenced by her support and willingness to have fun on the net.

The informality of the collaboration does not mean that it did not have a strong structure. This autumn I will focus on clarifying my relationship with my staff co-researcher so that I can understand the links that make this collaboration work so well.

3. Practitioner

Key phrase: **facilitator**

4. Researcher

Key phrase: **reflection**

My role as the teacher practitioner in my research is that of the expert on what works in a school environment. After twenty five years of teaching you have a deep sense of what is possible and what can be changed.

The practitioner who is also a researcher is in the constant mental state of having multiple personalities. I am constantly talking to myself: inner conversation making you appear absent minded or speaking aloud make you appear as though senility has set in early. I have had to make a real effort to identify the teacher and the researcher in my mind. I am observing myself observing myself. Am I compromising my research by knowing that I am observing myself teaching and researching? It is important to establish the characteristics of the relationship.

The teacher in me is the practical personality in this relationship. I am the expert in all that is involved in teaching. I know my domain and the personality the researcher will use to give advice on all things educational.

The researcher on the other hand has to observe and reflect. This reflection process makes the teacher in me take a long hard look at my practices and routines. This examination of the inner minutia of my practice has resulted in changes that have a rippling effect on my practice. It is the responsibility of the teacher in my research to facilitate those changes. As the practical personality I had to understand the thinking of my reflective researcher side and facilitate the opportunities to move forward. In a way I was listening to the 'voice' of the researcher in the same way I was beginning to listen to the 'voice' of the pupils.

Who then is the engine of the research? : The teacher or the researcher? The teacher makes the changes happen while the researcher reflects and shows the way. What comes first the chicken or the egg? Is it in fact possible to tease apart the two roles? My autumn research should ponder this conundrum.

5. History

Key phrase: **past**

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This aspect of my summer research evolved slowly over the term. At the beginning of the term I was unsure exactly what I was going to do and relied heavily on my co-researchers to help me find a way through this uncertainty.

The past was the perfect affordance word as it freed up my thinking to encompass all aspects of history. I was not tied to one era or any way of thinking. I let my mind be a fertile piece of land ready for any seeds. Over the term it became very obvious that the pupils were fascinated by voicing their own opinions and to listen to other people's opinions. I was amazed by the intensity of the pupils desire to communicate. It was in a way humbling to listen to the pupils in the recording sessions. The facilitator in me created opportunities to explore this route to the Internet and the researcher reflected on what these actions produced.

The idea for 'Voices from the past' came from the pupils and I could see the possibilities. It was the perfect historical enquiry. It had all the elements needed to generate the next stage of my research. It built on what the pupils wanted: listening to other people's views. It was the perfect format for an historical enquiry: it would generate primary source material that could be examined and analysed. 'Voices from the past' would use the technology of the Internet and would lead me towards strategies that could create an effective way to teach Key Stage 2 history. It would also be an opportunity to observe and reflect on the anatomy of a paradigm shift in my thinking process as this change occurs.

History would become what it should always be, the conduit that links the past, present and future. The autumn research will involve the setting up of the 'trading places' blog where the pupils will discuss the questions to be asked at the interviews and listen then analyse the podcast evidence. It is all new and very exciting.

6. Internet

Key phrase: **communication**

My preliminary research was based on the premise that the Internet was a large search machine. This stage of my research looks at the Internet as a communication tool that will have a key role to play in the future. In the summer research, I the researcher and teacher delved into the inner workings of the Internet. It was not easy and at times I felt vulnerable and to be honest: scared. The 'nerd' quotient was high. I was intimidated but I had to fight through that stage. Learning a new language would have been easier. I had very few cultural references and people I talked to glazed over. The sense of achievement, as I mastered each piece of technology: blogging, podcasting, and publishing, was indescribable. I felt empowered and started the new term with a confidence that influenced my whole attitude to teaching. I am not worried about perceived outcomes; there is no success/ failure scenario. It is a process of how I, a teacher, introduces and uses a radically different approach to teaching history through a medium that has yet to reveal its true potential.

Final reflections

My main difficulty for this stage of my research will be writing an improved version of my narrative. I was not happy with my summer narrative. It was fragmented but in a way reflected the reality of life as a teacher/ researcher. I have been reflecting on how my autumn narrative will evolve but as of yet I have not yet achieved a satisfactory recording schedule where I am recording all my practical actions in any depth. I do not want a detailed set of notes that record a 'stream of consciousness' as this would be impractical. On the other hand, by selecting what I recorded I am making a judgement of what I considered research worthy. The key affordance words were a way of filtering out the cacophony of 'noise' that makes up my teaching. I felt it was successful to a certain extent in my summer journal and I will continue to use the words as the general filter but will reflect on improving the way I record my actions.

Appendix 8.1

Wiki hyperlinks

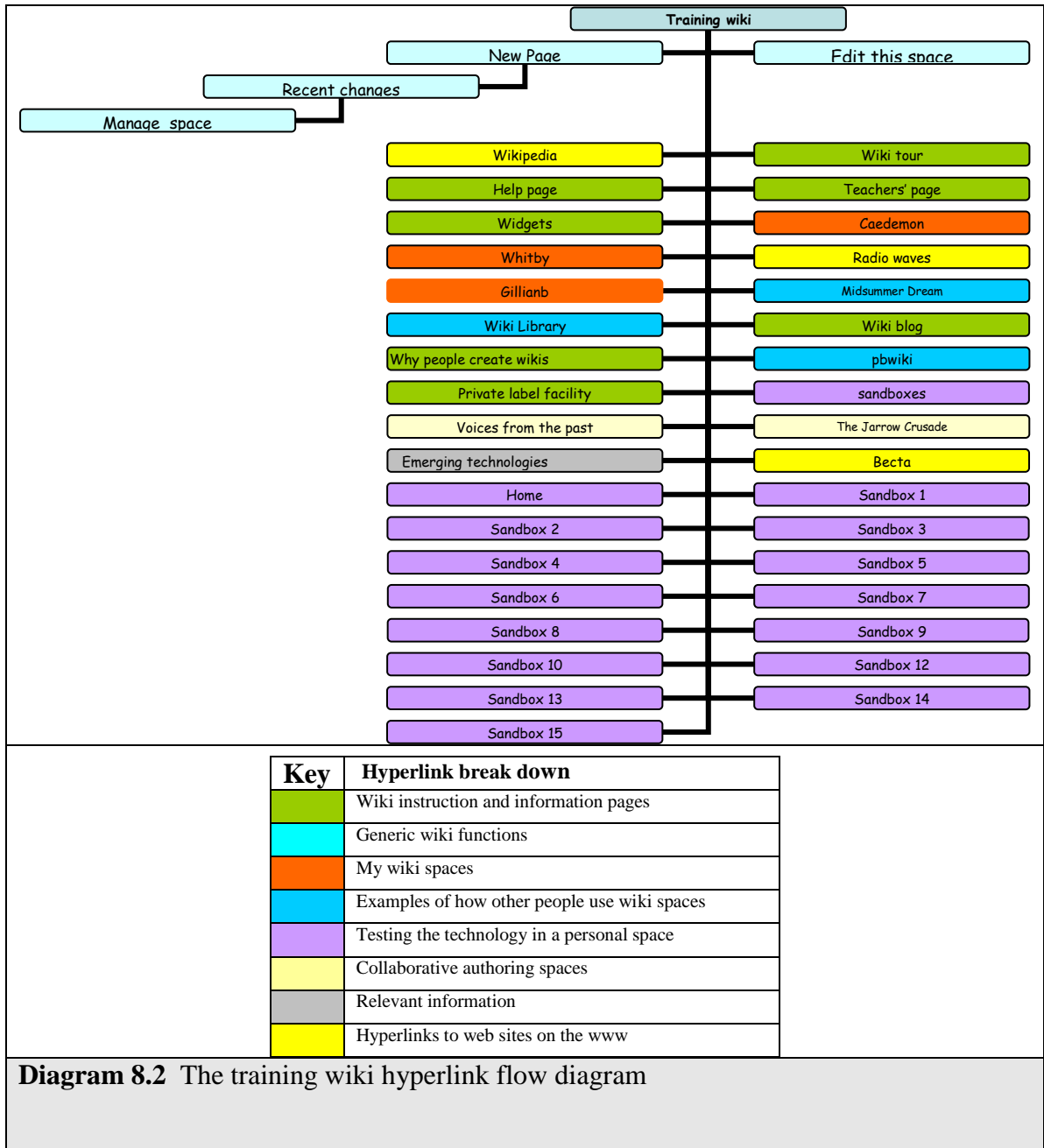


Diagram 8.2 The training wiki hyperlink flow diagram

Appendix 8.2


Why use a wiki : audience - teachers



Why use a wiki?

Wiki Workshop by Gillian Forthouse
2007


Slide 1



Who am I?

- I am Deputy Head and ICT co-ordinator at St. Hilda's School Bushey in Hertfordshire
- I am in the final stages of my PhD researching the most effective way to teach Key Stage 2 history on the Internet.
- Central to my thesis has been the process I have had to go through to facilitate the changes in my practice in order to achieve my research aims.
- Learning how to use a wiki space was one of those changes!

Slide 2



Why do you really want to learn about wikis?

Be honest because your true motivation will determine whether you will use this tool effectively.

So which of the following reflects your reason for wanting to learn about wikis?

- To encourage collaborative learning skills
- Teach a traditional subject in a new and exciting way
- To become more informed about the emerging technologies that the pupils use because you are scared they know more than you do.
- Help pupils tackle the many skills required to be an informed user of the web in a safe and monitored online environment
- Create an e-portfolio for reflecting on your own professional development
- Create an e-portfolio for your pupils benefit.
- Create a community of practice that encourages the pupil to link in a meaningful way the learning taking place in the school with the emergent learning taking place when they work on the Internet at home.
- A online space from which pupils can develop a personalised learning platform
- Interested but still need to be convinced of the value of what could be yet another technological fad that maybe already out of date before I can apply it to my teaching practice
- No idea I was told to come by the ICT co-ordinator after our last inspection
- None of the above

Slide 3



What is a wiki?

It is an online authoring site.


So what does that mean?

Visit the workshop wiki space I have set up at [Herkomer](http://herkomer.wikispaces.com/) and find out.

Have fun and discover what you can do on this online authoring site

<http://herkomer.wikispaces.com/>

Slide 4



An online classroom?


I see my wiki space as my online classroom: a space in which I feel comfortable when working with my pupils.

A safe haven from which the pupils and I can explore the web and bring back resources to examine and use when studying history

Slide 5

Appendix 8.3


A Living Theory: audience - PhD researchers



A Living Theory

A self-study action research into my practice


Slide 1



Who am I?

I am full time teacher and part-time PhD student in the final stages of creating a living theory that reflects on and interrogates the process of change involved in my practice in order to germinate and nurture an online community of enquiry, equality and individuality.


Slide 2



What is self study action research?

How do I improve my practice?
 What were the concern about my practice?
 Why did these concerns in my practice create a 'living contradiction': I was teaching but not in a way that was true to my values?
 My value system was not in tune with my practice

Slide 3




What values?

Equality Responsibility Individuality

These values are the living standards of judgement that will validate my contribution to new knowledge

Slide 4




My research journey

Start: researching my pupils using a traditional methodology where I was objectively observing, recording and analysing data: trying to find the answer 'out there'

Epiphany: I started to listen to the quiet voices of the pupils and realised I was denying them an equal voice in my research. I also realised that after twenty five years of teaching the tacit knowledge embedded in my practice did have value to the academic community and the wider teaching community of which I was proud to be a member.

Finish: researching with a small community of practice in a wiki space in order to articulate and theorise my practice to claim my contribution to knowledge.

Slide 5



What is a wiki?

A wiki is an online authoring site.


My **Whitby** wiki is an example of an **online learning community** working together based on the shared values of equality, responsibility and individuality.

I see my wiki space as my **online classroom**: a space in which I feel comfortable when working with my pupils.

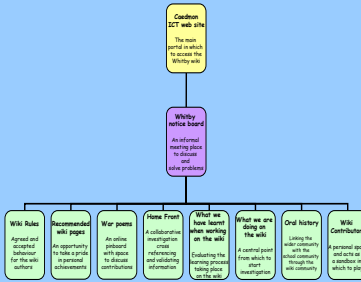
A **safe haven** from where **we** can anchor ourselves when **we** explore other online facilities and resources.

This **small community** over time will be creating a knowledge base of evolving practices that that will empower and inform present and future Year 6 pupils when are engaging with the Internet.

Slide 6




Whitby wiki: working like a real community

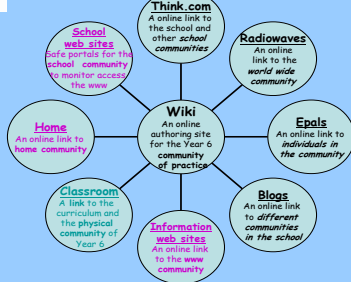


The flowchart shows the structure of the Whitby wiki. At the top is the 'Guidance ICT web site'. Below it is the 'Whitby website board'. The board oversees several key areas: 'Wiki Rules', 'Recommended wiki pages', 'Wiki points', 'Home Front', 'What we have learnt from the wiki', 'What we are doing on the wiki', 'Oral history', and 'Wiki Contributors'. Each of these areas has a brief description of its purpose and content.

Slide 7



What is an online learning community?



The mind map illustrates various online learning communities. At the center is 'Wiki: An online authoring site for the Year 6 community of practice'. Surrounding it are several other communities: 'Think.com' (online link to school and other school communities), 'Radiowaves' (online link to world wide community), 'Epals' (online link to individuals in the community), 'Blogs' (online link to different communities in the school), 'Information web sites' (online link to the www community), 'Classroom' (link to curriculum and physical community of Year 6), 'Home' (online link to home community), and 'School web sites' (safe portals for the school community to monitor access to the www).

Slide 8