University of Strathclyde, School of Education

On Knowing What to Do and Finding Ways of Being Wise

A thesis presented in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

by

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Date:

"Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom."

Theodore Isaac Rubin
Born April 11, 1923

"Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it."

Albert Einstein
14 March, 1879 – 18 April, 1955

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Mary McKee, and to my grandson, Joseph John McMillan, that he may grow to be as wise and as kind as his great-grandmother.

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Abstract

The study sought to provide insights into the motivations and actions of teachers in Scotland's colleges, which might enrich understandings of accepted practices.

A phenomenological methodology was harnessed and the phenomenon under investigation was teachers' disrupted spaces in the learning process. The study aimed to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teachers when seeking to resolve an interruption in the learning process and the extent to which *phronesis,* or practical wisdom both contributed to and emanated from the course of action taken

A total of twenty-three teachers in eight colleges were interviewed. Strong themes emerged which encapsulated the essence of the phenomenon. These included utilisation of vocational values and a vocational orientation in the learning process; differentiated knowledge use by teachers, dependent on the learner, level and context; a sharing of vocational and personal and emotional knowledge with learners; a strong commitment to learning relationships that worked within an ethic of care and a practical rather than a theoretical orientation towards learning.

The teachers did not appear to hold theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching in as high a regard as other areas of occupational knowledge, yet the use of theories was evident in their discussion of their practice. The study suggested that it is a mark of professionalism for a teacher to have an clear definition of learning which they own which reflects their beliefs and practices and which they can defend, if challenged. The study suggested that the apparent lack of high regard for theoretical knowledge in learning and teaching should be a matter of concern for the sector and a matter for formal teacher education.

The study suggests how the Aristotelian concepts of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*, which guided the study, could be harnessed in the education of teachers in colleges and in their continual professional development. It suggests that how teachers who enter practice without formal pedagogical knowledge acquire their knowledge or 'theories-in-use', before they access formal training, is worthy of further research.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

Compared to the school sector there is relatively little research into becoming and being a teacher in Further Education (Jephcote, Salisbury, & Rees, 2008; Wahlberg, Colley, & Gleeson, 2005). This study aimed to provide an illuminative account of how teachers in Scotland's colleges are experiencing the learning process. It sought to do this by determining the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and emanated from the course of action taken.

The central question that the study sought to address was:

> *"What was the experience of teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges when encountering a particular pedagogical issue or interruption, either fortunate or unfortunate, in the learning process?"*

There is relatively little research on Further Education in general (Elliot, 1996, p.101) and what exists has mostly taken place in colleges in England. Within the English context, there is a growing body of literature on the professionalism of staff in Further Education colleges (Bathmaker & Avis, 2005, 2007; Clow, 2001; Colley, David, & Diment, 2007; Gleeson & James, 2007; Robson, Bailey, & Larkin, 2004; Spenceley, 2006). There are also studies of the initial training of Further Education lecturers and their early years' experiences (Avis & Bathmaker, 2006; Bathmaker & Avis, 2005, 2007; Wallace, 2002) but much less about the working lives of experienced teachers in colleges.

In Scotland, some work has been carried out in relation to considering how learners in colleges learn (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2004) and learners' experiences of colleges (Gallacher, Crossan, Leahy J, & Merrill B., 2000) but not teachers' experiences of teaching.

The overall aim of this study is to explore practitioners' experiences of the learning process in Scotland's colleges and how teachers' beliefs about learning influence how they manage the process of learning (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p.44). Considerable debate exists amongst scholars as to how learning is to be envisioned. As Sfard (1998, p.4) states, theories of learning, like many scientific theories, come and go.

1.1. Learning

Sfard draws a distinction between acquisition and participation metaphors for learning. She states that "since the dawn of civilisation learning is conceived of as an acquisition of something" (ibid. p.5). This view of learning instigates an image of the human mind as a receptacle of resources and the learner as becoming an owner of these resources.

Plato's (428?-347 B.C.) theory of learning (Phillips & Soltis, 2004) was that people come equipped with most of their knowledge and need only hints and contemplation to complete it. Two thousand years later, John Locke (1632-1704), (Phillips & Soltis, 2004 ibid.) could not accept Plato's view that knowledge was innate. In his view, a child came into the world as a 'blank slate' but experience would lead to the accumulation of ideas. According to Locke relevant experiences, are required for learning. Both Plato and Locke shared a passive view of the learner. For Locke, the mind was an empty cabinet waiting to be filled (ibid. p.17).

For John Dewey, (1938) learning, or the "educative process" amounts to the "severe discipline" of subjecting our experience to the "tests of intelligent development and direction" so that we keep growing intellectually and morally (p.114).

A participation metaphor of learning can be seen in the notion that we construct our own understanding of knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Phillips, 1995; Phillips & Soltis, 2004). Rousseau (1762), in his influential text '**Emile**' (1993) emphasized the importance of expression and learning through experience in order to produce a well-balanced child. Known as Constructivism, this theory of learning was initially developed by Dewey (1859-1952), expanded by Piaget (1896-1980) and with further contributions by Vygotsky (1896-1934) (Phillips, 1995).

From a Constructivist viewpoint, when we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant.

Jarvis (2005) describes this process as occurring "in the relationship – in the interaction of the inner person with the outer world – that experience occurs and it is in and through experience that people learn" (p.1) In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore and assess what we know. This view is reinforced in the report "**Learning to Improve**" (Scottish Executive, 2005, p.10) where learning was defined as being created by the learner and it is the job of the educator to facilitate, guide and support the learner in the process.

Social Cognition was a major theme in the work of Vygotsky (1962; 1978) who argued that learning is influenced by the ethics, mores and values of the culture that learners find themselves in and that, crucially, social interaction has a fundamental role in learning processes. Bandura (1977) in his theory of social learning argued that learning occurs as result of observing the behaviour of others. Social Learning Theory considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation and modeling (Phillips & Soltis, 2004, p.60).

Lave and Wenger's (1991) work is founded on this social theory of learning, where learning is defined as a socially situated activity, emphasising the social and cultural processes that shape learning. Based on case-studies of how newcomers learn in various occupational groups which are not characterised by formal training, Lave and Wenger (op.cit.) suggest that legitimate peripheral learning is the key. The case-studies include traditional midwives in Yucatan, tailors in Liberia, butchers in supermarkets and quartermasters in the US Marine Corps.

Lave and Wenger's (ibid. p.37) model accepts that newcomers to a community of activity become more competent as they become more involved in the main process of that community. They move from legitimate peripheral participation into full participation. Learning is not seen as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals so much as a process of social participation. It is through doing that individuals acquire knowledge within the practices of the community.

Wenger explains in his later work (Lave & Wenger, 2002), that a social theory of learning encourages an understanding of individual experience in a wider social and historical context of activity and development. The central unit of analysis is the community of practice, which Lave and Wenger describe as being a "set of relations among persons, activity and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 2002, p.115). They state that the term community of practice implies, "participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives for their communities" (Lave & Wenger, 2002, p.115).

Additional commentators on learning build on Lave and Wenger's (1991) socio-cultural ideas (Avis, Bathmaker, & Parsons, 2002; Bathmaker & Avis, 2005; Colley, David, & Diment, 2007). James and Biesta, (2007, p.28), for example, argue that learning and teaching are primarily social and cultural rather than individual and technical activities.

In addition, Hodkinson *et al.*'s (2003) debate of formal, non-formal and informal learning offers the view that learning is inherently embodied and social. Within this model, learning is not seen as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals so much as a process of social participation.

Hodkinson, *et al.* (2007, p.421) emphasise that it is the social practices within a community **through** which people learn. As Lave and Wenger (1991) put it, "learning is not merely situated in practice – as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world" (p.35). According to Hodkinson (2005), "it is a mistake to separate out either learning or the learner from the contexts in which the learning takes place, as each is part of the other" (p.10). Coffield (2008) describes this approach to learning as being about understanding that learning is something that is done, it is practical and embodied and involves our emotions and our bodies as well as our brains and that learning is a "thoroughly social process" (p.15).

Sfard (op.cit.) counsels against aligning ourselves to either an acquisition or participation metaphor of learning. She argues that in order to better understand learning, we need both. Human learning, as Jarvis (2005, p.1) reminds us, is a complex process and is not the preserve of one single discipline. He describes human learning as:

> …..the combination of processes whereby the human person (knowledge, skills, attitudes, emotions, values, beliefs and the senses) enters a social situation and constructs an experience which is then transformed through cognitive, emotional and practical processes, and integrated into the person's biography – it is the driving force behind the emerging humanity, and this is lifelong.
> (Jarvis, 2005, p.2)

Commentators on learning in Scotland would appear to subscribe to the social, participative view of learning. It has been defined as being less to do with assimilating

knowledge; as being created by the learner; more to do with personal growth and development and the job of the educator is to facilitate, guide and support the learner in the process (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2004; Scottish Executive, 2005).

Learning is regarded as being most often effective where the quality of the social interaction and communication between the learners and the teacher are regarded as being crucial components of the learning process. The quality of relationships is seen as a central influence on the quality of the learning and a key role for the teacher is to create a climate where learning becomes a social activity (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2004, p.8).

Teachers' views about learning, whether they ascribe to the acquisition or participation methaphor, or both, will shape their decision-making and will govern students' learning experiences (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p.44). Putnum and Borko (2000, p.4) suggest that, although attention has been given to how learners learn, less attention has been paid to teachers - either to their roles in creating learning experiences or how they themselves learn new ways of teaching. Goodson (2003, p.55) believes that a major value underpinning investigations into teachers' work is that it can provide different perspectives on education which can instigate change.

1.2. Teaching

If learning is a complex process, then so is teaching (Hegarty, 2000; Squires, 2004) as "teaching **should** entail learning" (author's emphasis) (Edwards, 2006, p.127). Professional work exists in order to bring about change, which in the case of teaching, is learning (Squires, 2004, p.343). Squires (ibid. pp.343-345) sets out some functions of teacher work which include assembling and managing resources; orienting students to new learning; providing feedback; managing assessments; motivating and supporting students; managing behaviour; managing student interactions and helping learners

explore, challenge and reflect on what is being taught.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that teaching can incorporate a range of acquired methods and skills, Squires posits the notion that teaching cannot be described as merely being about a set of functions or application of rules. He suggests (ibid. p.353) that teaching is primarily a matter of interpretation and that the role of judgement is central to the teaching profession. Every task implies decision-making which is contingent on the learner, the context, the subject and the subject level. Teachers' judgements are refined by reflection in and on action (Schon, 1983) and professional, occupational knowledge.

The literature on teachers' decision-making (Benson & Malone, 1987; Smylie, 1992; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1997; Winch, 2004) suggests that knowledge informs action. In order to understand the proper scope of teachers' decision-making, it is necessary to scrutinize their occupational knowledge (Winch, 2004, p.181). The problem with such a scrutiny is that a primary characteristic of education would appear to be that it does not just have one knowledge base but several (Hegarty, 2000; Squires, 2004). Turner-Bisset (1999) for example, proposed a model of knowledge bases for teaching that comprised eleven sets of knowledge, including subject knowledge, teaching knowledge, content knowledge of learners and knowledge of self.

The theoretical basis of this study utilises three classifications of knowledge identified by Aristotle (translation D. Ross, 1984), which he described as *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*.

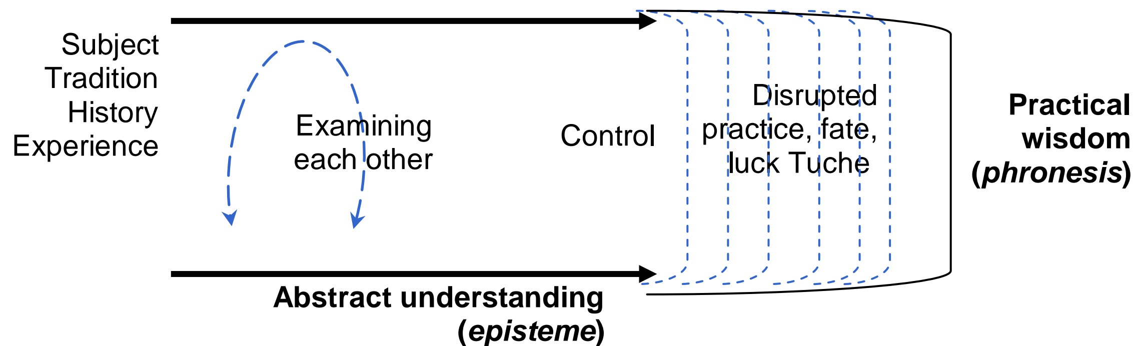
1.3. Knowledge: *Episteme*, *Techne* and *Phronesis*

In a presentation delivered by Professor Kari Smith at the Scottish Learning Festival in 2008 she put forward a model of understanding the decision-making of teachers, utilising the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*.

In this presentation, Smith expounded on the work of Brunstad (2007, cited in Smith,

2007, p.3). (See Figure 1, below.)

Figure 1 *Brunstad's (2007) model (cited in Smith, ibid. p.3)*



In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (translation D. Ross, 1984) described three approaches to knowledge. They were *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. In the above model, Brunstad examined professional practice in the light of the relationship between practical skills (*techne*), abstract understanding (*episteme*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*). In the above model, when professionals draw upon epistemic and technical knowledge they can be in control of a situation which is going to plan. However, when the unexpected happens, in disrupted practice, the professional has to make a decision, which, according to this model, could result in *phronesis*, or practical wisdom.

1.3.1. Practical Wisdom: *Phronesis*

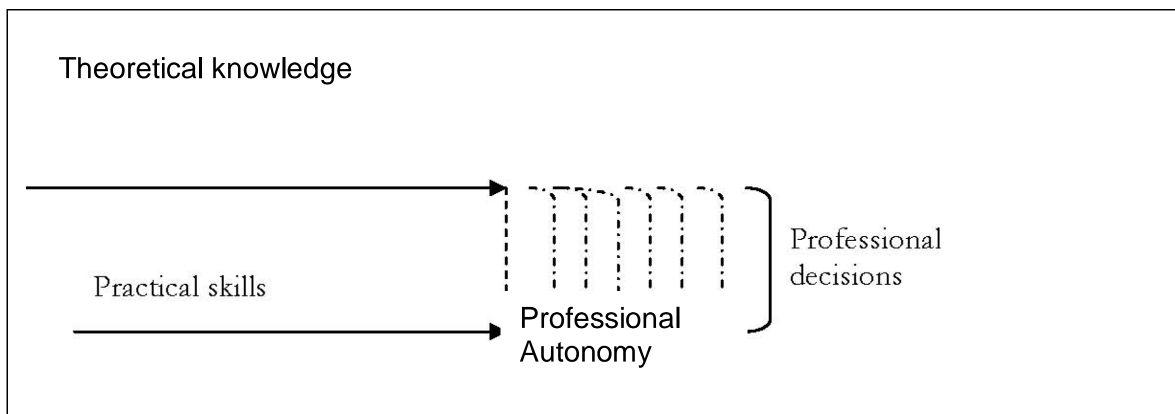
Flyvbjerg (2001) explains that "whereas *episteme* concerns theoretical know why and *techne* denotes technical knowhow, *phronesis* emphasises practical knowledge and practical ethics" (p.56). Dalton and McClinton (2002, p.101) describe practical wisdom as the ability to draw upon knowledge in a selective manner and to apply it in fitting ways in the practical situations that arise in the course of professional work.

Practical wisdom is associated with the manner in which knowledge is held and how that knowledge is put to use in exercising judgement. The characteristics of practical

wisdom also include an ability to learn from ideas and from the environment as well as intuition in being able to see through things, read between the lines and interpret messages gleaned through interactions with social and physical environments (Phelan, 2002, p.10). As Gibbs (2007) put it, "practical wisdom [is] developed through experience of practical judgements" (p.223).

Smith (ibid.) adapted Brunstad's model. (See Figure 2 below).

Figure 2



She identified the disrupted space, during the learning process, where teachers need to exercise professional autonomy. In this space, teachers need to draw on their theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge acquired during formal education. This knowledge, however, isn't always sufficient when deciding how to act in certain situations. It is the analysis of the context that determines the professional actions that are taken. This analysis is conducted in the light of the professional wisdom (*phronesis*) of the practitioner. "It is professional wisdom [*phronesis*] which determines the quality of professional actions within the autonomous space" (Smith, ibid. p.4). It is in the disrupted spaces that most professional learning takes place. In Brunstad's model, decisions taken in the disrupted space could result in practical wisdom (*phronesis*). In Smith's adaptation, decisions are taken utilising professional wisdom.

In the light of Smith's work, this study sought to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and emanated from the course of action taken. By this means, the study hoped to gain an insight into the learning and teaching process in colleges.

Noel (1999a, p.274) states that the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* has been proposed by several researchers as a concept which can be utilized for improving education and, more specifically, for improving teaching practice. For example, Breier and Ralphs (2009) argued that a greater understanding of the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* or practical wisdom could make an important contribution to the conceptualization and implement of Recognition (Assessment) of Prior Learning (RPL/APL) in formal education contexts. Paul Gibbs (2007), when considering the activities of the workplace researcher, put forward the case that practical wisdom developed through experience of practical judgements offers a form of enquiry appropriate for the complexity of the workplace.

Phronesis, was, therefore, seen to be a suitable conceptual guide for this investigation.

1.4. Research Context: Scotland's Colleges

This study focuses on teachers in colleges in Scotland and the sector is complex. A body of literature exists which suggests that the Further Education sector is a turbulent one, undergoing continual and excessive change (Edward, Coffield, Steer, & Gregson, 2005; Villeneuve-Smith, Munoz, & McKenzie, 2008). The forty-three colleges in Scotland deliver a broad and extensive curriculum, including qualifications which range from level 1 to level 10 in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). They teach a wide and diverse range of learners. In 2008-2009 (Scottish Funding Council, 2010), 15% of students were registered as having a disability; programmes and services designed to help learners with additional support for learning needs accounted

for around one fifth of all college activity and the average age of a student was 29. Learners from the most deprived areas in Scotland, where twenty per cent of the population reside, are disproportionately more likely to attend a college (Scottish Funding Council, 2008).

Salisbury *et al.* (2009, p.422) suggest that teachers in colleges are expected to deliver a far more diverse range of education and training programmes, to a wider range of learners, in a broader range of contexts, than any other educational sector.

During 2008-2009 (Scottish Funding Council, no date), there were 12,404 members of teaching staff delivering this diverse range of education in the forty-three colleges in Scotland. Of this number, 5,591 (45%) were teaching on a temporary contract. A teaching qualification isn't mandatory for practice in colleges. During 2008-2009, 69% (8,602) of all teaching staff held some kind of teaching qualification. 3,802 members of staff did not hold teaching qualifications. Of this number, 2,796 (74%) were on temporary contracts.

Access to the Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) at one of the three teaching institutes delivering this qualification in Scotland, is generally through the acquisition of permanent employment for individuals and largely financed by the Scottish Funding Council. During the period 2001-2002 to 2008-2009, the number of staff who held teaching qualifications in colleges increased by 13%. An independent review of the TQFE was undertaken by Tribal Consulting (Walker, Hudson, & Wood, 2008) and their report was published in February 2008. A number of participants in the study noted concerns about the TQFE's fitness for purpose. The report (ibid. p.11) stated that the issue of fitness for purpose of the TQFE was beyond the scope of the study but that there was clearly a concern about the qualification that needed to be addressed.

In September 2004, the Scottish Executive launched a Consultation on 'The Need for a Professional Body for Staff in Scotland's Colleges'. The consultation sought views on whether or not there should be a professional body which could help to support the career development of college staff and help raise the standards and quality of learning. In 2005, on the publication of the responses to the consultation[1], Scottish Ministers pronounced that the time was not yet right for the institution of a professional body for staff in colleges in Scotland. At the time of this study, there was no professional body for staff in colleges, although teaching staff with teaching qualifications can enrol as a member of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)[2].

1.5. A Word about Me

I have almost thirty years of experience of teaching and have taught in the secondary, special and Further Education sectors. I have also taught young people in psychiatric provision and in secure provision. For fifteen years, I was a teacher and manager in one of Scotland's colleges. My work chiefly involved provision for learners with disabilities or who required reasonable adjustments to be made in order to enable them to access to learning.

I hold strong values and believe in the right of all individuals to access learning opportunities which enable them to meet their potential and not to be discriminated against on any grounds, including race, gender, faith or religion, sexual orientation or disability.

For eight years I delivered support and services, including consultancy, conferences and workshops, to numerous colleges while working for the sector's national development agency. As Lead Specialist in Access and Inclusion at Scotland's Colleges, I created, delivered and managed professional learning and development to staff around Scotland's

[1] See: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/55971/0015672.pdf+
[2] See http://www.gtcs.org.uk/Registration/FurtherEducation/further_education.aspx

(then) forty-three colleges. Themes included equality and diversity, inclusive learning, promoting mental health, promoting positive behaviour and resilience and eradicating barriers to learning.

I know a great deal about colleges and cannot claim to be impartial. I think highly of the work of colleges and the difference they make to the lives of many learners. When contemplating embarking on a research activity, I wanted to carry out a piece of work that might somehow contribute to the good of colleges. I was drawn to Edwards' (1992, p.382) claim that educational research should be relevant to long-term societal well-being and may not always be immediately utilitarian - that its primary function is to provide insights into motivations and actions which will enrich understandings of accepted practices and may challenge them.

When seeking a strategy to guide the study, I wanted to find a methodological framework which could harness my experience in the field and which might allow me to be surprised by what I found. I sought an approach which could provide insights into the motivations and actions of teachers in colleges which could enrich understandings of accepted practices. I wanted to find a way to hear the voices of these teachers, to collect their stories and to make their stories visible. After sometime spent thinking and researching, I eventually settled on phenomenology.

1.6. Phenomenology

Van Manen (1990) states that, from a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, "to want to know the world in which we live as human beings" (p.5). He argues that to know the world is to profoundly be in the world in a certain way and that through the act of researching, we become more fully part of the world. Fundamentally, a phenomenological study describes how one or several individuals experience a phenomenon (Finlay, 2003b; Koch, 1995).

The phenomenon in this study was disrupted spaces, or interruptions, in the learning process and the investigation aimed to ascertain the teachers' experience of this phenomenon. The over-arching aim of the study was to reach an understanding of the everyday experiences of teachers in Scotland's colleges. It sought to bring, "into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life" (Van Manen, 1990, p.32).

1.7. A Note on Language used in this Thesis

1.7.1. Teacher/Lecturer

In this thesis, those who teach in colleges and the staff who were interviewed have been referred to as 'teachers' while the common term for such staff is 'lecturers'.

Sometimes those who teach in colleges are referred to as 'teacher-practitioners' and I did start out to use this term but dropped it as the thesis progressed, due to its cumbersome nature. The word teaching has connotations of facilitation, guidance and of involving more nurturing relationships with learners than the word 'lecturing' conjures up. I envisage a lecturer as someone imparting information, adopting a transmission model of learning and teaching. I am more than aware that this is not necessarily true, that the image of teacher subscribes to my own world-view. In colleges, we talk about lecturers teaching and not about lecturers lecturing.

I also thought that using the word 'teacher' throughout this thesis, rather than 'lecturer' placed the work within the canon of research about teaching and teachers (Beijaard, 1995; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Dewey, 1933; Shulman, 1986, 1987, 1991; Van Manen, 1991). Although the context of this work is colleges in Scotland, I felt that it was about teaching *per se* rather than teaching which happened particularly in colleges. The themes that arose in the study could equally be applicable to other sectors of education.

I explained my use of the term 'teacher' at the beginning of each of the twenty-three interviews with staff. No real discussion took place in relation to my chosen nomenclature for those who teach in colleges. I did not directly ask their opinion on describing lecturers as teachers. However, some staff voiced agreement with me while others were quiet on the subject. Pamela, Beauty Therapy stated that:

> Yea, I think what we have got is, some people work here who know stuff because they have got the qualifications ...... they lack, well I suppose they don't understand the people they are working with. I suppose they are missing knowledge of these learners and how to teach them and they are stuck standing in front of the class, trying to, I suppose, lecture, rather than trying to break some sort of two way sort of discussion – allowing kids to react and ask questions and so, I think sometimes, that is kind of lost.

One respondent (George) put forward the opinion that a proportion of staff in his college liked using the word 'lecturer' because it set them apart from school teaching. In George's view, such staff saw themselves as being different from school teachers and wanted to emphasis this perceived difference. According to George, for these staff, the major difference lay in the often informal, often collaborative, often nurturing and (as they saw it, again according to George) more adult learning relationships that were to be found in colleges and which may not be found in schools. Whether this is true or not, in terms of perceived or real differences between teaching in schools and teaching in colleges, is outside the limitations of this study

What can be said, is that using the word '*teacher*' rather than '*lecturer*' helped me to place those who teach in colleges within the wide cannon of literature on teachers and teaching. It helped me to reach some understanding of the general principles of teaching, which are common to all who teach, before considering what might be particular to the context of teaching in colleges.

1.7.2. Disrupted Spaces

Throughout this thesis, the term 'disrupted space' is used, as are the terms 'disrupted practice' and 'interruption in the learning process'. These terms were used to correspond with the term 'Disrupted Practice', used in Brunstad's model at Figure 1. They are mean to signify something that happened during the learning process, where the teacher had to think and make a decision. It could be an every day event or something that was uncommon or unexpected.

Initially the research used the term 'critical incident' which caused some difficulties which are described at 5.1.2. in this thesis. Prior to interview, participants were asked to think about critical incidents (see Annex XIV). In this thesis, all of the terms in the above paragraph are used interchangeably.

1.7.3. Narratives, Accounts, Interviews and Stories

This thesis seeks to explicate teachers' in Scotland's colleges' experiences of the phenomenon that is disrupted practice in the learning process. Van Manen (1990, p.115) suggested that the use of stories is a common device in phenomenological writing. Chapter Six gives an account of, or tells, six teachers' stories within a framework of five themes which accumulated from an analysis of the data.

The word 'account' is used in two contexts.

During interviews, the teachers provided their accounts of their experiences of the phenomenon, that is, disrupted spaces in the learning and teaching process. In this thesis, for the reader, I am providing an account, or a description, of the teachers' experiences of the phenomenon. This account is my interpretation of the teachers' accounts, as told to me during interviews.

In the thesis the word '*narrative*' is often used. I transcribed each of the teachers' interviews and I came to see these transcriptions as the teachers' narratives, their

accounts of their experiences. In order to unpeel the essence of the phenomenon, these narratives were subjected to an explication process. The result of this process was the emergence of five key themes which encapsulated the essence of the phenomenon. This process, in phenomenological terms, is known as reduction.

The teachers' stories are then told against the five themes which emerged through the explication of their narratives.

1.8. Summary

This study is a phenomenological investigation into teachers' in Scotland's colleges experiences of making professional judgements during interrupted spaces in the learning process and the extent to which *phronesis* both contributed and emanated from the course of action taken. The theoretical concept which guided the study was informed by the work of Kari Smith.

The study is underpinned by the assumptions that teaching and learning are complex activities; that interpretation and judgement are central to teaching; that the occupational knowledge of teachers influences their judgement but it is not enough to know how to act in certain situations. It is the analysis of context that determines the professional actions that are taken in disrupted spaces and that analysis is conducted in the light of the professional wisdom (*phronesis*) of the practitioner.

The following Chapter will provide a deeper understanding of the concept of *phronesis* and of the professional, occupational knowledge of teachers that is necessary for *phronesis*. It will outline the research aims and research questions and provide details of the conceptual framework which guided this study.
Chapter Three will provide a brief précis of the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutic phenomenology, the methodology which was adapted to guide this study,

and provide reasons for its selection.

Chapter Four will describe the methods and research instruments that were employed to meet the aims of the research. This Chapter will also explain how the concepts of hermeneutic phenomenology guided the collection of data and the research process. In addition, Chapter Four will give a full account of how I approached analysis of the data. Chapter Five will tell the stories of six out of the twenty-three teachers who were interviewed for this study. The six stories will be told against a framework of five themes which emerged from a hermeneutic phenomenological reflection of the data.

Chapter Six will provide a summary of the remaining seventeen teachers' stories which will also be told against the same five theme framework utilised in Chapter Five. Chapter Seven will discuss and interpret the teachers' stories, again utilising the five theme framework, in order to explicate their experience of the phenomenon of disrupted spaces in the learning and teaching process.

Chapter Eight will consider the six teachers' stories about their disrupted spaces described in Chapter Five and analyse the text against the interpretations of *phronesis* that was identified in Chapter Two. This Chapter will also review to what extent the study's theoretical framework affected the findings and consider the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection methods.

Chapter Nine will consider to what extent the research questions and the aim of the study were met. It will also consider the extent to which the methodological aim was achieved through the research design and how it might be improved. Finally, this Chapter will reflect on the extent to which the central question was answered and provide recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This Chapter will review the literature which is relevant to this study. It will use the ideas inherent in the literature to provide a justification for this research and a framework for progression (Hart, 1998 p.2).

The aim of this study was to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed and emanated from the course of action take. The previous Chapter explained how the initial conceptual ideas for this study emanated from the work of Kari Smith. This idea is that professional wisdom (*phronesis*) emanates from an analysis of the context of the interruption in the learning process and from the professional judgements taken in the light of that analysis. Analysis of the context involves practitioners drawing upon their occupational knowledge in order to both reflect upon and analyse a situation, and, thereby, making professional judgements or decisions.

This conceptual idea was the driving force behind this study. The literature search, therefore, sought greater understanding on the Aristotelian concepts of *episteme* and *techne*. It also sought empirical examples of what is meant and understood by *phronesis* but also where it had been used as a conceptual explicative tool. The problem was that, while a substantial body of literature exists where writers consider *phronesis* within meditative or analytic papers on what constitutes good teaching, empirical examples, in

the context of education, are sparse. In fact, the only relevant one that could be traced was Breir and Ralph's (2009), which was mentioned in Chapter One. Internet searches afforded some examples where *phronesis* had been utilized for masters or doctoral studies. As these were unpublished and not peer-reviewed, it was not considered appropriate to incorporate them within this review.

Therefore, rather than a critique of a body of work which utilised the concept of *phronesis* within empirical studies, this Chapter is a review of the literature which discussed the concept of *phronesis* in general as well as that which specifically addresses the concept of *phronesis* within the context of education. One reason for this is to provide the reader with an idea of the many interpretations of *phronesis* that abounds. The primary motive, for a review of the different interpretations of *phronesis*, however, was to settle on the interpretation that would underpin the investigation and to provide reasons for its selection. If an aim of the research is to ascertain the extent to which *phronesis* both contributed and emanated from any course of action taken by teachers, it is essential to make clear the definition of *phronesis* that is adopted in this investigation.

This Chapter, therefore, will provide a summary of the different explanations of *phronesis*. It will then attempt to analyse the different interpretations and to structure them into three categories or understanding of *phronesis.* These three categories will later be used to analyse the research findings. The work of Noel (1999a, 1999b) and Feldman (1996, 1997, 2002) was indispensable to this process and their ideas both led to the development and population of the three categories of *phronesis*.

The second purpose of the literature search was to reach an understanding of the occupational knowledge of teachers. In Kari Smith's model, teachers needed to draw upon their theoretical and practical knowledge in order to exercise professional autonomy in interrupted spaces during the learning process. The literature on teachers' decision-making (Benson & Malone, 1987; Smylie, 1992; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1997;

Winch, 2004) suggests that knowledge informs action. To understand the proper scope of teachers' decision-making, it is necessary to scrutinize their occupational knowledge in order to appreciate what knowledge is being utilized in the decision-making. The literature on the occupational knowledge of teachers is vast. The task was to choose, analyse and synthesise this work in order to provide a coherent and manageable understanding of teacher knowledge that could guide this study.

Again, the purpose of this review is not to critique the literature on teachers' occupational knowledge. The purpose is to name the primary categories of knowledge that is deemed necessary for teaching and to provide reasons for this identification.

2.2. Researcher as Quilt Maker

Throughout their key text for qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) provide the notion of the researcher as interpretive *bricoleur*, mixing methods, paradigms and modes of inquiry. 'This person is an artist, a quilt maker, a skilled craftsperson, a maker of montages and collages' (p.1084). [As an artist and a maker of quilts, I was strongly drawn to this metaphor of the researcher as quilt maker when approaching the literature search.] Starting a new quilt always involves a process of selection and rejection. Fabrics are chosen on the grounds that they can be assembled into a coherent whole. The literature search followed the same process.

2.3. Selecting, Organising and Managing the Literature

Several sources and databases were searched for relevant material including ERIC, SwetsWise, Ingenta Connect as well as the University library. Google Scholar and Google Books were useful and literature identified through Google was sourced through the University library electronic services. Electronically sourced material was skimmed to establish possible relevance and stored electronically. Mind maps were made of the literature as it was gathered, in order to establish coherence or identify gaps (see examples of mind maps at Annex I and II). Notes on readings were entered into the mind

maps and also stored on EndNote.

The questions that the literature search sought to answer were:

- What is professional wisdom or *phronesis*?
- What is the professional, occupational knowledge of teachers that is required for *phronesis*?

2.4. What is Professional Wisdom or *Phronesis*?

In the *Nichomachean Ethics,* Aristotle (translation D. Ross, 1984) described three virtues or approaches to knowledge, *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. *Episteme* is theoretical 'know what' and *techne* denotes technical 'know how' while *phronesis* emphasises practical knowledge and practical ethics.

Flyvbjerg (2001, p.57) summarizes the three as follows:

	Episteme	***Techne***	***Phronesis***
Meaning:	Science	Craft/art	Ethics Deliberation about values with reference to praxis
As an activity it is:	Universal, invariable, context independent	Pragmatic, variable, context-dependent	Pragmatic, variable, context-dependent
Based on:	General analytical rationality	Practical instrumental rationality governed by a conscious goal	Practical value-rationality
Oriented towards:	Knowledge	Production	Action
Contemporary terms:	'epistemology' 'epistemic'	'technique' 'technical' 'technology'	No analogous contemporary term

In contemporary literature, *episteme* is considered to be a form of expert propositional knowledge which is claimed to be true, provable or at least consistent with a theory, formulated in abstract terms, fully cognitive and transmittable from one person to another (Kessels & Korthagen, 1996, p.18). *Episteme* is the form of knowledge enshrined in educational theory. Aristotle defined *phronesis* in the *Nichomachean Ethics* as 'a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man' (translation D. Ross 1984, p.1140b5)

2.4.1 *Phronesis*: Priority of the Particular

Phronesis is context specific and is not solely concerned with universals (Flyvberg, 2004 p. 288) whereas *episteme* is concerned with universals (Flyvberg, 2004 p. 285) and "the production of knowledge that is invariable in time and space and achieved with the aid of analytical rationality." Aristotle (1976, pp 1139b 18-36, cited in Flyvberg, 2004 p. 288) stressed that in practical decision-making, knowledge of rules (the universal) is inferior to knowledge of real cases (the specific). That is why "some people who do not possess theoretical knowledge are more effective in action [especially if they are experienced] than others who do possess it" (Aristotle, 1976, pp 1139b 18-36, cited in Flyvberg, 2004 p. 288). An example, for Aristotle, was that someone who knew that light flesh goods were digestible and wholesome, but did not know what kinds were light; would be less likely to produce health than one who knew that chicken was wholesome. According to Aristotle, for prudence (*phronesis*), knowledge of the universal as well as the specific was required. As Flyvberg (2004 p.285) put it "*phronesis* requires an interaction between the general and the concrete."

2.4.2 Images of *Phronesis*

Within the literature, there are various interpretations of the meaning of *phronesis* including practical reasoning, practical wisdom and prudence (Noel, 1999a, 1999b). Eisner (op.cit. p.381) suggested that *phronesis* could be acquired through experience but that experience takes time. Mason (2007, p.357) agrees that practical wisdom can only

be gained through life experiences and through reflection on the lives of others, stating that, "we become wise though the exercise of practical reason." As has already been stated, *Phronesis* is context-specific, it is situated in the particulars of a specific time and place and is concerned with specific events and persons (Birmingham, 2004, p.315)

Some commentators provide an imagery of *phronesis* as practical wisdom. For example, it is described as being the ability to draw upon knowledge in a selective manner and to apply it in fitting ways in the practical situations that arise in the course of professional work (Dalton & McClinton, 2002, p.101); the manner in which knowledge is held and how that knowledge is put to use in exercising judgement (Sternberg, 1990, p.187); an ability to learn from ideas and from the environment as well as gleaned through interactions with social and physical environments (Goodfellow, 2002, p.6) and developed through experience (Gibbs, 2007, p.233).

2.4.3 *Phronesis* and Teacher Education

Some teacher educators have argued that the concept of *phronesis* should be harnessed within teacher education (Eisner, 2002; Higgens, 2001; Kessels & Korthagen, 1996; 1999). Korthagen and Kessels (1999, p.8), for example, describe educational epistemic knowledge as being based on research and characterized as '*objective*' theory or theory with a big T. While being necessary to allow student teachers to see the '*bigger picture'*, they argue that teachers often need knowledge that is situation-specific and related to the context in which they meet a problem or develop a need or concern. They describe this type of knowledge as being *phronesis*, or theory with a small t. They argue that theory with a big T, *episteme*, helps teachers to know more about many situations, while *phronesis* is about being perceptive in a particular situation and finding a helpful course of action on a basis of strengthened awareness (Korthagen, 2007, p.306).

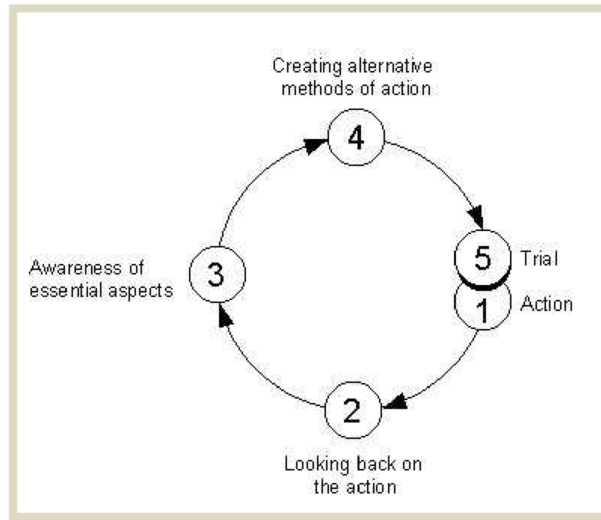
Kiristjansson, (2005, p.471) on the other hand, casts doubt on what he terms the *phronesis*-praxis perspective (*phronesis* being reflection and praxis being education). In

his opinion, there was no Aristotelian basis for this standpoint and that it was anti-theory, stating that, as educators, we have 'no good reason for denying ourselves the insights of moral, psychological and educational theory'. I took this to mean that Kiristjansson was arguing that teacher educators who promulgated the incorporation of *phronesis* into teacher education were doing so at the detriment to educational theory. From my reading of the literature on *phronesis* in teacher education, however, I did not see it as being anti-theory. The *phronesis* approach seemed to be about bridging the gap between theory and practice (Kessels & Korthagen, 1996; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999).

Korthagen's point of view is that there is a disconnection between theory and practice in teacher education; that teaching programs prepare teachers in ways that reinforce a transmission model of teaching as telling, which construes teachers as technicians delivering a prescribed curriculum. Such teaching gives little credence to learning from or in experience and advocates a progression of the work of Schön (1983) in teacher education, from his theories of the reflective practitioner towards the development of knowledge which is situation-specific. Korthagen argues that it is this type of knowledge, *phronesis*, which is essential for teachers in their work and most important for teacher education.

Korthagen and Kessels (1996, 1999) also put forward the notion of utilising the concept of *phronesis* within teacher education because "it is concerned with an understanding of specific concrete cases and complex or ambiguous situations" (Kessels & Korthagen, 1996, p.19). They do not deny the place of theory (*episteme*) in teacher education, just that they also promote *phronesis* because it is rooted in the particular and allows the teacher to perceive what is happening in a situation and creates flexibility for action Korthagen (2001, p.7) puts forward the ALACT model for teacher education, see Figure 3 overleaf:

Figure 3



The ALCT model, so called because of the first letters of the five phases, which are (1) action, (2) looking back on the action (3) awareness of essential aspects (4) creating alternative methods of action and (5) trial, which itself is a new action and therefore the starting point of a new cycle. A set of questions have been devised to correspond to the ALACT model which student teachers are asked to consider in relation to concrete situations. The questions can be found at Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

What is the context?	
1. What did you want?	5. What did the students want?
2. What did you do?	6. What were the students thinking?
3. What were you thinking?	7. How did you feel?
4. How did you feel?	8. How did the students feel?

Others who argue for a *phronesis* approach to teacher education suggest that it helps teachers to develop discernment and perception in themselves and in their learners

(Phelan, 2005a, p.340) and to be open-minded and avoid the extremes of impulsiveness and rigidity (Birmingham, 2004, p.320). Phelan (2005b) describes discernment as being "a teacher's capacity to see the significance of a situation, to imagine various possibilities for action and to judge ethically how one ought to act on any given occasion*" (p.10).* For Phelan (ibid. p.10) the capacity for discernment is brought about through a process of reflection, where prospective teachers speak and write about their direct and indirect experiences in practice settings and in case studies.

This inquiry-based model of teacher education promotes ongoing exploration of the concrete particulars of practice in specific situations as the route to wise decisions about how to act. Teacher educators invite teacher candidates to participate in action research projects, to become critical consumers of the research literature in the light of practice and to develop a reflective approach to decision-making. This method of teacher education is about helping practitioners develop their artistry by exploring problems of practice that cannot be solved by the straightforward application of established theories and by reconsidering their own assumptions and reasoning processes.

Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) state that in such a model of teacher education, "what is known and worth knowing about teaching is related to the practical knowledge possessed by teachers of how and when to act in actual teaching situations" *(pp.1-2).* What is important in this model is that the underlying premise is the value of a knowledge base in which teachers are not only consumers of knowledge but that they are also, "architects of study and generators of knowledge" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, ibid. p.1-2).

In a complicated world of learning and teaching, *phronesis* or practical wisdom offers no guarantees (Phelan, 2005a, p.23). According to Birmingham (2004 p.322), it is not a moral panacea but as Phelan (ibid.) states, it does allow the recovery of the ontological dimension of teaching and learning by "reintroducing questions such as…Who am I?

Where do I fit? What can we best live by and live together as social beings in our schools?" (p.23). Phelan (ibid.) goes on to argue that *phronesis*, or "practical wisdom opens up tremendous possibilities for how we think about teaching and learning to teach" (p.24).

2.4.4 *Phronesis* : Knowledge or a Way of Being

There is some confusion in commentaries on Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* as to whether the authors regard it as a form of knowledge, a form of reasoning or understanding, a form of disposition or a personal quality. Gibbs and Angelides (2004), for example, suggest that to consider a person a *phronimos*, or a "*moral expert*" (Biondi Khan, 2005, p.39), that is, having *phronesis*, is to recognise them as being "knowledgeable and wise rather than as having knowledge" *(op.cit. p.334).* Birmingham (2004) considered *phronesis* to be a virtue of the mind and "different from a state of mind, a process of thinking or a way of knowing" *(p.314).* It is a body of knowledge **and** a way of being. *Phronesis* is part of who the *phronimos* is. It is part of the way that one goes about everyday life. It must be stressed again that it is context-specific, one may have *phronesis* in one domain of life and not another.

2.4.5 *Phronesis* : Inherently Moral

Furthermore, *phronesis* is inherently moral and orientated towards the common good. It is a human activity which is aimed at the good of mankind, an element of moral character and not simply a morally neutral way of thinking (Noel, 1999a, p.284). Wivestad, (2008, p.309), defines *phronesis* as a kind of moral reasoning, a view shared with Eisner (2002) who regarded it to be "a kind of morally pervaded practical wisdom" (p.381) and Gadamer (1975, p.316) who considered it to be a form of moral knowledge that offers an intentionality to act. *Phronesis* is a sense or a tacit skill "for doing the ethically practical" (Flyvberg, 2004, p.287).

There is circularity between *phronesis* and an ethical disposition. One cannot act ethically and morally without *phronesis*. The moral value is centred within the person acting morally rather than within the actions themselves. Birmingham (2004, p.316) describes this as being an important distinction. The virtue is in the character of the individual but expressed in actions, i.e. caring for students.

Birmingham (2004) argued that the morally ethical interpretation of *phronesis* be aligned with contemporary work on reflection on teaching. She states that “the moral complexity of teaching requires *phronesis* to achieve moral goodness, promote excellence in teaching and learning and advance human flourishing. Reflection - as *phronesis* - is both essentially moral and morally essential” (op.cit. p.323).

2.4.6 *Phronesis* : Many Interpretations

There are many interpretations of *phronesis* within the literature, it is a way of making practical arguments; it is a body of knowledge and it is a way of being. I already stated at the beginning of this Chapter that it is my intention to distil these interpretations into three categories and it would perhaps be logical to do this now. However, I have decided that, in order to reach an understanding of the interpretations of *phronesis*, it is necessary to first reach an understanding of the occupational knowledge of teachers. As *phronesis* requires knowledge, in order to consider *phronesis* in teaching, we need to consider teachers’ knowledge. Therefore, the second question which drove this review will be addressed.

2.5. What is the Professional, Occupational Knowledge of Teachers that is required for *Phronesis*?

The literature on teacher knowledge encompasses notions of craft knowledge, practical knowledge, personal practical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Fenstermacher, 1994; Hoyle & John, 1995). Each of these types of knowledge denotes experiential knowledge

or knowledge accumulated through practice. The literature refers to tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967) which is difficult to articulate concisely and clearly, and to formal, non-formal and informal knowledge (Hodkinson, *et al.*, 2003). While the broad categories which sought to define teacher knowledge were useful, they were not specific enough to be helpful to this study. Squires (2004) helpfully provided teacher functions but not knowledge.

Shulman (1987, p.8) attempted to codify teacher knowledge and classified it into seven categories. These included knowledge of subject; pedagogical content knowledge (*the ways of representing subject knowledge appropriately for learners*); knowledge of curriculum; general pedagogical knowledge (*broad understanding of management and organisation*); knowledge of curriculum (*grasp of the materials, resources and tools of the trade*); knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational aims, purposes and values.

Turner-Bisset (1999, p.43) identified eleven categories of teacher knowledge, some of which are included in Shulman's list. In what she considered comprised teacher knowledge, she added beliefs about the subject and knowledge of self. She also stratified knowledge of learners to include cognitive and social knowledge.

Beijaard *et.al* (1995, p.751) also helpfully provided a notion of the knowledge necessary for teaching. This encompassed subject knowledge, didactical knowledge (the planning, execution and management of lessons) and pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of learners). Marrying the work of Beijaard *et al.*, Shulman and Turner-Bisset with Aristotelian concepts of *episteme* and *techne*, this study assumes that the central tenets of teacher knowledge are knowledge of subject; theoretical knowledge (*episteme*); process knowledge (*techne*) and knowledge of learners.

2.5.1. Subject Knowledge

Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999) stated that teachers must firstly know about their subject area and they must know how to teach that subject area. Shulman (op.cit.) argued that the more strategies that teachers have at their disposal, within their subject area, the more effectively they can teach that subject. Shulman suggested that it was not sufficient for a teacher to simply 'know their subject' and developed a classification of knowledge known as Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Shulman (1987, p.8) described PCK as "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is unique to the province of teachers, their own form of professional understanding."

Young (2008) developed Shulman's concept of PCK when considering the knowledge that teachers in colleges require for practice. Firstly, they need to be specialists in relation to their occupational field, in engineering say or travel and tourism. In other words, they need to know their subject and they must know how to teach that subject. They need to know the implications for learning and teaching and assessment within their particular vocational field. He puts forward the notion that, "teaching marketing or business administration raises quite different pedagogic and assessment issues to teaching plumbing or electrical installation" (ibid. p.176). Young described this as "specialist pedagogic knowledge" (ibid. p.176) and contended that college teachers needed to acquire such knowledge, either before they start work or in the next few years as part of their professional development.

Thomson and Wiliam (2008) stated that teachers need strong content knowledge to *ask*

> good questions, to interpret the responses of their students, to provide appropriate feedback that focuses on what to do to improve and to adjust their teaching on the fly, based on the information that they are gathering about their students' understanding of the context (p.15).

They also put forward the opinion that teachers need a good overview of the subject-matter knowledge in order to be clear about the big ideas in a particular domain, so that these are given greater emphasis (ibid. p.15).

2.5.2. Theoretical Knowledge

Both Shulman (op.cit. p.8) and Turner-Bisset *(*op.cit. p.43) agreed that teachers also need theoretical knowledge (*episteme*). *Episteme* could be considered as 'knowing why'. As already stated, it concerns universals. Hodkinson *et al.* (2003, p.314) described this kind of knowledge as "formal or acquisitional and individual learning; vertical or propositional knowledge; within educational institutions."

Theoretical knowledge would enshrine theoretical perspectives on how learning happens, including an historical understanding of these perspectives. This knowledge is generally accrued through formal initial teacher education which precedes practice. This assumption cannot be made in relation to those who teach in colleges as a substantial number take up posts without access to prior teacher education. Access to teacher education comes when staff are in post and, usually, have a permanent contract. Staff could acquire professional knowledge in the form of *episteme* when they had been teaching for some time.

Epistemic knowledge would encompass an understanding of some of the theories of learning, as briefly outlined in Chapter One. For the post compulsory sector, it might include awareness of the work of Kolb (1984) and Knowles (1984; 1990) who argued that adult learners have particular requirements of the learning process. It might also include knowledge and some understanding of recent research and the implications for learning and teaching. For example, in the areas of neuro-science (Geake, 2004; Teaching and Learning Research Programme, 2007) or Web 2.0 technology (Alexander, no date; Crook, Crook, Cummings, Fisher, Harrison, & Lewin, 2008; Davies, 2009).

Epistemic knowledge in relation to technology might also require technical knowledge, or how to apply that knowledge in practical situations.

2.5.3. Technical Knowledge

In Aristotelian terms, *techne* is the activities and skills of the craftsman. In teaching, *techne* is 'knowing how' and is encapsulated in the ways that teachers plan, execute, manage and evaluate learning and teaching processes (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p.257). It is practical skills and expertise in the management of learning. *Techne*, in teaching, could be described as "general pedagogic knowledge" (Shulman, op.cit.; Turner-Bisset, op.cit).

In teaching, practice which chiefly draws upon *episteme* and *techne* could be understood as being a process which basically applies received knowledge to a practical situation. Teaching, utilising only 'knowing how' and 'knowing why' knowledge could result in a pull towards teaching as transmission (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, op.cit. p.257). This model of teaching would not inculcate the socio-cultural model of learning outlined in Chapter One, where learning is seen to be an inherently social process (Hodkinson, *et al.*, 2007; Hodkinson, Biesta, & James, 2004; James & Biesta, 2007). In teaching, *techne*, according to Birmingham (2004, p.314) is the condition of possessing knowledge about the means to reach a given end, not dealing with the nature of the goal, just with the most effective means to achieve a goal. It contains no moral component.

2.5.4. Knowledge of Learners

Both Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999) agreed that knowledge of learners should be included in the occupational knowledge of teachers. Beijaard (1995) described this form of knowledge as pedagogical knowledge. It encompasses knowledge of "what is going on in students' minds, ways of communicating with and speaking about other people, and personal or private problems students have" (p.751). Feldman (1997, p.759) stated that, in addition to knowing their subject area and knowing

how to teach the subject, effective teachers also required to know about their students as learners as well as knowing about their students as individuals in larger contexts.

Turner-Bisset (1999, p.45) suggests that knowledge of learners encapsulates the social knowledge of a particular individual or group; what they like, what they dislike. It includes knowledge of their interests and preoccupations and what is going on in their personal life which could impact on learning. This kind of knowledge influences the learner-teacher relationship.

There are also two forms of cognitive knowledge of learners (Turner-Bisset, op.cit p.45). The first could be related to *episteme* because it is theoretical knowledge and is concerned with universals. In the case of school teachers, it is theoretical knowledge of, for example, child development. It is knowledge which would inform practice.

I would suggest that cognitive knowledge of learners could include knowledge for inclusive practice. This would mean an understanding of the barriers to learning which can be created by, for example, dyslexia, autism or physical or mental health difficulties. I would also include in this category, an understanding of the discrimination in education which can be encountered on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, faith or religion or sexual orientation. Inherent within this cognitive knowledge is an understanding of the responsibilities that teachers have to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the six categories mentioned above and to anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for learners with disabilities.

The second form of cognitive knowledge is context-bound and relates to a particular group of learners (Turner-Bisset, op.cit p.45). It is the kind of knowledge which grows with regular contact with a group of learners and leads to differentiation of materials and approach, dependent on the learner and the learner's cognitive, social, emotional and physical abilities.

2.5.4.1. Knowledge of Learners: Summary

The literature on the occupational knowledge of teachers is vast. For the purposes of clarification and coherence, this review drew principally on the work of Beijaard, (1995), Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999). While recognizing there are many dimensions associated with teacher knowledge, for simplicity, this study assumes that the primary tenets of teacher knowledge are:

a. Subject knowledge
b. Process knowledge (*techne*; 'knowing how'; pedagogic knowledge)
c. Theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching (*episteme,* 'knowing why')
d. Knowledge of learners (cognitive and social knowledge). Knowledge of learners could also come under the category of *episteme*, if it concerns universals rather than specifics.

Having clarified teacher occupational knowledge, this review will now turn back to the notion of *phronesis* and define the three categories against which research findings will later be analysed. Within each of the three categories, I have attempted to incorporate some understandings of teacher knowledge which I believe sit within some of the three categories. In this way, I have tried to synthesis some ideas of teacher knowledge with the ideas of *phronesis*.

2.6. Three Interpretations of *Phronesis*

Noel (1999b, p.283) suggests that there are three interpretations of *phronesis*. She describes these three interpretations as the rationality, the situational and the moral character. Noel (ibid. p.283) finds the multifaceted concept of *phronesis* useful when considering the complexity of the classroom, stating that, "the combination of the different interpretations when looking at the classroom teacher in the complex classroom situation make up the concept of *phronesis* for teaching"

I have borrowed Noel's categories in order to refine and reach an understanding of the various interpretations of *phronesis*. Every interpretation assumes that teachers have a body of occupational knowledge.

2.6.1. *Phronesis*: The Rationality Interpretation

One interpretation of *phronesis* is rationality and *phronesis* is interpreted as "*practical reasoning"* (Fenstermacher, 1993, p.102). Noel (op.cit.) states that the rationality interpretation of *phronesis* approaches the question, "What should I do in this situation?" through rationality (p.275). The rationality model of *phronesis* pertains to the thinking done by teachers in anticipation of or following an action, as well as the relationship between the thinking and the action itself. For Fenstermacher (1993) the rational, practical arguments interpretation was a tool for examining teacher thinking. The hope was to improve teachers' thinking about practice by improving the premise of their argument. The rationality interpretation of *phronesis* requires teachers to examine their own beliefs, desires and possible actions when deliberating about what to do in the classroom. In the rational, practical reasoning interpretation, reflection is crucial and Schön's (1983) notions of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action are familiar within education. In this interpretation of *phronesis*, practical reasoning denotes the type of thinking that enables human beings to act in ways that are good, sensible and conducive to well-being (Orton, 1997, p.57).

Feldman (no date) proposed that the rationality interpretation suggests "a vision of teachers as reasoning beings who make decisions about their practice, and that their expertise in doing so lies in their abilities to identify goals, to make defensible decisions based on practical and moral considerations, and to plan and carry out actions to meet those goals"

The rationality perspective includes the individual knowledge perspective of teaching; that teachers are individuals who possess an array of knowledge that is unique to their

profession or craft (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Eraut, 1983, 1988; Fenstermacher, 1994; Hoyle & John, 1995). It also suggests a vision of teachers who make decisions on their practice, and that their expertise in doing so lies in their abilities to identify goals, to make defensible decisions based on practical and moral considerations, and to plan and carry out actions to meet these goals (Feldman, 1997, p.759).

The rationality perspective takes account of Shulman's (1986, 1987, 2007) admonition against an approach to the learning of teaching practice that is merely about the acquisition of a narrow band of practical skills and encapsulate his 'wisdom of practice'. Wisdom of practice refers "to the full range of practical arguments engaged by practitioners as they reason about and ultimately make judgements and decisions about situations they confront and actions they must take" (Shulman, 2007, p.560).

For Feldman, this rationality interpretation, which includes teacher knowledge and teacher reasoning, was not enough to encapsulate what teaching is. He stated that, "teacher knowledge and teacher reasoning perspectives do not pay enough attention to the actions, knowledge, beliefs and intentions of teachers that are the result of meaning making in situations" (ibid. p.762).

2.6.2. *Phronesis*: The Situational Interpretation

The rational interpretation of *phronesis* requires deliberation, an ability to reason and to construct a rational argument for action either before or after an event. A second interpretation of *phronesis*, is the situational. In this interpretation, *phronesis* is about being perceptive; having discernment and being able to read and analyse a situation. It is about knowing how to draw upon occupational knowledge and about knowing how to apply that knowledge when deciding to act. It is the situational interpretation of *phronesis* that Smith (2007, op.cit.) used in the model that was delineated in Chapter One. According to (Noel, 1999a, p.279), this interpretation answers the question, "What

should I do in this situation?" by focusing on the situation and how best to act in that situation.

The situational interpretation could be related to what Hegarty (2000, p.462) described as 'insight' when outlining the knowledge base for teaching. Hegarty describes a teaching moment or a classroom intervention when the teacher draws down some elements of their occupational knowledge. Not all have to be present, what is essential is that the teacher relates the knowledge that is used to the particular situation and does so by generating a new insight specific to that situation.

Dunne (1993, p.292) sees *phronesis* as a dynamic, insightful and flexible concept that might be described as *phronetic* insight. Based on this *phronetic* insight, we have unique insights into certain practical situations due to our experiences and personal relationships with the intricacies of those situations (Noel, 1999a, p.282).

The situational interpretation of *phronesis* is aligned to the notion of teacher knowledge as knowledge-in-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p.257). Knowledge is acquired through experience and, importantly, through considered and deliberative reflection about or inquiry into experience. Like the rationality interpretation of *phronesis*, the situational interpretation requires reflection on and in action.

The situational interpretation of *phronesis* could also encompass what Fenstermacher (1994, p.12) describes as "what teachers know as a result of their experience as teachers." He includes here, "how to do things, the right place and time to do them, or how to see and interpret events in relation to one's actions" (ibid. p.12). The situational perspective of *phronesis* could be aligned to the thinking of commentators who prescribe to knowledge in action and where teachers learn how to make that knowledge explicit through deliberation and reflection (Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Fenstermacher, 1994; Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992). Cochran-Smith and Lytle,

(1999) put it this way:

> .....from the knowledge-in-practice perspective, it is acknowledged that competent professionals pose and construct problems out of the uncertainty and complexity of practice situations by connecting them to previous ones and to a variety of other information. Here, thought and action are linked, and the lines between knowledge generation and knowledge use are blurred (p.263).

The focus is on teaching as action. To do this, good teachers need to draw, not only on their expertise of practice, but also on their previous experiences of actions and their reflections on these actions. Feldman (1997) described the situational perspective of *phronesis* as "deliberative wisdom". He said that:

> Deliberative wisdom is Aristotle's *phronesis*. It is the ability to step out of practice and to reflect on what has occurred to make defensible decisions about what to do. This is similar to Schön's (1983) reflection-on-action (p.769).

2.6.3. *Phronesis*: The Situational Interpretation

In the third understanding of *phronesis*, the moral character interpretation, *phronesis* is the character of a person. Noel (Noel, 1999a, p.283) proposes that this interpretation of *phronesis* answers the question, "What should I do in this situation?" by responding that what one would do is inextricably bound up with who one is as a person.
In this interpretation, *phronesis* isn't something that can be assessed distinct from the individual; it is part of who the *phronimos* is, a part of how they go about their everyday life. Dunne (1993) stated that there is a "reciprocal relationship between *phronesis* and virtuous character" *(p.283).* Within the moral character interpretation, *phronesis*, as defined by Dunne (ibid.) "characterises a person who knows how to live well....it is personal knowledge in that, in the living of one's life, it characterises and expresses the kind of person one is" (p.244).

Noel (1999a) states that issues that arise within the moral character interpretation include "examining how experience, collaboration and friendship lend themselves to the character of the phronimos"(p.284). A key focus in the moral character interpretation is the circling between *phronesis* and character which has already been outlined. In order to be considered a *phronimos*, one displays ethical goodness when making practical decisions. Ethical decision-making is dependent on moral character and one shapes and develops the other. To have moral character one needs experience of making moral decisions and one must have moral character in order to make moral decisions. Noel (ibid.) explains the result of this circling as a sense of *phronesis* that "sees it not only as a way to explain or determine actions to take in practical situations but also as a way of being that arises from oneself" (p.285).

Kristijansson (2005 p.470), states that all teaching has a moral dimension. Oser (1991, p.202) proposed that when normal classroom routines are interrupted, teachers need to consider principles which define their professional responsibilities when seeking to solve dilemmas. The types of principles referred to by teachers in these conflicts define their professional responsibility, which manifests itself in professional acts.

Hanhimaki and Tirri (2009; 1999) suggest that teachers cannot separate their own moral character from their professional self – that this moral character influences teachers' reasoning and interaction with students. Johnston also (2008, p.429) suggests that teachers, when seeking to resolve classroom dilemmas, conduct assessments or allocate resources, are making *moral* judgements and that an ability to make such judgements effectively is the cornerstone of high quality teaching, conditional on the judgements made being morally sound.

Feldman (1996, 1997, 2002) argues for a view of teaching that encapsulates the notion of teaching as a way of being, much in the same way that the moral character interpretation of *phronesis* sees *phronesis* as a way of being. Feldman utilises the

arguments of Stengel (1996, cited in Feldman, 1997, p.764) who suggests that being a teacher is a way of being; that teachers are human beings for whom teaching is a way of being human. A person's way of being is the sum total of their experience. The human being who is a teacher has a way of being that is unique to them. They have other ways of being that include relationships with family, friends, community etc. but being a teacher is one of the ways of being to that teacher.

This model of *phronesis*, as being, acknowledges who the person is and what they can bring to the situation. Feldman (ibid. p. 763) argues that a way of looking at teaching which involves content knowledge and application of that knowledge through a set of competences and skills views the teacher as a person who is doing the teaching rather than being a teacher. To be a teacher is to live the life of a teacher rather than act in prescribed ways (Phelan, 2002, p.10).

This view of teaching corresponds to Heidegger's (1962) understanding of being-in-the world which is Heidegger's replacement for terms such as subject, object, consciousness and world. He rejected the notion that we can be separated from that which appears in our consciousness - consciousness and objectivity – and moved towards the concept of **Dasein** (there-being) which is conscious being or a being which understands its own being. Feldman (op.cit , p.767), posits the concept of teaching-as-being. It arises from a notion of being-in-the-world and the meanings that we each bring to it. Understanding arises from immersion in situations that constitute our world, an immersion that is fundamental to and inseparable from our existence. Understanding of one's own being can never be separated from the individual and can never be fully accessed because it is constituted by our being in the world. He says, that in this perspective:

> ......teaching is viewed as a way of being. It begins with the recognition that teachers are people in the role of the teacher, who act as teachers, and teach in educational situations. It is in their being as teachers that their understandings arise through meaning-making in those situations, and why they act as they do.

> And it is also through their being in these situations, with their web-like structures that extend not only through time and space, but also across human relations, that teachers come to understand others through a hermeneutic interpretation of their actions. (Feldman, op.cit. p.768)

Feldman describes this as *wisdom-in-practice* and that it comes about through the understanding of one's own being and others in situations. 'Teaching as being', including the moral character interpretation of *phronesis,* is a complex concept. It encompasses a teacher's professional identity, humanity, intentions and the hermeneutic nature of a teacher's actions and understanding in the classroom (Feldman, no date). It incorporates knowledge, values and beliefs about teaching which generate enthusiasm. It is evident when enthusiasm results in behaviour and actions that stretch learner horizons which correspondingly stretches the horizons of the teacher (Feldman, no date). It is seen in the level of affiliation and the quality of the social interactions within individual educational contexts. It incorporates the knowledge, values and beliefs intrinsic to the individual. It incorporates their world-view. A teacher acting within this interpretation must have moral character, an ability to act and think morally, for the common good (Noel, 1999a).

Phronesis is accumulative and as Eisner (2002, p.381) suggests is acquired through experience and experience takes time. It could be assumed that the moral character or teaching as being interpretation of *phronesis* would only be accessible to teachers who had been teaching for some time. This is not to presume that longevity in the profession would automatically bestow *phronesis*. Practical wisdom accumulates through experience, both positive and negative. Over time, *phronesis*, gleaned through experience, builds into a body of knowledge which informs future teacher actions. The *phronimos* learns through experience and decisions are taken which are morally defensive. A person who acted immorally, or whose actions bestowed harm in any way could not be seen as a *phronimos*.

The definition of moral behaviour which guides this study will be outlined at the end of this Chapter.

2.6.4. All Interpretations are Needed

Noel (op.cit. p.287) categorised true *phronesis* as incorporating all three interpretations, the rationality, the situational and the moral character. Feldman also delineated wisdom in the practice of teachers as an amalgamation of 'wisdom of practice', 'deliberative wisdom' and 'wisdom-in-practice'. These categories relate to Noel's interpretations of *phronesis* as rationality, situational and moral character. Both Noel and Feldman made clear that each interpretation was necessary for good practice. Each relied on the other and there was interplay between all three.

Teacher knowledge and reasoning, in the rationality interpretation, provides the basis for deliberative action found in the situational interpretation of *phronesis*. The moral character interpretation guides actions and use of knowledge.

I was strongly drawn to using the multiple lenses of *phronesis* to view teachers and teaching. Utilising all three of the interpretations of *phronesis* as a way of viewing teaching acknowledges that teaching is a deeply complex, intellectual and practical activity. It is a creative act in which the expert teacher, as a human being and with all the flaws that makes us all human, is influenced by all that it is that makes that person human. In this creative act, they draw from a store of knowledge, experience and strategies when analysing a situation and deciding to act in that situation. The very action that a teacher takes will guide future actions, as *phronesis* is gained from experience. This view of teaching completely moves away from an interpretation of teaching as composing of skills, competencies or standards. It addresses the complex reasoning, thinking, synthesis and relationships that underpin the best teaching.

To summarise, the three interpretations of *phronesis* which will guide this study are:

- **The Rationality Interpretation**
    - Where teachers utilise their professional knowledge to apply practical arguments and practical reasons for action. It is where they use their knowledge and skills to plan thoughtful interventions to promote rational ends. The Rationality Interpretation is evident in teachers' ability to apply rational arguments before and after action.
- **The Situational Interpretation**
    - Where teachers utilise their occupational knowledge to analyse and interpret a situation and to make professional decisions and judgements.
- **The Moral Character Interpretation**
    - Where *phronesis* is seen as being. People don't only just act wisely, they are wise, it is part of who they are and how they come to act. *Phronesis* is, however, context-specific. There is a reciprocal relationship between *phronesis* and moral character. A person who is wise in one context might not necessarily act wisely in another. Included in this interpretation is the notion of teaching as being and that being a teacher is inherently part of who that person is and the meanings that they bring to being a teacher. In order to be considered a *phronimos* within this interpretation, one displays ethical goodness when making practical decisions.

The literature review helped to formulate the research questions. Effort was made to formulate a research aim which was concise and a set of questions which were open, outcome driven and which would seek to address the aim. As Shulman (1986) stated, in order to conduct a piece of research, "scholars must necessarily narrow their scope, focus their view and formulate a question far less complex than the form in which the world presents itself in practice. This holds for any piece of research; there are no exceptions" (p.192)

2.7. Research Aim and Research Questions

The research aim was to:

Determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (phronesis) both contributed to and matured from the course of action taken.

The research questions were:

1. What is each individual participant's:
    a. Educational biography (excluding teacher education);
    b. Experience of teacher education and level (s) of qualifications;
    c. Professional biography;
    d. Subject specialism
    e. Professional identity?

2. What was the experience of teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges when encountering a particular pedagogical issue or interruption, either fortunate or unfortunate, in the learning process?

3. On reflection, what did they think of the deliberations, decisions and actions taken by them during the incident?

4. What, if anything, would have been helpful to them during the incident?

The notion of teaching-as-being and that teachers' actions, as human beings, were influenced by a variety of factors inherent to them as people, influenced the first

research question. A decision was taken to garner information on the participants in the study in order to better understand them as people and, therefore, their decision-making.

The understanding of *phronesis* that was assumed within this study was based on an amalgamation of all three of the interpretations of *phronesis*. *Phronesis* could be practical reasoning; it could be an ability to draw down knowledge and apply it to practical situations after reflection; and it could be part of a person's moral character and an ability to make moral and ethical judgements; a *phronimos*; a way of teaching as being.

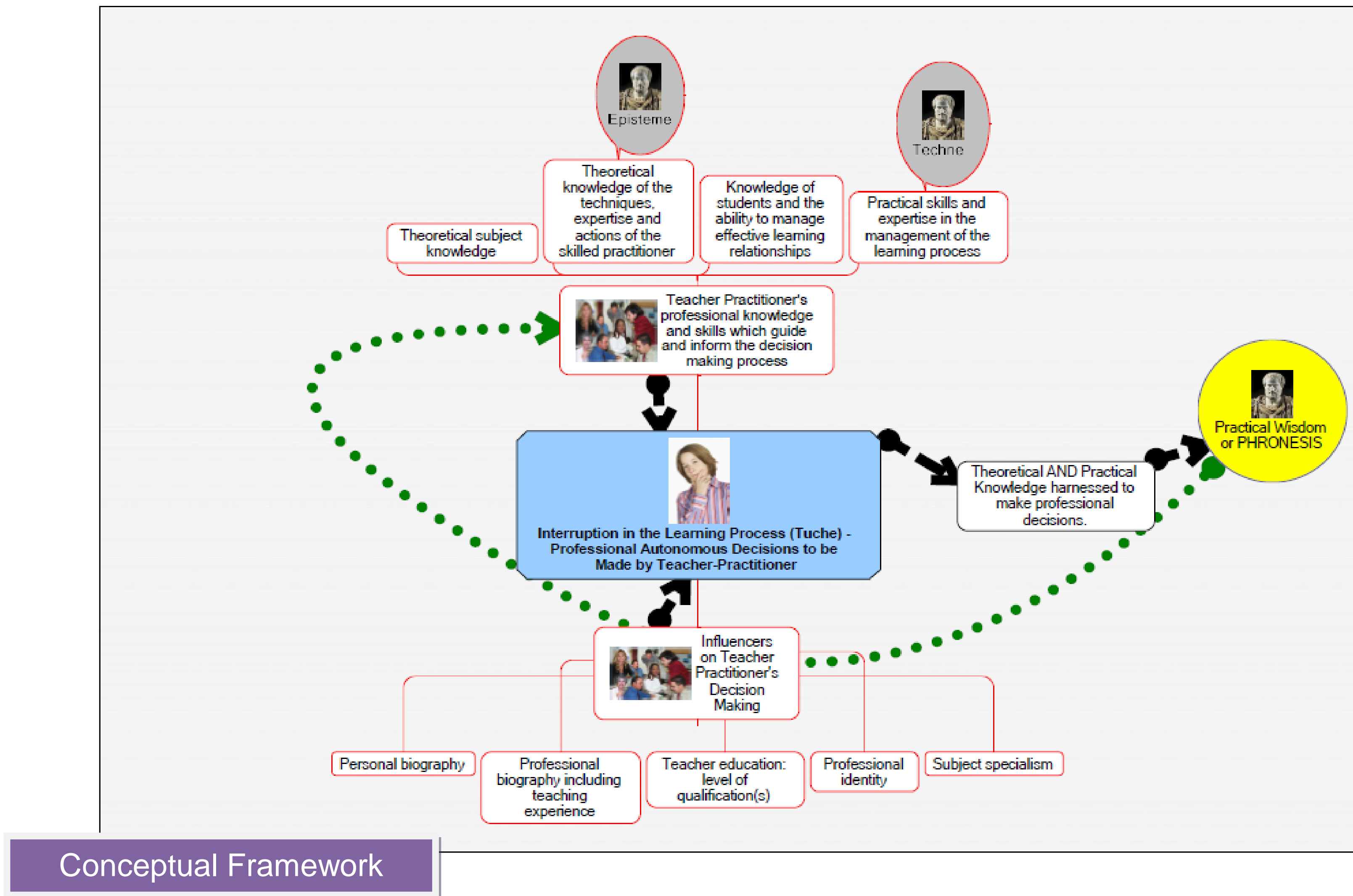
The study was to find out what teachers did when they did not know what to do and what ways they found to be wise - wisdom being *phronesis*, in all of its interpretations.

2.8. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework was drawn up in order to guide the investigation and seek answers to the above questions. The framework draws heavily from Brunstad's (2007, cited in Smith, 2007, p.3) and Smith's (ibid. p.4) adaption of this model. It can be seen at Figure 5 on the following page.

The framework assumes that a teacher's subject knowledge, theoretical knowledge (*episteme*), process knowledge (*techne*), and knowledge of learners can guide the decision-making of teachers during disrupted spaces. It also assumes that teachers' personal biographies, learning biographies level of teacher education and subject specialism can influence a teacher's decision-making.

Figure 5



The conceptual framework assumes that, when theoretical and practical knowledge are harnessed to make decisions within disrupted spaces, then *phronesis* can emanate from the process. *Phronesis*, as knowledge, gained from this experience can be utilized and join the armoury of teacher professional knowledge.

The rationality and situational interpretations of *phronesis* are incorporated into the framework. The concept of *Phronesis*, as a way of being, drove the first research question and the intention to reach an understanding of the participants as people, as human beings.

2.9. Morality

One assumption that underpins this study is that *phronesis* is essentially moral and commentators on *phronesis* such as Wivestad, (2008, p.309) define it as a kind of moral reasoning. This assumption drove the requirement for a small scale review of the literature on morality and teaching. A wide scale review of the vast literature on these topics was outside the limitations of this study, particularly in terms of time available. As I lacked any extensive prior knowledge in the disciplines of philosophy and morality, this personal position also presented limitations, in terms of accessing relevant literature.

Unfortunately, according to Oser (1991, p.61) the concept of professional morality does not yet have a strong theoretical base. However, the purpose of the literature search was not to attempt to select and critique the arguments of major commentators on morality but to seek a working definition that would lay bare the assumptions that underpinned the study.

2.9.1. Kant and Universalisability

Warburton, (1992, p.43) suggests that the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-804) was interested in moral action and his thinking has been of tremendous importance in moral philosophy. According to Warburton (ibid. p.43), Kant believed that moral actions were

performed out of duty and the reasons for someone's action defined whether or not they acted morally. For example, if someone gave money to charity out of feelings of compassion, rather than duty, then their action was not a moral one. Kant described the general intentions which are behind any act as the maxim. If someone helped a stranger in need, one could say that they were acting on the maxim, 'Always help those in need if you feel compassion.' If the helper was acting morally, then they might be acting on the maxim, 'Always help those in need because it is your duty to do so' (ibid. p.44).

Kant believed that, as rational human beings, we have certain duties which are categorical. Categorical Imperatives are absolute and unconditional duties such as, 'Always tell the truth' or 'Never kill anyone' (ibid. p.44). According to Warburton (ibid. p.45), Kant believed that the basic Categorical Imperative is to only act on a maxim you would rationally apply to everyone. Kant thought that for an action to be moral, the underlying maxim had to be universalisable. It had to be a maxim which would hold for anyone else in similar circumstances. Harris *et al.* (2000) described universalisability as "whatever is right (or wrong) in one situation is right (or wrong) in any relevantly similar situation" (p.37). In Kant's view, immorality occurs when the Categorical Imperative is not followed; when a person attempts to set a different standard for themselves than from the rest of humanity.

For example, a person asks for a loan with no intention to pay it back. When the Categorical Imperative is applied to this situation, a contradiction emerges. If everyone were to behave similarly and break promises, it would lead to the disappearance of trust. No one would ever agree to a promise and promises would disappear. Such an action, in Kant's view, would be immoral. Kant connects rationality with morality, and sees contradictory behaviour as immoral (Warbuton, ibid, pp45-46).

Jones, Cardinal & Hayward (2006) state that "a major difficulty for Kant's theory is that not every universal maxim is a moral one" (p.45). The maxim could be trivial or even

amoral, such as 'Never step on cracks in the pavement (ibid. p.45). According to Jones *et al.* (ibid. p.46) there are examples of maxims which cannot be universalised and therefore, according to Kant, must be morally wrong.

For example, during the study, one of the colleges participating in the research was concerned about students being late for classes. They wanted to inculcate a disciplined approach to learning in the student body. Therefore, the senior management laid down the instruction that all students must be in class for nine in the morning. A suggestion was made that classroom doors could be locked at nine and latecomers could be refused entry. The maxim in this case could be 'All learners must be on time for classes'.

Applying a Kantian perspective, all learners should abide by this rule out of a sense of duty, in order that they achieve their learning goals; out of respect to their teachers, who have organised a lesson for them and to their fellow learners, who want to get on with their work and not be interrupted by latecomers. In addition, they should abide by the rule out of a sense of duty to the college community, which is desirous of working within an ethos of disciplined learning. Again, applying a Kantian perspective, any learner who did not abide by this Categorical Imperative to be on time for classes would be acting immorally.

However, problems arose when teachers tried to apply the maxim 'All learners must be in time for classes'. Not all students could be in time for classes. For example, some were parents who had to deliver children to school before coming to college. If the maxim were universalised, then some learners would be excluded from learning. In a culture which advocates inclusion and lifelong learning, the suggestion that such learners were acting immorally when they were not in time for class would be 'counter-intuitive' (Jones *et al.* p.46) to educationalists in the post compulsory sector, and, therefore, lays bare a problem with Kant's theory.

2.9.2. Definitions of Morality

McCadden (1998) defined morality as an active process of applying understanding and meaning to social interaction. (p.76). According to this definition, there is no definite answer as to which morality one should observe in every day interactions. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (no date) defined morality as "referring to a code of conduct put forward by a society or some other group or given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons".[3]

Atkinson (1969), states that to be moral:

> .....standards must be in some way strictly universal, not subject to arbitrary exceptions or limitations of scope; moral standards must be conceived as being of overriding importance, where they conflict with those of other fields it is the moral that must prevail, morality may or may not be good policy (expedient) but it is necessarily better than any policy; moral standards have to do with the furtherance of what are conceived to be human interests – the content of the standards accepted as moral is generally explicable on this basis (p.92).

Atkinson (ibid. p.92) considers the above three elements as fitting well together i.e. moral standards must be universal; be of overriding importance and relate to abiding human interests.

2.9.3. Morality and Teaching

During the past twenty years, morality and teaching have been relatively popular themes in educational research (Colnerud, 1997; Hanhimaki & Tirri, 2009; Mason, 2007; Sockett, 1993; Tirri, 1999). Oser (1991, cited in Tirri, 1999, pp. 32-33) thought that teachers do not usually need to consider the ethical standards of their acts. It is in

[3] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/

disrupted practice, when normal teaching routines are interrupted that teachers need to consider the principles for solving the existing dilemma. The principles referred to by teachers in these conflicts define their professional responsibility, which manifests itself in professional acts.

Oser (1994) believed that any single teaching act undertaken in the classroom, or in any teaching setting, has a moral core. The unit of analysis is the decision a teacher makes to help students learn, communicate, share, reflect, evaluate and so forth (p.117). According to Oser (ibid.) teaching students to be responsible for themselves and for their own learning is a moral motivation underpinning any existing teaching activity (ibid. p.117).

According to Van Manen (1995), teachers are dealing with young people in a position of dependency, for whom they are responsible. The job is complex and demanding, involving a variety of tasks and contacts. Teachers need to act on the spot, lack time and are given few opportunities for reflection on ethical choices. Teachers need to manage multiple, sometimes challenging, interpersonal relationships (Carr, 2010, 63).

Baron (1990) thought that much of what was described as immoral behaviour in teaching, "arose not so much out of malice but rather out of thoughtlessness, that is, failure to think of consequences and relevant moral principles, or out of unreflective commitment to questionable ideologies" (p.77). Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen's (1993) research on ethical dilemmas found that teachers are not always aware of the moral impact of their actions and Tirri (1999) found that teachers themselves report that they are ill prepared to deal with those ethical dilemmas in their work.

Commentators, such as Hanhimaki & Tirri (2009; 1999) and Van Manen (1995), call for a reflective approach to moral decision-making in teaching based on the work of Schon (1983; 1987). Carr (2010, p.63), thought that the ability to take a reflective, ethical

approach to interpersonal relationships in teaching was inextricably bound up with the human qualities of an individual and called for qualities of individual personality and character. Oser (1994), on the other hand, stated that,

> To have a moral method means not so much to be a moral person but to construct, day by day, a moral journey as a way of life. In this review, professional responsibility, especially teachers' responsibility, is not conceived as a personal trait but as a lifelong practice (p.117).

While Van Manen (1995) called for consistent reflective practice in teaching, he acknowledged that reflective methods alone are not sufficient for moral and ethical decision-making in teaching. He stated that there must be a "union of skilled method with attitudes" (p.34). Van Manen cites Dewey, who advocated the development of certain traits of character for teaching, such as open-mindedness, sincerity, responsibility as well as the requirement to develop the habit of thinking reflectively (Dewey, 1964, p.224-282, cited in Van Manen, 1995, p.34). Van Manen (ibid. p.39) found that, even though he advocated consistent reflective practice for effective teaching, it was probably not attainable in the real world of teachers. Teachers need to make countless decisions in the course of one day and it is debatable how much reflective thinking really goes into these decisions (ibid. p.39). "What makes true reflection in action difficult is that life in classrooms is contingent, dynamic, everchanging: every moment, every second is situation-specific" (ibid.p.40).

Van Manen (ibid.) put forward the suggestion that teachers, struggling to answer the innumerable questions that could arise out of any teaching situation, must "constantly and instantly act in a manner that hopefully demonstrates a thoughtful considerateness" (ibid. p.41). From this observation, he suggests that the interactive nature of teaching and the kind of knowledge used in this action resembles a type of experience that we ordinarily call 'tact', or better 'pedagogical tact' (ibid. p.41). Van Manen goes on to say that, while the notion of tact is inherently a factor of personal style of individual teachers

it is also, at the same time, " inherently an intersubjective, social and cultural ethical notion" (ibid. p.43). To act tactfully, as an educator, may mean to be able to see what is going on with a learner, to understand a learner's experience; to be sensitive to the needs of learners; to be sensitive to the power relations in any learning relationship; to sense the pedagogical significance of situations; "to know how and what to do and to actually do something right" (ibid. p.44). Van Manen (1991) suggested that pedagogical tact could be defined as "thinkingly acting" (p. 45)

2.9.4. Professional Codes of Practice

The literature on morality and teaching is almost universally on teaching and schools and assumes the existence of professional codes of practice. In this regard, they conform to the definition of morality outlined in the Stanford Encyclopaedia (above). For example, Hanhimaki & Tirri (2009) state that "in many difficult situations teachers have to act according to their professional codes and not let their emotions overwhelm them" (p.117). In this regard, Hanhimaki & Tirri (ibid.) reflect Kant's Categorical Imperative. As Categorical Imperatives are unconditionally binding, they are equally applicable to all rational beings (Jones, *et al.*, 2006, p.41) and are, therefore, universal. Professional Codes of Practice are unconditional duties placed upon teachers. They do not depend on any conditions being met. They are imperatives which need to be abided by, whatever the personal goals or desires of individuals. For Kant, duties are determined by the use of reason alone. So any non-rational motive, such as emotion or feeling of compassion, is not a moral motive (Jones, *et al.* ibid. p.44).

While Carr (2010, p.63) thought that 'good' teaching implied standards that are value-laden and not always universally accepted, school teachers do have a recognised Code of Professional Practice. In Scotland, school teachers are required to adhere to the General Teaching Council's Professional Code of Practice[4]. Colleges of Further Education in

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4 http://www/gtcs.org.uk/Publications/StandardsandRegulations/code_professionalism_conduct.aspx62

Scotland do not have a national Professional Code of Practice, although one exists for colleges in England[5]. All colleges in Scotland will have developed a Code of Conduct for all staff and, although unlikely to be as detailed as the national Codes of Professional Practice, will outline the sorts of behaviour that colleges expect from their staff.

In a study on professionalism in Further Education, Robson *et al.* (2004, p.186) suggests that teachers in colleges have a level of professional autonomy. This autonomy allows them the freedom to resolve the uncertainties they are presented with in relation to their own professional values and culture.

2.9.5. Definition of Morality

Reviewing the literature on morality and teaching, I concluded that the definition of morality which would underpin this study was:

a) behaviour which is concomitant with the Law;
b) conformity to the individual's organisational Code of Conduct;
c) conformity, or degree of conformity, to the conventional standards of moral conduct that are concomitant with the values and culture of the teaching profession, as is understood by any rational member of that profession – taking into account Kant's Categorical Imperative and that whatever is right (or wrong) in one situation is right (or wrong) in any relevantly similar situation;
d) behaviour which is 'pedagogically tactful'.

It has already been acknowledged that there are some problems with Kant's view, in as much as that not all situations can be treated in the same way (Jones, *et al.*, 2006, p.46). However, Kant's notion of morality was considered to be a useful concept to exploit in

[5] http://www.ifl.ac.uk/designtestingenvironment/membership/professional-standards/code-of-professional-practice

order to guide this investigation. Particularly when considering Atkinson's (1969, p.62) admonition that moral standards *must be in some way* (author's emphasis) strictly universal. It would appear that Atkinson's definition of morality emulates Kant's but also provides some room for manoeuvre, for some flexibility of approach. Therefore, the study assumed that, while not all situations that are the same can necessarily be treated in the same way, it adopted Kant's view that it is our duty, as teachers, to abide by the conventional standards of the profession. In carrying out our duty to abide by conventional professional standards, we are acting morally.

2.9.6. Pedagogical Tact

The concept of pedagogical tact as a working definition for moral and ethical behaviour would appear to be particularly fitting for this study. It requires a practical moral intuitiveness; a sensitivity and openness to learners; determination and flexibility. Van Manen (1995) suggests that pedagogical tact requires, "a sensitive ability to interpret inner thoughts, understandings, feelings and desires" (p.44) of learners, from indirect clues. He says that teachers with tact appear to have "a fine sense of standards, limits and balance that make it possible…to know how far to enter into a situation and what distance to keep" (ibid. p.44). Van Manen also states that:

> Tact seems characterized by moral intuitiveness: a tactful teacher seems to have the ability of instantly sensing what is the appropriate, right or good thing to do on the basis of perceptive pedagogical understanding of [a learner's] individual nature and circumstances (ibid p.45).

Pedagogical tact requires perceptiveness, understanding and insight. There is a fitness for purpose in adopting pedagogical tact as a measure against which to define moral action in teaching, in a study which utilises the concept of *phronesis* to learn more about teacher decision-making. Descriptions of pedagogical tact chime with descriptions of

phronesis, in as much as both seem to be characterised by an ability to see through the lines and to be intuitive.

Teachers can be pedagogically tactful in ways in which are concomitant with their own personality but it is also a body of knowledge which can be accrued through experience, as is *phronesis*.

2.10. Summary

This Chapter explored the different explanations of *phronesis*. It provided three interpretations of *phronesis* which will be used to analyse the research findings. These interpretations are Rationality; Situational and Moral Character, or Teaching as Being. The Chapter also explored the occupational knowledge of teachers and stated that this study assumed that the central tenets of teacher knowledge were knowledge of subject; theoretical knowledge (*episteme*); process knowledge (*techne*) and knowledge of learners.

This Chapter also outlined the aim of the research and the research questions and provided the conceptual framework which directed the study. In addition, the Chapter briefly explored the concept of morality and moral action in teaching. It provided a definition of morality and moral action which will underpin this study. This definition included the notion of pedagogical tact.

The following Chapter will explain how phenomenology was adopted as a method for ascertaining the experiences of teachers when seeking to resolve issues in disrupted spaces and the extent that *phronesis* contributed to or emanated from the action taken.

Chapter Three

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This Chapter will consider issues of methodology, that is, the philosophy of science, a tactic to generating knowledge or an approach to an inquiry (Burns, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The framework of the research will be outlined, the underpinning theoretical assumptions and the reasons for its selection.

In order to address the aim of the study in a systematic and coherent fashion and avoid gathering superfluous data, a plan of action was required, or a ‘strategy of inquiry’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.28). There are numerous methods of inquiry and the research literature resoundingly advises that a research method should be fit for purpose. It should be selected as the best means of addressing the questions as the type of knowledge being sought can be a determining factor in deciding between qualitative and quantitative approaches (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 1998; C. Robson, 1993).

Before evaluating the strengths and limitations of different approaches to seek solutions to the research questions, it is first necessary to consider issues of methodology. According to Burns (2000, p.5), methodology is a “method of knowing” or approach to generating knowledge.

3.2. Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

Ontology is a theory of what exists and how it exists. Epistemology is the theory of how we come to know these things - the theory of knowledge and research is, at least partly about getting knowledge (Punch, 2009, p.85). Epistemology encompasses a set of questions and issues about knowledge; what it is, how we get it, how we recognize it, how it relates to truth (Punch, ibid., p.87). Methodology is an offshoot of this set of questions. It refers to the theory of getting knowledge, providing a rationale for the way in which a researcher goes about getting knowledge. As Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.21) put it, ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions, these in turn give rise to methodological considerations and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection. Methodology provides reasons for using techniques in relation to the kind of knowledge that is being collected, developed or constructed.

Two approaches to the seeking of knowledge, underpinned by differing ontological assumptions, are positivism and interpretivism.

3.3. Positivism and Interpretivism

The academic wrangling over the two dominant research paradigms, positivist (quantitative) and interpretive (qualitative) is well documented in the literature (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Punch, 2009). The heart of the debate is philosophical, not methodological. The ontological and epistemological basis of positivism is a belief in a single independently existing reality that can be accessed by researchers adopting an objectivist approach to the acquisition of knowledge (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000; C. Robson, 1993). Although qualitative methods can be undertaken by using a positivist approach, researchers accepting this perspective generally favour 'scientific' methods and therefore tend to utilise experiments, large-scale surveys and quantitative techniques (Wisker, 2001, p.143). Fundamentally, researchers assuming a positivist perspective seek 'the truth' by attempting to eliminate the effect of their preconceptions,

personal views and value judgements on the research process (Punch, 2009, p.74). Positivist researchers do not expect that they themselves are significant variables in their research. Thus, in testing a hypothesis, they expect other researchers handling similar data to come to the same conclusion that they had (Pring, 2000; C. Robson, 1998).

In contrast to the positivist approach, those following an interpretivist tradition accept subjectivity and the idea that research can result in different or "multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp 70.91). Lincoln and Guba argue that qualitative research assumes a different ontological position than traditional quantitative research. They claim that quantitative research espouses the idea that reality is outside the control of the researcher. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is characterised by the fact that the researcher constructs the reality that he or she sees. Along with this idea, is the notion that each person involved in the inquiry, as either participant or subject, also constructs their own reality (ibid. pp. 70-91). Interpretivist researchers generally favour more qualitative approaches, although quantitative methods can be utilised from an interpretivist position.

In the literature on methodologies and methods, (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1995) research within an interpretivist paradigm is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, consisting of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Within this paradigm, the social world is not straightforwardly perceivable because it is constructed by each of us in a different way, it is not simply '*out there*', and it is different for each of us, with words and events carrying different meanings in every case. Qualitative researchers strive for an understanding of this complexity. Understanding, within the social sciences is about being empathetic towards a given person's point of view by imaginatively putting oneself into the place of the person. Although arguably all research is open to interpretation, quantitative research seeks to limit the role of personal interpretation over the period of data collection and analysis (Locke & Spiroduso, 1993; Thomas, 2009), it is rooted in a

scientific search for cause and effect culminating in theory.

Interpretivists accept the influence of their values, rather than assuming that they are able to depersonalise their research, holding objectivity to be an illusion, a human state that is both impossible and undesirable to achieve (Griffiths, 1998; C. Robson, 1993). Human beings react, can and do construct interpretations of events, and they can and do use interpretations as reasons to act in particular ways (Hammersley & Gomm, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This has a significant impact on what is known about human beings (epistemology) and how anyone could come to know it (methodology).

Inevitably, the interpretations of the researcher form part of the method of producing the knowledge within a qualitative paradigm, which can raise issues of objectivity and bias.

3.4. Values, Objectivity and Bias

A researcher's values can determine what it is to be researched but, according to Punch (2009, p.78) great care should be taken to acknowledge the influence of these values in the research process. Values will inevitably influence the qualitative research process (Silverman, 2000, p.2) and qualitative researchers must strive for personal reflexivity and adopt procedures which establish 'trustworthiness' and guard against bias (Thomas, 2009, p.106). Whilst inclusion of biographical details and statements about underlying values may not result in eliminating or reducing their effect, it enables those evaluating the research to take account of the values that are influencing the work (Punch, 2009, p.78)

Interpretive researchers also recognise that they may alter or change the situation which they are studying. They recognise themselves as potential variables in the study (Greenbank, 2003, p.792). This gives rise to the major criticisms charged against qualitative methodologies, that, because of the subjective nature of the data, it is difficult

to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity (Creswell, 1998, p.17). Cohen, *et al.* (2000, p.119) counters this argument and puts forward the notion that qualitative research can emulate qualitative research and strive for replication in generating, refining, comparing and validating constructs. Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.8) suggest that as qualitative and quantitative studies constitute different ways of looking at the world the same measures towards ensuring reliability and validity should not hold. Qualitative researchers require constant vigilance towards evidence that runs counter to their social values and should actively seek further insight into such evidence and recognise that utilisation of such information may cause value conflict (Creswell, 1998, p.195).

3.5. Phronetic Social Science

As a key component of this study is the concept of *phronesis*, it is interesting to note that Flyvberg (2001, Ch. 3-4) argued that instead of trying to emulate natural science, social science should be practised as *phronesis*. Phronetic social science takes the approach that social science should be directly engaged in seeking to bring about practical improvements in the quality of life for ordinary people by challenging powerful interests.

Phronetic social scientists study social phenomena with a focus on values and power. Researchers ask and answer the following four value-rational questions for specific instances of social action:

1. Where are we going?
2. Is this development desirable?
3. Who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?
4. What, if anything, should we do about it? (Flyvberg, 2004, p.289)

3.6. Adopting a Methodology

In considering an inquiry into the *experiences* of teachers in colleges and the meanings that they brought to these experiences, and faced with the two above alternatives in the nature of research, it was apparent that such *experiences* were not quantifiable and measurable. Creswell (1998, p.19) recommends an interpretive approach when the topic needs to be 'explored' and when there is a need for a detailed view of individuals within a naturalistic setting, as removing individuals from their setting can result in contrived and decontextualised findings. In this study, the nature of the questions was exploratory; seeking out a deeper understanding, rather than seeking to explain a particular phenomenon, therefore, an interpretivist approach was selected.

Thomas (2009, p.100) helpfully advises the researcher that, once a general approach to answering research questions has been selected, whether positivist or interpetivist, a scaffold or '*design frame*' should be contemplated.

3.7. The Design Frame

The design frame provides the framework for the research, connecting purposes with questions with the way that data can be collected. It is a scaffold within which to structure the research. Creswell (1998, p.27) indicates that, to those embarking on interpretivist studies, there are a myriad number of types of research structures and usefully outlined five major traditions of qualitative inquiry. These five traditions are: biography, ethnography, grounded theory, case study and phenomenology.

3.7.1. Biography

A biographical study is the study of an individual and their experience as told to a researcher or found in documents or archival material (Cotterell & McKenzie, 2005, p.220). Such a framework would not have been suitable to meet the aims of this study. An investigation into the life of one individual would not have met the requirements of

the research questions and a biography was not considered.

3.7.2. Ethnography

Ethnography is "a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system" (Creswell, 1998, p.58). Researchers immerse themselves in a community in order to seek an understanding of the culture of that community. A range of factors, including time constraints, access and the fact the researcher was in full-time employment precluded immersion in a community. Therefore, an ethnographical approach for the collection of data was disregarded.

3.7.3. Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, on the other hand was considered as it allows for exploration of a phenomenon. Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach which was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The self-defined purpose of grounded theory is to develop theory about phenomena of interest. This is not just abstract theorising, instead the theory needs to be grounded or rooted in observation – hence the term.

Grounded theory is a complex iterative process (Charmaz, 2005, p.508). The research begins with the raising of generative questions, which help to guide the research but are not intended to be either static or confining. As the researcher begins to gather data, core theoretical concept(s) are identified. Tentative linkages are developed between the theoretical core concepts and the data. This early phase of the research tends to be very open. Later on the researcher is more engaged in verification and summary. The effort tends to evolve toward one core category which is central (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp.143-57).

There are several key analytic strategies including coding and memoing. Eventually, the researcher approaches conceptually dense theory as a new observation leads to new linkages, which lead to revisions in the theory and more data collection. The core

concept or category is identified and fleshed out in detail (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp.143-57).

The selection of grounded theory as a methodology might have paved the way towards an understanding of the professional judgements being made by teaching staff and the development/contribution of *phronesis*. However, the idea was rejected as grounded theory takes an almost blank sheet as its starting point and, as research questions had been formulated, questions would need to be asked of the data, which would force theory, rather than allowing it to emerge. When considering the research questions, this study was not attempting to generate theory.

3.7.4. Case Study

Case study was also considered as a methodology to guide the research. Colley (2003, p.3) ventures that case study research offers a number of advantages which offset its small scale against the depth of knowledge it can generate. It provides rich data with multiple dimensions, reflecting a variety of perspectives on learning and teaching at an experiential level that is usually hidden from view (Stake, 2000, p.443). A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Bassey, 1999, p.22). It deals with specifics within a 'bounded system', a clearly marked unit of analysis that the research studies in its entirety (Burton & Stoynoff, 2004, p.380). The unit of analysis with a case study can range from an individual, group or organisation. A single case can be studied in order to seek a better understanding of that case or it can be studied to provide greater insight into something else. A number of cases can also be studied in order to understand a phenomenon, population or general condition (Bassey, op.cit).

As the aim of this study was exploratory, around teachers-practitioners' decision-making during the learning process in colleges, a case study methodology was considered. A case study could have allowed an investigation into the role of *phronesis* in the decision-

making of teachers in colleges within the context of their every-day working lives. It could have provided an opportunity to utilise multiple sources of evidence, allowing the data to be triangulated. An important aspect of triangulation is to actively look for evidence that will contradict assertions (Thomas, 2009, p.111). While a study of a small selection of cases could lay no claim to generalisability, I was drawn to Bassey's (op.cit. p.14) notion of 'fuzzy generalisations', which is one that is neither likely to be true in every case, nor likely to be untrue in every case, it is something that may be true. A number of cases within Scotland's colleges could have been subjected to systematic and critical search for information in relation the research questions. Comparisons could have been drawn between individual cases to stimulate 'fuzzy propositions' (Bassey, op.cit. p.14) about similar situations in other colleges.

3.8. Finding Phenomenology

The effort to find a research design which was fit for purpose became a circular activity between continual questioning as to what *exactly* it was that I wanted to find out and frequent redefinition of the research questions. I was seeking a methodology which could provide insights into the motivations and actions of teachers in colleges which could enrich understandings of accepted practices. I wanted to find a way to hear the voices of these teachers, to collect their stories and to make their stories visible.

My search for a solution led me to the work of Van Manen (1990) and the hermeneutic phenomenological approach to human science research and writing.

Van Manen (1990, p.4) states that a research method is only a way of investigating certain kinds of questions. He went on to say that the questions themselves and the way one understands the questions are the important starting points, not the method as such. The way in which one articulates questions has something to do with the research method that one tends to identify with. There exists a certain dialectic between question

and method. Van Manen (op.cit. p.5) also advises that the adoption of one research method over another should reflect more than mere preference, taste or whim. The method an educational researcher chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator in the first place.

Van Manen's view chimes with that of Thomas (2009, p.77) who states that an approach a researcher adopts should reflect how they think about the social world. The struggle to find a 'fit for purpose' methodology led me to scrutinize my place in the educational world in general and the educational world of Scotland's colleges in particular.

3.8.1. Placing Me in the Research|

I have already said, in Chapter One, that I knew a great deal about colleges and wanted to find a methodology which could harness my experience in the field. I also wanted a methodology which was congruent to my way of looking at the world. I wanted to align myself with the underlying assumptions and values of the methodology. I wanted to believe in it. Gibbs (2007, p.244) stated that the natural sciences are epitomised by exactness, whereas in the human sciences such exactitude would turn humans into objects, so research here is inexactitude, yet the more challenging for this. I wanted a methodology that could encapsulate the imprecision and downright messiness that is humanity.

Van Manen (1990, p.5) states that, from a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, "to want to know the world in which we live as human beings". He argues that to *know* the world is to profoundly *be* in the world in a certain way and that through the act of researching, we become more fully part of the world. Phenomenology, then, appeared to help me place *me* in the research. Furthermore, Van Manen (op.cit. p.5) describes a phenomenological approach as being a caring act as "we want to know that which is most essential to

being". As an educator, subscribing to the caring values of the profession, I was drawn to this standpoint.

Holstein and Gubrium (1998. p.139) stated that phenomenology allowed researchers to "focus on the ways in which members of the life world themselves interpretively produce the recognisable, intelligible forms they treat as real." Cohen *et al* (2000, p.24) advised that it is a most appropriate approach for the investigation and description of human experience, and the meaning that the individual ascribes to this experience. Phenomenology, then, appeared to be a sound vehicle for a researcher seeking insight into the experience of teachers when encountering an interruption in the learning process.

Dudley (1992 p 162) argued that it is important to select a research approach that "reflects a harmony of relationship between self and method". To choose a methodology that a person is congruent with, is the key to ensuring that integrity is central to the study. In all honesty, I was initially extremely resistant to the adoption of phenomenology as a methodology. As phenomenology is rooted in philosophy and I lacked any prior philosophical knowledge or understanding, I thought that, for me, a phenomenological study would prove to be thorny and difficult to accomplish. I realized that acquiring a deep-enough understanding of the core concepts of phenomenology and being able to apply them to the research context would not be an easy option. I was daunted by the amount of intellectual effort that I sensed would be necessary. However, I sensed a fitness for purpose. I identified with the core principles of phenomenology and felt comfortable with its world view.

There are, however, numerous phenomenological philosophers, each with a distinctive perspective and the researcher must distinguish which view is concurrent with their thinking and the study taking place (Koch, 1995, p.835).

3.9. Phenomenology as a Methodology

3.9.1. Husserl: Transcendental Phenomenology

The tenets of phenomenology as a methodology are difficult ones for a novice phenomenological researcher to grapple with. Fundamentally, a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for one or several individuals about a concept or a phenomenon (Finlay, 2003a; Koch, 1995). It has its roots in the philosophical perspectives of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) who embraced the notion of the mind-body split, known as Cartesian duality which descended from the philosophy of René Descartes (1596 –1650). He rejected the belief that objects in the external world exist independently and that the information about objects is unreliable. Human beings can only be certain about how things appear, or present themselves, to their consciousness (Moran, 2000; Steeves, 2006).

Husserl introduces the concept of the 'life-world', or lived experience. This life-world is pre-reflective, it takes place before we think about it or put it into language (Finlay, no date-b, p.2) Husserl claimed that the life-world is not readily accessible, it is full of complex meanings, composed of that which is taken for granted or deemed to be common sense. Researchers, using Husserlian phenomenology attempt to return to taken-for-granted experiences, or to use his famous phrase, "to return to the things themselves" (Friesen, Feenberg, & Smith, 2009, p.85). They search for the essential, invariant structure (or **essences**) or the central underlying meaning of the experience (Holstein & Gubrium, 1998, p.139).

A tenet of Husserlian phenomenology is the **intentionality of consciousness**, which he explains as consciousness being intentional insofar as it refers to, or is directed at, an object. Consciousness may have intentional and non-intentional phases, but intentionality is what gives consciousness its objective meaning. For Merleau-Ponty, intentionality is a kind of *a priori* which connects the individual to the life-world around them, structuring interaction, purpose and meaning as they arise in everyday activity

(Sadala & Adorno, 2002, p.286). In research, the aim is to explicate the intentional relationship between a person and the meanings of the things they are focusing on and experiencing (Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991; Sokolowski, 1999).

"The overall aim of lifeworld research", according to Dahlberg et al (2008, p.37), "is to describe and elucidate the lived world in a way that expands our understanding of human being and human experience". Instead of categorization and explanation, this approach requires observation and description. The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon and '**bracket'** or eliminate all preconceived notions and judgement (Hycner, 1999, p.281). 'Bracketing,' (or **epoche**) according to Koch (1999, p.829), is not to doubt the existence of an 'outer-world' but to suspend all beliefs of this outer-world through the act of phenomenological **reduction**. Through reduction, the phenomenological inquirer seeks to determine the essence of a phenomenon.

Husserlian *transcendental* phenomenology, through the process of bracketing, defends the validity or objectivity of interpretation against the self-interest of the researcher (Dreyfus, 1994; Koch, 1995). Hycner (ibid. p.281), advises phenomenological researchers to list any presuppositions of which they are consciously aware and then discuss with research advisors. In this way, additional presuppositions may come to light.

3.9.2. Heidegger: Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) arose from Husserl's philosophy. Heidegger was Husserl's prize student but his views of phenomenology differed from his teacher. Heidegger developed his *hermeneutic* phenomenology in opposition to Husserl's *transcendental* phenomenology (Dreyfus, 1994; Sokolowski, 1999). He broke with the Cartesian tradition of raising epistemological questions in relation to the knower and what is known and substituted ontological questions in relation to how we

come to know – what kind of people we are and how we are bound up in the world (Koch, 1995, p.830).

He rejected the notion that we can be separated from that which appears in our consciousness - consciousness and objectivity – and moved towards the concept of **Dasein** (there-being) which is conscious being or a being which understands its own being. Dasein, a German word with no exact English counterpart, is a concept of the situated meaning of a human in the world, or "being there" in the world (Dreyfus, 1994; Hammond, *et al.*, 1991). In **Being and Time**, Heidegger explored the meaning of being as defined by temporality, and viewed as connectedness rather than linear time. The past influences the present and the actions taken (Donnelly, 1999; Hammond, *et al.*, 1991; Polkinghorn, 1989).

Dasein is the concept of "being-in-the-world" and enshrines our human ability to wonder about our place in the world (Van Manen, 1990, p.176). A human being cannot be extricated from the world; to be human is to be embedded in the physical, literal and every day world that a person finds themselves in. We make sense of the world through our presuppositions, from within our existence and not detached from it (Crotty, 1998; Donnelly, 1999). We are always in the world and experiences can only be understood in terms of our background, culture and the social context of our experience (Van Manen, 1990 p.1). Any new learning opportunity hinges on what we have already experienced and learned. At any given moment we are construed and constrained by fore-structures of understanding, or what we know or think we know about the situation in hand (Van Manen, 1990 p. 34).

Schutz (1967, 1970), developed a social phenomenology, attempting to bridge Husserl's philosophical standpoint with the mores and concepts of sociology. Schutz argued that the social sciences should focus on the ways that the life-world – the one that we take for granted – is experienced by us, who live in this world. He cautioned, "the safeguarding

of the subjective point of view is the only but sufficient guarantee that the world of social reality will not be replaced by a fictional non-existing world constructed by the scientific observer" (Schutz, 1970, p.8). The important point here is that the researcher seeks to make meaningful the experiences of others, as if they were separate and distinct entities (Holstein & Gubrium, 1998, p.139). Schutz was especially interested in how ordinary people made sense of their interactions with each other (Creswell, 1998, p.53).

A crucial point for a researcher, adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, is that they accept that their beliefs, perceptions and experiences in the world will not only influence the research but are essential for making sense of, for interpreting, the data. Transcendental phenomenology is essentially about description; - describing the lived experience of others. Hermeneutic phenomenology is interpretative.

3.9.3. Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Van Manen

Hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen as a suitable methodology for this research, informed by the work of Max van Manen (1990). As already stated, I had considerable experience of the context of the research and considered the 'bracketing' of values and presupposition, in Husserl's terms, to be problematic.

The overarching aim of the study was to gain some understanding of what it is like to be a teacher in Scotland's colleges. Phenomenology, although highly subjective and very broad appeared to provide the opportunity to capture the experiences of staff *in context* – in their world. It befits concentration on one small segment of interactions in context, rather than attempts to capture the whole (Giles, 2007, p.7). Therefore, it seemed a fitting framework to study disrupted practices in the learning process as identified by Smith (op.cit, 2007).

The study also sought to determine the extent to which *phronesis* both contributed to and

matured from any course of action taken by staff. This aim required interpretation. The use of hermeneutic phenomenology enabled the exploration of participant's experiences with further abstraction and interpretation utilising my own theoretical and personal knowledge. Hermeneutics adds the interpretive element to explicate meanings and assumptions in the participants' texts that participants themselves may have difficult in articulating (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000, p.29). In this study, it is *phronesis* which is the complex concept that participants might have difficulty in articulating.

It might be worth noting, at this point, that, in order to ease participants' understanding of *phronesis*, a definition of the concept was provided in the information that was sent to all participants before interview (Annex 1V). In addition, I provided a copy of the study's conceptual framework at each interview and explained the notions and assumptions that drove the framework to each participant before interview.

The context of this study is education and the work of Van Manen is situated in the educational field. In '**Researching Lived Experience**' (1999) he states that the text engages with pedagogic reflection on how we live as teachers and is fundamentally orientated to pedagogy. While phenomenology has been widely used as a methodology in the field of nursing, (Beck, 1964; Crotty, 1996; Koch, 1995; Sadala & Adorno, 2002), it is less widely used in the field of educational research, although some studies do exist (Bourke, 2007; Clarke & Thomas, 2009; Groenewald, 2003; Reinsel, 2004).

Van Manen (op.cit p.30) suggests an elemental methodological structure for hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry. These are as follows:

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualise it;
3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterise the phenomenon;

4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp.30-31)

Van Manen (1990 p.34) cautions against the blind, mechanistic use of the above steps. He counsels the would-be researcher in hermeneutic phenomenological human science that critical moments of inquiry are ultimately elusive to systematic explication. "Such moments may depend more on the interpretive sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent of the human science researcher."

3.10. Personal Position in the Research

It has already been said that a crucial point for a researcher, adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, is that they accept that their beliefs, perceptions and experiences in the world will not only influence the research but are essential for making sense of, for interpreting, the data. Finlay (no date-a) believed that "researchers who claim to have 'bracketed' and therefore 'transcended' their assumptions while using a hermeneutic approach would seem to be both naive and confused" (p.3). At the outset of this research, I had a particular perspective, derived from my values, knowledge and experience, which were already outlined in Chapter One, and which cannot be removed from the study. It seemed to me, that adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to this study would require a delicate interplay between acknowledging this personal perspective, utilising it to reach an understanding of the phenomena but, at the same time, ensuring that this perspective did not lead to pre-conceptions, clouded judgement and act as a barrier to gaining new knowledge or insights.

Finlay (2003b, p.108) counsels the phenomenological researcher to continually reflect upon their interpretations of both their experiences and the phenomena being studied, so as to move beyond the partiality of their previous understandings. In addition, Halling *et*

al. (2006, p.256) argue that phenomenological researchers need to come to an awareness of their already existing beliefs which then make it possible to examine and question them in light of new evidence.

During the course of this study, I had occasion to re-examine personal beliefs and to reappraise them in the light of evidence gathered. Details of the struggle which ensued will be outlined in later Chapters.

3.11. Critical Incidents

In order to facilitate the phenomenological demand to concentrate on small segments of interactions in context and to guide an investigation into disrupted practice, the literature on critical incidents was consulted.

John Flanagan (1954) was amongst the first researchers to describe the critical incident technique. He stated how it became essential when collecting certain important facts related to defined situations. Irvine *et al.* (2008) used the technique to elicit the perceptions of student nurses regarding language awareness and Tripp (1994) studied teachers' life histories through the critical incident method. Miles and Huberman (1994) used the critical incident chart to list "*those events seen as critical, influential, or decisive in the course of some process"* (p.115).

Hanhimaki & Tirri (2009) aimed to identify and investigate critical incidents in teachers' work that generated moral emotions. Their argument was that in these emotionally laden situations, teachers need ethical sensitivity to be able to act in moral and professional ways. Their intention was to demonstrate, with the help of teachers' narratives, what types of situations teachers deal with in their work and to use these narratives as case studies in education for teaching to promote ethically sensitive teaching and teachers. Critical incidents, in Hanhimaki & Tirri's study, were incidents in teachers' work where ethical sensitivity was needed and which gave rise to "moral

emotions" (ibid. p.107). According to Hanhimaki & Tirri (ibid.), "it is in these emotionally laded situations that teachers require ethical sensitivity to be able to act in professional and moral ways" (p.107).

I considered the utilisation of the concept of critical incidents as a research instrument to be useful. The assumption was, that utilising this concept would pave the way to finding out what teachers thought were disrupted spaces which they deemed critical, influential or decisive in the learning process.

3.12. Summary

This Chapter has outlined the reasons for the selection of hermeneutic phenomenology as a guiding framework for this research and gave a brief précis of the philosophical underpinnings of the philosophy of phenomenology. It acknowledged the constant personal reflexivity required of the phenomenological researcher. It also explained why the concept of critical incidents was deemed to be useful as a research instrument in this study.

The following Chapter is an account of the methods adopted, where due regard was paid to Van Manen's six procedures and I strove for sensitivity, thoughtfulness, and tact. While extremely indisposed towards the notion of any talent in writing, I made every effort to hone any inherent writing skills in order to best describe the richness of the phenomena within the lived experience of the teachers in the study.

Chapter Four

4. Methods

4.1. Introduction

The phenomenon which seriously interested this researcher was teachers' experiences and decision-making in disrupted spaces within the learning and teaching process in Scotland's colleges. The study sought to understand teacher practitioners' lived experiences of the phenomenon and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and matured from the course of action taken. This Chapter will explain how the concepts of hermeneutic phenomenology guided the collection of data and the research process.

4.2. Investigating Experience As We Live It Rather Than As We Conceptualise It

Creswell (1998, p.110) stated that data collection is a series of integrated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer research questions. Van Manen (1990, p.54), however, counsels would-be phenomenological researchers that the notion of 'data' is ambiguous within the human science perspective as the concept has positivistic overtones. He does, however, concede that the 'data' of human science research are human experiences and, therefore, one of the most straightforward ways to find out about such experiences is to talk to selected individuals about their encounters with a phenomenon.

Interviews, therefore, were selected as a means of exploring and gathering experiential

material in order to reach a deeper understanding of teacher practitioners' experiences of disrupted practice. Before interviews could be carried out, the questions of *who* and how had to be considered.

4.3. Sample

A question that often plagues novice researchers is just how large their samples for the research should be (Giorgi, 1997; Van Manen, 2006) and a purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study (Burns, 2000, p.82). Two techniques are common to social scientists, probability and non-probability sampling. The former, is a random sample of a population, where every unit in a population has an equal chance of being selected. As it draws randomly from the wider population, probability sampling is useful if a researcher wishes to be able to make generalizations, because it seeks representativeness of the wider population.

On the other hand, in non-probability sampling, some members of the wider population are excluded and some included – the researcher deliberately, purposely, selects a particular section of the wider population to include or exclude from the sample (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000, p.102).

As Hycner (1999, p. 281) advises phenomenological researchers that the phenomenon dictates the method, including the type of participants, non-probability or purposive sampling was selected for this study, in particular 'criterion sampling' (Creswell, 1998, p.118). The reason being, that phenomenological inquiry requires participants meet some criteria, i.e. have experienced the phenomenon. As the study progressed, the sampling approach resembled 'snowball' or 'chain' sampling – where people know people who meet the criteria and refer them to the researcher (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000, p.104)

As purposive sampling demands that the researcher thinks critically about the parameters of the population that they are interested in (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000; Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000). I wished to access teaching staff. Colleges are complex organisations delivering a myriad programmes and courses and I wanted a sample which could, in some way, represent this diversity. Therefore, I aimed to gain access to staff who taught in vocational and academic areas as well as those who taught students with additional requirements for learning, or learning disabilities.

A small scale study such as this could lay no claim to generalisability. However, an attempt was made to select colleges which might, in some small way, represent the college curriculum and geographical spread. One college resided in the east of the country (A) and one in the west (B). Based on information on colleges available from the Scottish Funding Council website, both (A) and (B) were in the top five colleges in terms of size and numbers of staff and learners. The third selected college (C) was smaller and was situated within a large town but also serviced a rural community.

Drawing from the literature review, an assumption that underpinned this study was that a teacher's context and subject area influences their thoughts and actions. Therefore, I wished to access staff that represented vocational and academic subjects as well as those who worked with learners with additional support needs. One reason for this was to provide an opportunity to explore any correlation or link between the subject that a teacher taught and their thoughts, actions and beliefs on and during the learning process.

It transpired that this avenue of thought was not pursued in the course of the study as no real data emerged which would encourage such an exploration. However, providing an option for such an opportunity was one driver behind sample selection. The fact that no real data emerged which provided an opportunity to explore the correlation between the subject a teacher taught and their beliefs and actions during the learning process might indicate a flaw in the study's methodology. However, on reflection, I think that a desire for such an exploration was over ambitious on my part and would have taken me outside the limitations of the study. Establishing any correlation between a teacher's subject

specialism and their beliefs and actions as teachers would require a much larger sample than was available to this investigation and would, indeed, be a study in its own right.

Despite the necessary limitations of a study being carried out by one individual on a part time basis, I wanted the sample to, in some way, indicate or represent the breadth and diversity of provision in the college sector. This was the second and most important reason, for seeking staff from academic and vocational areas as well as those who taught learners with learning disabilities.

The literature on phenomenological research recommends a small sample, due to the amount of data that can accrue from phenomenological methods. However, I thought that in setting out to gain access to the maximum number of participants, within the time limitations of the study, there was a greater chance of interviewing staff within the three areas (vocational, academic and programmes for learners with additional needs) and of reflecting the width of the college curriculum. The intention was not to lay claims on generalisability but to gain a greater understanding of the processes at work.

Eight members of staff were sought in each of the selected colleges, making twenty-four in total. From a phenomenological point of view, this was a large number. However, the thinking behind the choice was that a larger sample than was usual for a phenomenological study might provide the curriculum breadth. The decision to recruit this amount of participants for the study presented a thorny methodological problem when it came to the presentation of findings. How this problem was resolved will be outlined later.

4.4. Access

Bell (1991, p.12) advocates that permission to carry out an investigation must always be sought at an early stage and that one must be honest about what one is intending to do. Therefore, a letter was sent out to each of the three Principals in the three selected

colleges from my line manager (Annex III) with an accompanying explanation of the aims and purpose of the research (Annex IV).

A response was received from the Principal in college (C) who provided a point of contact for the selection of staff and an email was sent to this member of staff (Annex V). At this point in the study, I hoped to use the subject areas of the participants in college (C) as the baseline for the sample and select subsequent participants to 'fill in the gaps'. For example, if only participants in vocational areas came forward in college (C), then participants in academic and supported learning would be sought in the remaining participatory colleges. I was provided with names of two Heads of Department in college (C) who, in turn, identified further names of lecturing staff. Eventually, four members of staff were interviewed in college (C). Two taught Art and Design, one Construction and one Electronic Engineering.

No response was received from the principals of colleges (A) and (B). I then sent a follow up email to an assistant principal in each of the colleges who both provided assent for an investigation within their organisations. College (A) sent out an email to all college staff, outlining the main aims of the research and asked for volunteers. Three participants came from college (A). College (B) provided a named contact who acted as a gatekeeper to a selection of teaching staff. I scanned college (B)'s website to establish the curricular departments and requested the gatekeeper to find staff from specific areas. The college contact emailed staff in the specific areas asking for volunteers. He then subsequently set up interviews with eight members of staff in four curricular areas, although one failed to meet the appointment.

4.5. Access Through the Subject Mentors

Gaining access to staff through the colleges was a slow process. In addition, this method did not afford the target numbers. Therefore, I sought another route to gain access to teaching staff.

My employer provided on-line information and support to eighteen subject areas in colleges through what was known as 'subject networks' [6]. A list of the subject networks can be found in Annex VI. Each of these subject areas was supported by a subject mentor who was usually seconded from their college to do this work. The subject mentors were managed by a colleague of mine. I contacted this colleague and asked for his help in seeking volunteers for the study (see Annex VII). After gaining his permission and support, an email was sent out to a selection of mentors (see Annex VIII). At this time, I already had some volunteers. Subject mentors were selected if their subject area differed from these volunteers.

This same colleague also volunteered to contact past personal colleagues and ask them if they were willing to participate. One came forward and an email was sent to this member of staff (see Annex IX) who subsequently became participant A, or Allan.

Three subject mentors put themselves forward for interview as well as putting forward names of colleagues. I contacted the named colleagues and asked them if they would be willing to be interviewed.

All of the above actions afforded access to twenty-eight members of staff in eight colleges, or access to five more colleges than was originally intended. Each of the additional colleges straddled the central belt in Scotland and ranged from medium-sized (college D) to large (college F).

4.6. Volunteers

It is important to note that all participants in the study were volunteers and the fact that they were volunteers placed limitations on the study. For example, while I went to great lengths to ensure that the participants reflected the diversity of the college curriculum as

[6] Each of the subject networks can be accessed by teaching staff, through membership and password at the website address http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/practitionersplus/index.asp

much as was possible in a small study, relying on volunteers meant that this could not be guaranteed. As my background is in supported learning, I was quite keen to interview staff who worked with learners with disabilities or additional support for learning. I was interested to know if a disrupted space for a participant included making adjustments for a learner to access the curriculum. As it turned out, only one member of staff from supported learning volunteered and her experience of the phenomenon did not directly relate to making adjustments for individual learners during the learning and teaching process. Accessing this kind of information would require more purposive sampling, indeed it would probably require harnessing an alternative methodology and different methods to the ones employed in this study.

It is important to acknowledge my position in relation to the accumulation of the sample. It could be said that having a position in a national agency was advantageous in accessing the sample. It meant that I had good working relationships both within the organisation and with members of staff in colleges which greatly assisted the process of gaining access to participants. Gaining the help of the Subject Mentors, for example, might not be so accessible for someone outside the organisation. My position in a national organisation, coupled with extensive experience working in the sector, also meant that I knew a great many people who worked in colleges. At the outset of the study, I was keen to avoid interviewing staff that I knew. I thought that interviewing acquaintances might lead to preconceptions on my part or lack of clear boundaries in the interview.

It turned out, however, that I knew two of the volunteers, Vicki and Roger. At one time, many years previously, I had taught beside Vicki in a school for children and young people with learning disabilities. Roger stated in his interview that the only reason that he volunteered was that I had done his wife a service some years ago when we shared the same college workroom. I do not remember carrying out this service. The reason that I mention this is to acknowledge that my personal position might have influenced

the sample. It should also be said that interviewing known participants raised no particular difficulties for this study.

4.7. The Participants

The staff who contributed to the study ranged from those who taught in purely academic subjects – that is theoretical with no vocational or workplace element (Law, Social Sciences, English); those which were hybrids of vocational and academic (Anatomy and Health; Early Education; Health and Social Care) to those which were strictly vocational (Electrical Installation, Construction). Only one member of staff came forward who taught learners with additional support needs.

Initially, in order to protect anonymity, each of the twenty-eight participants was allocated a letter of the alphabet for identification purposes i.e. 'Participant A'. Later, when writing up the data and in trying to portray the world as lived by the teachers in the study, I thought that a sense of humanity was lost through this method of identification. As Van Manen (1990, p.111) says "the phenomenological method consists of the ability, or rather the art of being sensitive – sensitive to the subtle undertones of language". I considered the undertones of 'participant' to be about collectivisation and negated any sense of the individual. Therefore, in order to allow the reader to connect with the human beings in the study and to hear their voices, I altered all previous work and allocated a name, a pseudonym, to each of the teachers.

The names allocated to the teachers, the curricular areas in which they taught and the order in which they were interviewed can be seen in Table 1, overleaf.

Interviews carried out between 25th March 2009 and 27th May 2009.			
	NAME OF INTERVIEWEE	DEPARTMENT or SUBJECT AREA	COLLEGE
1	Alan	Computing and ICT	COLLEGE D
2	Ben	Law & Social Sciences	COLLEGE B
3	Colin	Law & Social Sciences	COLLEGE B
4	Davina	IT & Digital Art	COLLEGE B
5	Eleanor	Beauty	COLLEGE B
6	Fiona	Sports and Health	COLLEGE B
7	George	Sports and Health	COLLEGE B
8	Helen	IT & Digital Art	COLLEGE B
9	Ian	Creative Industries	COLLEGE C
10	Janice	Creative Industries	COLLEGE C
11	Kieran	Electrical Installation	COLLEGE C
12	Lennie	Brickwork	COLLEGE C
13	Melanie	Hospitality, Travel and Tourism	COLLEGE E
14	Neil	Hospitality, Travel and Tourism	COLLEGE E
15	Orla	Hairdressing and Beauty	COLLEGE F
16	Pamela	Hairdressing and Beauty	COLLEGE F
17	Quentin	Anatomy & Health	COLLEGE F
18	Roger	Access and Continuing Education	COLLEGE A
19	Susan	Early Education, Health and Social Care	COLLEGE A
20	Tracey	Early Education, Health and Social Care	COLLEGE A
21	Ursula	Social Sciences	COLLEGE G
22	Vickie	Supported Learning	COLLEGE H
23	Winnie	English	COLLEGE H
	PARTICIPANT X Failed to turn up for interview	Beauty Sports and Health	COLLEGE B

Table 1

4.8. Ethics Approval and Ethical Issues

Initial approval for the study was sought from the HEI's Research Ethics Committee and approval was received in writing from the chairperson. Ethical issues in the study, however, did not stop at this point. Thomas (2009, p.147) describes ethics as being about the conduct of the researcher's work, about how they think about the inquiry and about their respect for others. Whenever investigators enter into the lives of others at the level of intrusion often required for a qualitative study, significant problems of ethics can arise (Graves & Varna, 1997, p.31) and ethics should permeate the whole research process (Mauthner & Birch, 2002, p.5).

4.8.1. Information Sent Prior to Interview

In order to ensure that all twenty-eight volunteers were clear about the rationale of the investigation, each participant was sent the following information, prior to interview:

- information on the research before the interview took place (Annex IV);
- a consent form (Annex X);
- the research questions (Annex XI);
- a small questionnaire which sought answers to the first research question's sub questions a. to d. (Annex XII);
- a set of questions which sought an answer to sub question e. (Annex XIII) and
- information on what was going to be asked in relation to a 'critical incident' (Annex XIV).

4.8.2. Informed Consent

According to Cohen *et al.* (2000, P.51), informed consent is when individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decision. After reading the information on the research, all participants signed the consent form and were also informed that they could withdraw from the research process at any time. Consent forms were held in the HR department at

my place of work. Each participant was assured of confidentiality.

During interviews, I was extremely aware of the relationship between myself and the participants. Great care was taken to ensure that this relationship was respectful and caused no harm, ill effect or perturbation on the part of the interviewee. Every attempt was made to respect the views of each participant and to afford each one the dignity that they deserved (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000, p.57). One interview did, however, raise particular ethical issues.

4.8.3. A Particular Ethical Issue

An interview with a lecturer in Construction presented two ethical dilemmas. Firstly, the participant's described interactions with students ran counter to my values and beliefs about learning and learning relationships between teacher and learner.

Lennie was the member of staff in question and he had been teaching construction in his college for a number of years and was now managing his vocational area. During his interview, he spoke about his interactions with his learners. He said that if any of his "bosses" overheard how he spoke to students, he would be "out a job". Lennie reported that he would "lay into" his students and "speak to them like they would be spoken to in a site." He said that he was not going to be "namby pamby" to students because he had been "out there" in construction sites. He said,

> At the end of the day, I am a bricklayer. I ken how hard it is out there…make no mistake about it…they get treated really quite hard in here…and, like, the language, if I got caught saying half the things I say….

Lennie argued that he was preparing his learners for the culture of the working environment that they might find themselves in. He reported that, if he had to watch his "p's and q's" and be "very nice to them", then his students would go on a building site

and "get ripped to **shreds** (Lennie's emphasis)". He thought that he was toughening up his learners for the construction site which he described as being "brutal". His language was peppered with expletives because "that is the way that they get spoken to outside". Lennie stated that what he was teaching students was "no just about learning about bricks" but that he was also teaching about the "banter" and the fact that "journeymen will lay into them". He said that students had to learn how to expect and cope with this situation.

This exchange resulted in a personal conflict. My professional values are strongly held and I am aware that value judgements, what I believe about learning and teaching, have influenced the selection of the research topic in the first place. In fact, seeking to produce knowledge is in itself a value judgement (Gewirtz & Gibb, 2006; Hammersley, 2000).

I was disturbed by Lennie's descriptions of his interactions with his learners, on several levels. Lennie's views ran in direct contradiction to the values that I hold in relation to my work and the teaching profession. My personal perspective was that Lennie, in the context he was describing, was not "just a brickie" but a teacher who happened to teach brick-laying. My view was that teachers model behaviours and that there is a professional responsibility to model behaviours that would be recognised and upheld by the profession. So, the use of expletives by a teacher in a classroom situation bothered me. I wondered what the learners were learning apart from how to build with bricks. The interactions of the workplace seemed to be condoned and replicated in the classroom. In my view, in this instance, the classroom is not the workplace but a place of education and learning. Arguably, classrooms can be gateways to employment but, simultaneously, they can be a means of providing learners with alternative ways of thinking about and looking at the world.

I found myself in the horns of a dilemma. As a fellow professional I felt that not

counteracting Lennie's opinions with my own would be to condone them and that that would be in contravention of my own personal and professional values. I was also more than aware that I was making a value judgement. Lennie argued that it was the culture of the construction site that necessitated his interactions with his learners, albeit he admitted that his exchanges could be deemed to be unprofessional.

I did not know whether, as a researcher, I should adopt a listening, non-judgemental stance or whether, as a fellow teacher, I should put my own views forward. Hammersley (2000) advises researchers that they may have to make ethical judgements during investigations and that they should take care to protect the interests and welfare of those they are studying. He also warns researchers not to let their values shape the way data is collected and analysed. He is against any assumption on the part of researchers that they are better qualified than those they are studying to make the everyday moral decisions that the people they are studying have to make. Gerwirtz and Gibb (2006 p.145) compound this view, stating that researchers "need to be especially wary of the danger of their value judgements preventing them from actively seeking out and taking account of evidence that might challenge their prior beliefs and values".

On this occasion, I stepped outside the phenomenological mores and put forward the point of view that those who taught in colleges were teachers and as such should espouse the professional values of teachers and not of those in the workplace. Lennie, however, did not agree with me. He said that his learners needed to know that if they were to "f*ck aboot like at school" then they would "no be here long". He stated that, even though he was wearing a shirt and tie, he was the same as the learners. He says to his students, "Dinnae distance yourself from me….I am one ah yoose…I am here to learn you a trade, that's the way it is." Several times he said that if anyone in senior management was aware of his attitudes to learners he would be "pulled up."

I found this exchange difficult. I felt responsible. I would have liked to have talked it

over with someone, perhaps shared my sense of disquiet with someone in Lennie's college but that would not have been appropriate. For a start, the consent form was an assurance that participants would not be identified except as might be required by law. More importantly, though, this member of staff had given up his time and trusted me with his story, and it was *his* lived experience of teaching in *his* world. I struggled for what Cohen *et al.* (2000, p.71) call a "sense of rightness" on which to construct a set of rational principles appropriate to the circumstances and based on my personal, professional and societal values.

In terms of resolving the ethical dilemma, perhaps counteracting his opinions with my own went some way to resolving my personal and professional ethical issues. One of the reasons why Aristotle believed there would be very few *phronimos*, or moral experts, was because it is hard to know what is right to do (Biondi Khan, 2005 p.44). I suspect there are many Lennie's in Scotland's colleges. Perhaps views such as Lennie's and mine could be discussed by the sector within the discourse of professionalism.

Of course, sharing the findings of this study also throws up ethical issues in relation to the protection of Lennie's privacy. Although the possibility that information sharing might lead to negative consequences for Lennie is extremely remote, it is a possibility that I find abhorrent. Every conceivable step will be taken to ensure his confidentiality. However, there is the optimistic possibility that someone in a support role for Lennie might recognise his profile and provide positive interventions.

I will return to Lennie's incident in later Chapters.

4.8.4. Another Ethical Issue

A second ethical predicament occurred when the same participant said that he had a story to tell but that the tape recorder would probably need to be switched off. However, he went on to describe his experience of an incident, between students, of a sexual

nature without asking for the tape to be switched off. When his story was told, he asked me not to use it in the research, saying:-

> "I don't think it appropriate if it got back to (C) College….I would be out of a job if it got out".
> **Lennie: Construction**

At the end of the interview, however, he changed his mind and said that the story could be used in the study. I was concerned about my role in this interview and later reflected on my behaviour, wondering if, in my eagerness to get a 'good story', I had egged the participant beyond a point where he did not wish to go. I later contacted the participant by email. I told him about my concerns and asked him if he was still happy for his story to be included in the study. He wholeheartedly agreed and again gave me permission to use his story. I am grateful to this member of staff for taking time out to furnish me with his experience of the world of teaching in colleges as he lives it.

4.8.5. Ethics and Prior Knowledge of Interviewees

It has already been stated that I knew two of the participants, in a professional capacity. The fact that two acquaintances volunteered gave me a moment of disquiet. I was concerned about possible bias on my part and possible boundary issues in the interviews. I did not want to refuse a generous offer. I would have considered it impolite to do so and might have caused offence. Also, I needed them in order to meet my target number. I had not seen either of the staff concerned for a number of years. Therefore, I thought that this fact would ensure that the interviewer/interviewee relationship was appropriate for an academic study and not marked by over-familiarity. I also thought that acknowledging possible bias might go some way to ensuring open-mindedness.

I encountered no particular difficulties in the interviews.

4.9. The Interviews

Thomas (2009) suggests that an interview is a discussion with someone in which you try to get information from them and that there are three basic sub-types - structured, unstructured and semi-structured. Each involves face-to-face or telephone contact with the interviewee. A interview can also be conducted with a group of people in a focus group (Creswell, 1998, p.124). A fully structured interview has predetermined questions recorded on a standardised schedule (effectively a questionnaire where the interviewer fills in the responses). A semi-structured interview is where the interviewer has worked out a set of questions in advance but allows flexibility for probing, clarification or exploration (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000, p.146). An unstructured interview has no predetermined format beyond a general interest in the subject under discussion and may be suitable in, for example, ethnographic studies. Cohen *et al.* (ibid. p.147) suggest that, if respondents are to talk freely, the latter demands great skill on the part of the interviewer. Interviews are generally time-consuming and take time to arrange and to write up (C. Robson, 1993, p.229).

The literature on interviews as a method of data collection advises on organisation; on clarity of motives and objectives and on awareness that it is a social interpersonal encounter and not merely a data collection exercise. In addition, that the interviewer has to be adept at 'active listening' and to be responsible for the dynamics and possible asymmetries of power (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000; Griffiths, 1998; C. Robson, 1993; Silverman, 2000; Thomas, 2009). Developing and maintaining trust between researcher and respondent is stressed by a number of authors (Briggs & Coleman, 2007; Griffiths, 1998; Silverman, 2000).

While interviews may serve many purposes for the social scientist, Van Manen (op.cit. p.66) states that in hermeneutic phenomenological human science, the interview serves very specific purposes, including "as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing richer and deeper

understanding of a human phenomenon." He describes hermeneutical phenomenological interviews as being disciplined conversations. In Heideggerian terms, the interview is co-created between interviewer and respondent as questions are "directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme in question" Welman and Kruger (1990, as cited in Groenewald, 2003 p.53).

In this study, the interviews were comprised of two sections and adopted two approaches. The first part was semi-structured and the second part adopted a hermeneutical phenomenological standpoint. The average length of the interviews was one hour. The shortest was forty-five minutes and the longest an hour and a half.

4.9.1. First Part of the Interview

Beijaard *et al.* (2000, 754), in a study into the professional identity of 80 secondary school teachers, developed a questionnaire consisting of four parts. The first part encompassed general questions about the background variables of the teachers' sex, age, prior teacher education, subject matter taught, years of experience as a teacher, and student classes. In the second part of Beijaard's questionnaire, the teachers were asked to represent their professional identity by awarding a total of 100 points to the three aspects of this identity. The three aspects of identity for this study were subject matter expertise, didactical expertise and pedagogical expertise. The teachers were asked to clarify why they awarded points in the way that they did.

In order to meet the aims of the first research question in this study, I borrowed and adapted Beijaard *et al.*'s method. A small questionnaire was drawn up asking questions about the teachers' age; experiences of school; experiences of learning since leaving school; subject specialisms; teaching qualifications; length of time teaching; what they did before they became a college lecturer and what kind of teaching contract they were on (Annex XII). This questionnaire had been sent out to participants prior to interview. During the first part of the interview, a semi-structured approach was adopted and the

participants were asked to respond to the questions in this questionnaire.

An additional questionnaire had been put together (Annex XII), again drawing inspiration from Beijaard *et al.* and which had also been sent out to participants prior to interview. After the participants had responded to the first questionnaire, they were then presented with a statement - that in order to be effective and professional within the learning and teaching environment, teachers in Scotland's colleges require a combination of high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills:

- in the subject they teach;
- in the planning, execution, management and evaluation of learning and teaching processes (*techne*);
- of learning and teaching theories and the practice and methods deriving from educational theories and (*episteme*);
- understanding and skills to support learners' personal, social and emotional development and wellbeing.

The participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement and their reasons for doing so. They were then asked to consider the above four categories of occupational knowledge and to allocate points out of 100 to each category, depending on how important they considered that body of knowledge to be for effective practice. For example, 10 points could be allocated to subject knowledge, 10 to planning or process knowledge, 10 to theoretical knowledge and 70 to knowledge of learners. The total had to count up to 100. The rationale for the points allocation was to avoid a hierarchy, or ranking from 1 to 5.

Some respondents allocated the greatest number of points to one category; some correspondents allocated points equally among all four categories. The reasons for points allocation was sought and recorded.

The reason for doing this was to establish what occupational knowledge was valued by the participants to help better understand their decision-making and what knowledge the participants valued and utilised when making professional decisions. A summary of the points' allocations that the teachers provided can be found at Annex XXV.

The dialogue that took place during the interviews, when participants explained their reasons for their points' allocation, constituted a major source of data in this study. The theme "Thoughts, Attitudes, Values and Beliefs about Teaching", which will be explained later, derived primarily from an analysis of the data which emerged from the teachers talking about the questionnaire which was used in the first part of the interview (Annex XII).

4.9.2. Second Part of the Interview

Van Manen (1990) counsels that, before embarking on a busy interview schedule, a researcher needs to be oriented to their question in such a strong manner that they do not get easily carried away with interviews that go everywhere and nowhere. In order not to get carried away, and to obtain data on how the participants "think and feel in the most direct ways" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998 p. 96) they were sent information prior to the interview, asking them to think about a 'critical incident' in their learning and teaching process (Annex XIV).

Thompson *et al* (1989, p.98) state that the goal of the phenomenological interview is to gain a first-person description of some specified domain of experience, where the course of the dialogue is set largely by the participant. Therefore, during this second part of the interview, I focused on asking the participants about their lived-experience of managing critical incidents, or disrupted practices, during the learning process. I attempted, through the use of open questions, to guide the participants to reconstruct this experience and to reflect on its meaning. Respondents were asked to talk about a critical incident or disruption in the learning process. I attempted to "understand the world from the

subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of people's experiences" (Kvale, 1991, p.1-2). In addition, I endeavoured to orient the participants to their "experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions" about their lived experience of dealing with disrupted practice and to encourage their reflection on the meanings this experience might hold for them (1999, cited in Groenewald, 2003, p.53).

4.10. The Role of the Researcher

Strauss and Corbin (1990 p.18) suggest that the interviewer draws "…..upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, with astute powers of observation and good interactional skills." In hermeneutical phenomenology, the interview is reciprocal, with both researcher and respondent engaged in dialogue (Groenewald, 2004; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). Also, at the root of phenomenology the intent is to understand the phenomena in the respondents' own terms. That is, to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the person themselves (Benner, 1994; Kvale, 1991; Laverty, 2003). While I did not know most of the respondents, the knowledge and experience that I had of colleges helped me to enter into and share their world, as they described it. This knowledge and experience, I believe, facilitated each interview as we were both in it together.

Developing and maintaining trust between researcher and respondent is stressed by a number of authors (Briggs & Coleman, 2007; Burns, 2000; Griffiths, 1998). At the beginning of every interview, time was taken to make sure respondents were clear about the aims and purpose of the interview. At the close, respondents were asked how they had felt about the experience. As all comments were positive, I believe that trust was established and maintained throughout the interview process.

4.11. Interview Data

It is essential that a full record is taken of interviews and each interview was fully recorded (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000; Creswell, 1998). It is also important that care is taken

with recording equipment and to check batteries. Unfortunately, a substantial proportion of Roger's interview was lost because, unbeknown to me, the battery had run out during the interview. As self-transcription can stimulate analysis of the data; aid '*immersion in the data'* and hermeneutic circling between research questions and data (Sadala & Adorno, 2002; Sokolowski, 1999; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974; Van Manen, 1990) all twenty-three interviews were transcribed by me between April and August 2009. It took many hours to transcribe the tapes. On completion, there were 339 single-spaced, type-written A4 pages of interview data.

4.12. Journal

During the lifetime of the research, I attempted to maintain a reflective journal.

4.13. Data Analysis : Using NVivo

To assist in the analysis of the data, I used NVivo, the qualitative data analysis software package developed by QSR International. The software helped to manage and organise the data. All interview transcriptions were imported directly from Microsoft Word. It was possible to write memos about particular aspects of documents and link these to relevant pieces of text in different documents. Documents could be coded easily on screen. Coding stripes could be made visible in the margins of documents so that I could see, at a glance, which codes had been used where (see Annexes XV -XX).

Bazeley (2007, P.7) noted that there are those who express doubts about the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). These doubts include concerns that computers could distance researchers from their data; that the code and retrieve methods exclude other analytic activities; that computers mechanise analysis, making it more akin to quantitative or 'positivist' approaches and that computers support only grounded theory methodology (Hinchliffe, Crang, Reimer, & Hudson, 1997; Seidel, 1991). Proponents of CAQDAS argue that it serves to facilitate an accurate and transparent data analysis process. At the same time, it provides a quick and simple way

of counting who said what and when, which in turn, provides a reliable, general picture of the data (Morrison & Moir, 1998; Richards, 2002). I found the software to be very useful.

4.14. Data Analysis

Creswell (1998, p.55) states that during phenomenological data analysis, the original text is divided into statements or **horizonalization.** Then the units are transformed into clusters of meanings expressed in phenomenological concepts**.** Finally, these transformations are tied together to make a general description of the experience, the **textural description** of what was experienced and the **structural description** of how it was experienced. Some phenomenologists incorporate personal meanings of the experience and use single-subject analysis before inter-subject analysis (Hycner, 1999; Moustakas, 1994). That is, considering the experience of the individual before reflecting on the experiences which are common to a series of individuals. Others analyse the role of context within the process of considering individual experiences (Giorgi, 1994, 1997).

The literature on the phenomenological analysis of interview data (Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1997; Hycner, 1999; Tesch, 1980) advises on listening to tapes and reading transcriptions several times in order to "get a sense of the whole" (Hycner, 1999, p.251). This process helps to provide a context for the emergence of specific units of meaning and themes.

I followed the above procedure. The texts were read and re-read, then broken down and coded using NVivo software. The first set of units or themes can be found at Annex XXI. The data was then grouped and re-grouped in accordance with perceived frequencies, similarities or differences in order to establish general descriptions or themes. I started with detailed analysis and worked up into broader themes. In an effort to make some meaning of what was being read, notes and memos were taken throughout this process. This, often laborious, mechanical coding procedure went some way

towards unpeeling the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the teachers in the study. But this process was not quite enough as "there is no one software package that will do the analysis in itself" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.169)

I found NVivo to be useful to keep track on 'who said what' and the searching tools allowed the interrogation of data at a particular level. However, the business of coding and grouping data into themes led to inter-subject analysis and individual stories seemed to get flattened and somewhat lost. I did not want these individual stories to disappear because a phenomenological inquirer is interested in stories (Laverty, 2003, p.18). As Van Manen (1990, p.152) states, "the logic of story is precisely that story retrieves what is unique, particular, and irreplaceable."

Hycner (1999, p.161) cautions against using the term data analysis as it has dangerous connotations for phenomenology. He states, "...the term usually means a 'breaking into parts' and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon." He prefers the term 'explication' which he deems implies an "investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole" (op.cit. p. 161).

The teachers' narratives were subjected to an explication process in an attempt to describe and interpret the individual experiences of the phenomenon, the individual stories, before considering what was common to all participants.

4.15. The Explication Process: Looking for *Phronesis*

The study aimed to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and matured from the course of action taken. The phenomenon was the disrupted spaces in the learning process and the study aimed to ascertain the teachers' experience of this phenomenon.

A great deal of reflection on the teachers' narratives had to take place in order to establish, in Van Manen's terms (1990, p.31), the essential themes or components which contributed to the phenomenon. In hermeneutic phenomenology, this reflective activity is a struggle towards grasping the essential meanings embedded within the text (Van Manen, ibid. p.77). Van Manen (ibid. p.79) tells us that, "making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure." He goes on to say that formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of "seeing" meaning (ibid p.79). 'Seeing' meaning in the narratives, for this researcher, entailed a constant circling between the transcripts, the literature and reflection on personal experience of the phenomenon.

If *phronesis* is deemed to be an intuitive and interpretative ability to read between the lines (Noel, 1999a; Phelan, 2005), then *phronesis*, to me, should be an essential component in the armoury of the phenomenologist. The question, "What is going on here?" had to be repeatedly asked of the text. The search to unearth the essential meanings rooted within the narratives was a difficult, slow, intuitive and interpretive process. This process was filtered through my own professional and personal belief system, as (Hammersley, 2000, p.65) suggests that phenomenologists, in contrast to positivists, believe that researchers cannot be detached from their own presuppositions and that they should not pretend otherwise.

Like truth, *phronesis* was a slippery fish to catch. In the end, *phronesis* was an interpretive lens with which to view the data. The search for meanings in the narrative was coupled with a search for professional, practical wisdom, wherever it might lie within the text. The result of this process was the emergence of key themes, which encapsulated the essence of the phenomenon, with the notion of *phronesis* embedded within these themes. *Phronesis* is not a component of the story, it permeates the story.

The result of this process led to the development of a model incorporating the key themes which emerged from the above process. This model will be used to guide the reporting and analysis of the findings and can be found at Figure 4 below.

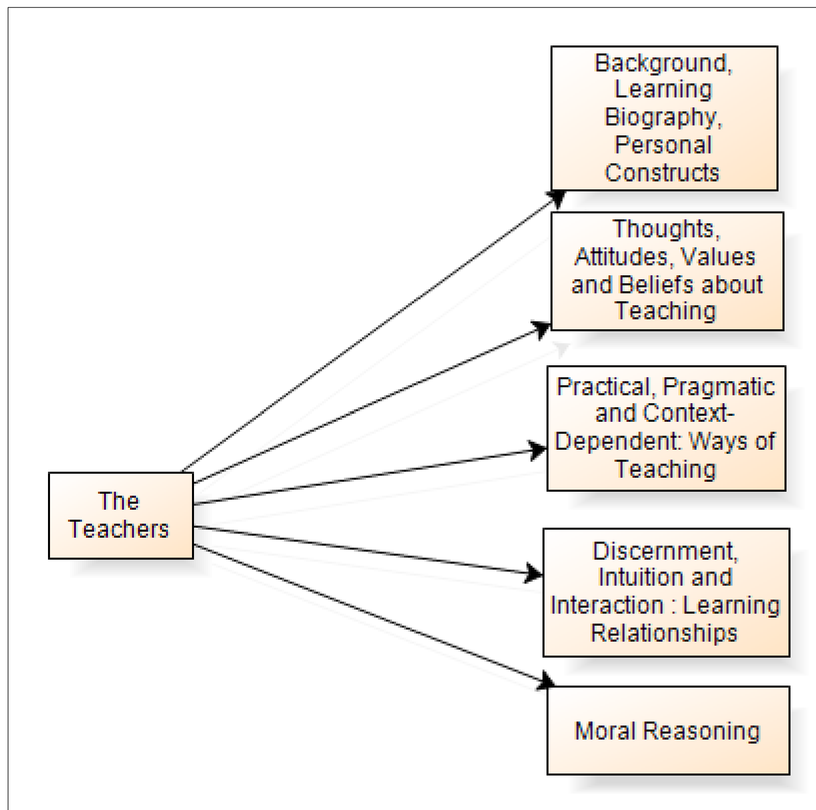

Figure 6

4.16. Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness and Rigour

Thomas (2009, p.105) describes reliability as, "*the extent to which a research instrument such as a test will give the same result on different occasions.*" The point here is, that if you are collecting data, you want your measuring instruments to be consistent from one time to the next. If the measuring instrument is not reliable then no claim can be made to validity or "the extent to which the research describes what, in fact, the study set out to do and describe and whether this description was accurate and authentic" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995 p. 78). Hycner (1999, p.297) considers the validity of research data to

be of extreme importance in any scientific research. That is, whether or not the data accurately represents or captures the phenomenon being studied. He goes on to say that, while this is an extremely important question to ask, it is one which is enormously difficult to answer at times.

Punch (2009, p.314) suggests that the question of whether or not research is valid can be answered in terms of the internal logic and consistency of the research. If research is seen as an argument (where questions are asked, and data are systematically collected and analysed to answer those questions), then the **internal** validity is about the logic and internal consistency of the argument. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.115) define internal validity as "the isomorphism of findings with reality." This means whether or not all the parts of the research fit together, whether there is a constant and coherent argument and whether the findings have consistency and coherence. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.279) suggest three specific questions that can be asked of a research study:

1. How context rich and meaningful are the descriptions?

2. Does the account ring true, make sense, seem convincing or plausible, and enable a vicarious presence for the reader?

3. Is the account rendered a comprehensive one, respecting the configuration and temporal arrangement of elements in the local context?

Within the interpretive paradigm, researchers sometimes incorporate "member checking" (Punch, 2009, p.315), which means checking with the people who are studied and who supplied the data. For example, an interview transcript can be taken back to the interviewee before analysis to check whether or not the record is accurate. Participants can also be asked to validate the findings of the research (1999, p.297).

4.17. Validity and Credibility in this Study

In this investigation, in order to verify the validity of the data, an audit trail was established. [All relevant documentation and actions have been made plain to the reader.] From the outset and throughout the study, my personal position and any possible bias or assumptions that might have impacted on the study have been clarified. A strenuous attempt has been made to ensure that a consistent logical argument exists throughout all parts of the research and that the findings are consistent and coherent. Attempts have been made to provide "rich, thick descriptions" (Creswell, 1998, p.203) of the participants which will allow the reader to ascertain transferability to other contexts. Erlandson *et al.* (1993) suggest that such detailed descriptions of participants enable readers to determine whether findings can be transferred "because of shared characteristics" (p.32).

I did not consider respondent validation of the interview data to be worthwhile in order to establish credibility. Phenomenological inquiry provides a 'slice of life' that represents a dynamic process. It is important to realise that the same person might interpret things differently at different times. From a phenomenological standpoint, I deemed the teachers' accounts of their experiences to be true as they perceived them to be *in that moment in time.* On presentation of transcripts, the participants might have offered different or altered accounts and that would have been considered as additional data and outwith the limitations of the study.

In this phenomenological investigation, triangulation of the data, by drawing from a third source in order to confirm or refute the findings, was considered to be inappropriate. The participant's experiences were deemed to be authentic and unique to them within their life-world. Their stories could not be confirmed or refuted by another source; they were simply true, as they told them, in that moment in time.

4.17.1. Outside Readers

Dukes (1984, p.201) suggests that phenomenological researchers can elicit the services of outside readers for research verification. Outside readers can recognise the logic of the experiences and how they match with their own experiences. Therefore, two colleagues who have a long history of involvement with learning and teaching in Scotland's Colleges and considerable standing and reputation in the sector were asked to read the study. One of the readers also had a Doctorate in Education. They were asked to consider whether or not, in the light of their experience of colleges, this account rings true, makes sense, and seems convincing or plausible to them. Their reply was in the affirmative.

4.18. Replicability

Hycner (1999, p.298) states that an essential feature of natural scientific research is that a study can be replicated by others and get essentially the same results. The point is that the methods are 'objective' and therefore consistent, irrespective of whom the researcher is. While replicability might be an important aspect in research, within phenomenological studies, there are bound to be differences among researchers. Giorgi (1975, cited in Hycner, 1999, p.275), suggests that different investigators can elicit similar data but that the difference lies in the individual researcher's perspective of the data. The difference also lies in whether readers can adopt the varying viewpoints of the researchers. That is, whether they can see what the researcher saw and whether they are in agreement or not.

The story of the lived-experiences of teachers that is to be told in the next Chapter is the story as I see it, or, more accurately, the story as I see them seeing it. As Van Manen (1990, p.94) states, "expressing the fundamental or overall meaning of a text is a judgement call. Different readers might discern different fundamental meaning. And it does not make one interpretation necessarily more true than another." A different researcher could listen to the same accounts that I did but weave an altogether different

tale of the telling of those accounts. Both, in all probability, could be true. This one is mine.

4.19. Methodology, Methods and Research Instruments

For the sake of elucidation and transparency, I would like to make clear that the methodology which guided this study was hermeneutic phenomenology, with particular reference to the works of Van Manen. (Silverman, 2000) indicated that methods are "specific research techniques" (p.79). Methods, according to Silverman (ibid.) are "more or less useful, depending on their fit with the theories and methodologies being used" (p.79). According to Silverman (ibid. p.79) research techniques, or methods, include interviews.

The principle method that was harnessed for the research was interviews, which is concomitant with a qualitative, interpretive study. A questionnaire was also sent out to participants prior to interview. The data that was collated from this questionnaire occurred during the interview. Therefore, for this study, the questionnaire is regarded as a research instrument. That is, while it accrued information which can be seen at Annex XII, this information was provided during the interview. The questionnaire also facilitated discussion and provided a great deal of information on the teachers' thoughts, attitudes and beliefs about teaching. Crucially, analysis of the data provided during the teachers' discussion of the questionnaire informed one of the themes which emerged from a hermeneutic phenomenological reflection of the data, that is "Thoughts, Attitudes, Values and Beliefs about Teaching".

Use of the questionnaire necessitated a mixed approach to the interviews. The first half, using the questionnaire to prompt discussion harnessed a semi-structured approach, using prompts. The second half adopted a phenomenological approach.

In other studies, for example, a positivist rather than an interpretivist investigation, a

questionnaire could constitute as being a method, in Silverman's terms.

The concept of critical incidents was also regarded as being a research instrument, in as much as that the concept aided data gathering during the interviews. Again, in other studies, critical incidents could be regarded as a technique or method (Flanagan, 1954).

4.20. Summary

This Chapter explained how the concepts of hermeneutic phenomenology guided the collection of data and the research process. It provided information on how the participants were recruited and what subject areas they represented. It considered issues of ethics and particular ethical issues which arose during the research. It provided an account of the interviews and stressed that the interviews comprised of two parts. The first part was semi-structured and the second adopted a phenomenological standpoint.

The Chapter gave a full account of how analysis of the data was approached. It stated that all possible measures had been taken to establish credibility of the research and that outside readers, with some repute in the sector, had been recruited in order to ascertain whether or not the account rang true to them.

It was acknowledged that this study may or may not be replicable but has adopted the advice of Creswell (1998), Erlandson *et al.*(1993) and Linclon and Guba (1985) and provided rich, thick descriptions of the participants in the study in order to allow the reader to ascertain transferability to other contexts. The following Chapter will provide an account of six of the teachers' experience of the phenomenon

Chapter Five

5. Six Teachers' Experiences of the Phenomenon: Disrupted Spaces

5.1. Introduction

The over-arching aim of the study was to shine a light on the everyday experiences of teachers in Scotland's colleges. It sought to bring, "*i*nto nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life" (Van Manen, 1990 p.32).

The twenty-three teachers in the study were delivering diverse programmes of learning. These included provision which catered for primary and secondary school pupils; for those who were returning to education; for those who had disengaged with education; for those wishing to access employment and for those already in employment, in partnership with their employers.

The levels of programmes ranged from that which catered to the needs of learners with additional learning needs or disabilities to provision designed and delivered solely on a University campus in partnership with University staff.

Experience of teaching ranged from two to thirty years. The least experienced was Melanie, who had just completed her probationary year in a secondary school. The longest serving was Vickie. Most of the participants' teaching lives had taken place in the institution in which they were currently employed.

Six of the teachers' stories will be told in this Chapter, as Van Manen (op.cit. p.115) advises that "a common rhetorical device in phenomenological writing is the use of anecdote or story." Their stories will be told within the framework of five themes, the nature of which will be explained later in this Chapter. Twenty-three is a large sample for a phenomenological inquiry, which usually involves a smaller group of participants (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000, p.93) and time and space forbids the explication of all of the stories. Therefore, six were chosen in order to "make comprehensible some notion that easily eludes us" Van Manen (op.cit. p.116). In this case, the notion is the teachers' experiences of disrupted spaces in the learning process.

Van Manen (op.cit. p.122) advises those engaged in hermeneutic phenomenological writing, that phenomenological description is, in a sense, only an example of what the research is attempting to describe. He counsels the researcher to vary the examples in order to better grasp the meaning of a phenomenon. Therefore, the six teachers were chosen for their divergent accounts.

Van Manen (1990 p.33) also advises those engaged in hermeneutic phenomenological studies to balance the research by considering parts and whole. Therefore, in the following Chapter, the remaining seventeen teachers' stories will be summarised within the context of the five themes and considered in relation to the six teacher narratives. Using this method, I intend to explicate the uniqueness of the individual and allow the telling of a real and human story. In addition, by providing a summary of the seventeen teachers' experiences and relating these experiences to the six unique stories, I intend to allow the reader to reach as comprehensive an understanding of the phenomenon as is possible within the confines of this study.

Before providing an explanation for the selection of the six teachers and an account of their narratives, some clarification of disrupted spaces is required.

5.2. A Word on the Meanings of Words

Van Manen (1990 p.60) states that it "is sometimes surprising how didactic language itself is if we allow ourselves to be attentive to even the most common of expressions associated with the phenomenon we wish to pursue." Words are primarily what most of us human beings use to communicate with one another and we can each of us conjure different meanings from the same words. I intended the word 'critical' to mean something of decisive importance which interrupted the learning process. Prior to interview, the participants were informed that this could be an everyday occurrence and something that was either fortunate or unfortunate in the learning process. They were asked to think about a time when they had to think on their feet and make a decision. The information that was sent to participants can be seen at Annex (XIV).

Later, on reflection, I realised that the word 'critical' can have many different interpretations for individuals. While the terminology associated with the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) was adopted, several of the teachers associated the words 'critical incident' to mean something associated with a crisis or an emergency. Alan, for example said that he could, "think of loads of examples, that is the problem.....it depends on how **severe** (researcher's emphasis) you need it to be." Alan had interpreted the term 'critical incident', as meaning something that stood out from the norm. He, therefore, hoped that his story had, "enough meat on it."

Many of the teachers indicated that the rhythms and routines of their working lives were never predictable and were continually being interrupted. Fiona, for example, liked to think that, "things happen all the time" and did not like to think of them as an "incident, they are just things that happen – like a moment in time." Davina could not really think of any "major incidents" and said that, "the only kind of critical incidents that are happening don't really stop the learning."

In the end, while the teachers tried to think of something that 'stood out from the norm'

in terms of being critical or an emergency, most of the incidents were what the teachers considered to be routine occurrences. This is what I had hoped for. I understood the teachers' attempts to think of something that was different from their everyday occurrences as a heartfelt attempt to be helpful, interpreting what they thought they were being asked to do. For me, there was learning here in relation to the use of words and the interpretation that we place upon them.

5.3. Summary of the Disrupted Spaces

The teachers' accounts of their notions of a disrupted space in the learning process were collated in order to place the individual within the context of the whole. They were categorised under eight themes which emerged from an interpretation of the data on disrupted spaces. A summary can be found at Annex (XXIII). What the teachers considered to be an interruption in the learning process included:

a. Problems with resources;
b. Concerns with staff (for those who were in a management position);
c. Learning relationships with students;
d. Managing inter-student relationships;
e. Thinking on their feet, in relation to classroom issues;
f. A conflict of interest – where a teacher was pulled away from her class to meet another obligation;
g. Issues to do with curriculum and what was being taught to students and
h. A disrupted career path.

Fourteen out of the twenty-three teachers described an incident which featured their relationships with their learners.

5.4. Themes and Stories

The six teachers' stories will be told within the context of the themes which emerged

from a hermeneutic phenomenological reflection of the data. Themes can "give shape to the shapeless" and can also fulfil the "desire to make sense" of the information provided by the teachers (Van Manen, op.cit. p.88). 'Story' in this case, meaning narrative or something depicted in narrative form. Van Manen (op.cit. p.119) also counsels that stories or anecdotes can have a certain pragmatic thrust. They can force us to search out the relationships between living and thinking or between situation and reflection. As Van Manen (op.cit. p.120) says, "anecdotes can teach us."

Van Manen (op.cit. p.106) also advised that, in order to provide a phenomenological textual description, "we need to determine the themes around which the phenomenological description will be woven". In addition, Van Manen (op.cit. p.88), counseled that a theme is "the process of insightful invention, discovery, disclosure". He also advises the phenomenological researcher against strict adherence to a set of mechanistic procedures when doing human science research. He proffered the suggestion that critical moments of inquiry may depend more on "interpretive sensitivity" and "inventive thoughtfulness" (Van Manen, op.cit. p.3).

In explicating the data, it was not easy to discern whether or not *phronesis* emanated or contributed to teachers' actions within disrupted spaces. Therefore, in an attempt towards 'insightful invention', 'interpretive sensitivity' and 'inventive thoughtfulness', I married the process of hermeneutic phenomenological reflection on the data with reflection on the characteristics of *phronesis*. I viewed the data looking through the lens of *phronesis*. The key themes which emerged were as follows:

a. **Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs**

   The notion of teaching-as-being as identified the literature review acknowledges the humanity of teachers. It sees teachers as people and their actions and decision-making as being informed by their background, beliefs, learning biography, values, level of teacher education, culture and the

meanings that they bring to bear to their practice as teachers. Therefore, the teachers' biographies have been included as part of their story.

b. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching;

Kessels and Korthagen (1996, p.19) state that *phronesis* has to do with "the understanding of specific concrete cases and complex or ambiguous situations." Teaching is a complex process and what the teachers think is necessary in order to be effective and professional within the learning and teaching environment will be considered under this theme.

c. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

Phronesis is context-specific (Birmingham, 2004, p.315) and essentially practical in nature (Eisner, 2002, p.375). Korthagen and Kessels (1999, p.4) state that "while *episteme* aims at primarily helping us to know more about situations, the emphasis of *phronesis* is mostly on perceiving more in a particular situation and finding a helpful course of action on the basis of strengthened awareness." This theme, then, sits within the situational interpretation of *phronesis* and considers what the teachers' experiences were in relation to their responses to disruptions in the learning process.

d. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

The teachers in the study overwhelmingly chose an interaction with learners as in interruption in the learning process. *Phronesis* has been described as being akin to discernment or "a teacher's capacity to see the significance of a situation, to imagine various possibilities for action and to judge ethically how one ought to act on any given occasion" (Phelan, 2005, p.10). This theme, then will explicate the teachers' experiences of their relationships with their learners.

e. Moral Reasoning

Phronesis is essentially moral and orientated towards the common good. It is "a state of grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about what is good or bad for a human being" (Aristotle, translation D. Ross, 1984, p.89). Therefore, the teachers' professional judgements will be considered in relation to their moral and ethical components. The definition of morality which will guide this process is:

a) behaviour which is concomitant with the Law;
b) conformity to the individual's organisational Code of Conduct;
c) conformity, or degree of conformity, to the conventional standards of moral conduct that are concomitant with the values and culture of the teaching profession, as is understood by any member of that profession – taking into account Kant's Categorical Imperative and that whatever is right (or wrong) in one situation is right (or wrong) in any similar situation;
d) behaviour which is "pedagogically tactful" (Van Manen, 1995)

The context of the research will permeate through the teachers' stories as, in a phenomenological inquiry, their context or life-world is unique to them, it is how they experience it. As Van Manen (1990, p.101) states, "All phenomenological human science research efforts are really explorations into the structure of the human lifeworld, the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations". He goes on to explain that how we interpret and describe lived experiences constitute the complexity of the lifeworld and that multiple and different lifeworlds can belong to different human existences and realities. How each teacher views the context of the college that they teach in, is unique to them and their world as they experience it. It is not necessarily the view of others in the same college. Their experiences, however, would appear to highlight the complexity of colleges today.

5.5. The Teachers' Stories

Choosing the individual stories to tell was difficult, as each contributed to an explication of the phenomenon. Each story is unique (Van Manen, 1990, p.118) but the "paradoxical nature of anecdote narrative is that it tells something particular whilst addressing the general or universal (Van Manen, 1990, p.120). The teachers were chosen because their stories 'told of something particular'. The teachers who were selected and the reasons for their selection are as follows:

- ***Ben**: Economics/Social Science* – because he was relatively new to teaching.
- ***Davina**: Computing and ICT* – because her incident concerned classroom issues and most of the teachers cited relationships with students.
- ***Eleanor:** Beauty Therapy* – because her story had several dimensions. As a manager, it concerned her relationships with her staff as well as with learners.
- ***George:** Sports and Fitness* – because his teaching experience fell into the middle range and because of the richness of his story.
- ***Lennie**: Construction* – because his story was very different from the others.
- ***Vickie**: Supported Learning* – because she was the only teacher who worked with learners with disabilities or additional requirements for learning. She was also the longest served teacher.

5.6. Ben's Story

5.6.1. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

Ben was aged between thirty and thirty-nine and had been teaching for four years and has no teaching qualification. He had been on a permanent contract for six months at the time of the interview.

He left school at eighteen, went to college but dropped out. He then worked in retail as a shop manager. He decided that he had become "just a sort of glorified assistant" and

"decided to do something else". He had the requisite number of Highers but attended a summer school before taking up a University place where he became "really interested in Economics."

He was in the process of completing his post-graduate studies and applying for a government post when someone in the college contacted him and asked him if he would be interested in teaching. He said, "I had never even thought about teaching and I thought, Well, I will come along and see that they think." He took one class, initially, for three hours a week and found the experience to be "nerve-wracking, to be honest." He sat in on the same class the week before he started but "the next week (he) was on (his) own". He said:

> "This is the kind of place where its...here's your class list, mind your register, that's what you're teaching, there's your class.....shut the door behind you. Not everybody can stick it. You have to know what you are doing and fast. It takes some time to understand the rules, assessments, verification and everything."

He saw himself as being a role model to his students:

> "The students are always dead interested. They ask, 'Did you always want to become a teacher?' And then I explain, 'Well, no, not always, really. I sort of got in, well, not really by chance.' I explain how I got in and they say, 'Wow, as if you went from being a shop manager and now you are teaching'. You kind of model the possibilities."

He would like to be seconded to study for the Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) but said that;

> "as far as I am aware, at the moment, it is sort of like a first come first served kind of thing. So there is a bit of a backlog at the moment, so. But there is

> another course where they are mibbae doing like an introduction to teaching. But saying that, it widnae be the full TQFE. A PDA, I don't know the full name of it."

5.6.2. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

In the questionnaire used during the first part of the interview, (Annex XX11), Ben allocated 50 points for subject knowledge; 15 points for process knowledge; 10 points for theoretical knowledge and 20 points for knowledge of learners.

Ben thought that in order to be effective and professional within the learning and teaching environment, teachers in Scotland's colleges particularly require a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject that they teach.

> "I believe that if you didn't have enough knowledge and you didn't keep up to date, then I think that the students would soon....twig it. That you are kind of bumbling along in some way."

He said that he had quite a few students for whom English was not a first language and that he need to "connect what (he is) teaching to what they know about already."

Ben thought that the next priority for a teacher was to have a "personal feeling" with his students. He found it to be a bit more "pleasant" to have a personal connection with his learners and he does that by telling them about his "day to day life". Ben wonders if he has a good connection with his learners because he is slightly younger than his colleagues. He gets a lot of NQ classes and feels that they are more willing to tell him things than older staff. He felt that he has a "good enough connection to the learners" and that if the relationship with students broke down in anyway, then, "it becomes much harder to teach. It is much harder to rein them in....not rein them in but get them back, if you have drifted away from them."

He felt that a practical knowledge (*techne*) of teaching was of less importance that knowledge of subject and knowledge of learners. He thought that course planning emanated from subject knowledge. He believed that learning was about more than achieving qualifications:

> "I believe that if you haven't passed my course, then I don't look upon it that you have failed it. I believe that you have learned something while you are here and can always put it to good use."

Ben emphasises to his students that passing or failing "shouldn't be the be all and end all." He said that his work is organised around this principal and while it is "good to get qualifications" he would be "happier" with "people leaving his class who have a bigger range of knowledge" rather than "just turning up to pass a test". Ben admitted that his attitude had changed. When he first started teaching he thought that he just "had to get these people through". Now he thinks "it is the learning that is important".

Ben ascribed little importance to knowledge of educational theory (*episteme*). He said, "I have absolutely no idea of any theories of education. It could be that what I am doing is smack, bang on the theory without necessarily realising that that is the case."

He reported that his biggest problem was encountering students who were quiet and unresponsive in class. In his experience, this particularly happened with second year HND students. He said that he had had learners at NQ level who could work on their own but, later, the same students appeared to adopt a different learning style. Ben stated that he had needed to alter his teaching style to meet the needs of the quiet classes of students. The students were "so quiet it was more of a structured lesson – with me standing up telling them what to do and where to find information" Ben reported that that was not how he wanted to teach and that there had been times when he had to, "basically stand up and say, look this is what you need to know, this is what we are going to be doing."

Ben reported that "having no teaching experience and having no theoretical knowledge of doing it, like having your TQFEs and so on" he believed he emulated his own teachers when delivering learning and teaching. He thought that he had "taken the good bits" from his teachers rather than "from someone whose class (he) never enjoyed." When considering his experience of University lecturers he said, "that was about lecturing". He sees himself "more as a teacher". He thinks that, as a teacher, he connects "with the personal, social and emotional side of things with learners."

5.6.3. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

Ben's incident concerned difficulties between students in a second year HND class. Two students had been scribbling notes about another student. She saw what they had written about her and reacted badly, starting to shout out in the class and asking Ben what he was going to do about it. He said that he had decided to continue with the class and told the student that he would speak to the others when the lesson was over. He said, "I didn't want her to be telling me how to run the class...when she said what are you going to do about it?"

The student left at the end of the lesson and made a complaint to the course leader. Ben stated, "She said that these people had been writing stuff about her and I didn't deal with it correctly". He spoke to the class when the student was out of the room, telling them that he could not justify the students' behaviour. He reminded them that they were almost finished their course and that the behaviour would not be "tolerated" in the "workplace or University."

Ben then spoke to the girl in private, asking her if she was okay and then he spoke to the course leader and explained what had happened. He said, "I think, though, I could have done something…I sort of left it at that and it was sort of unresolved." He asked the course leader to speak to the class but decided to do this himself, when he next got the students four days later. He spoke to the class as a whole and told the students that he

was not sure if he had handled the incident correctly. He told the students that the behaviour was not "acceptable" and that, even if they did not like everyone in the group, everyone ought to be respected which he thought "was one of the main things."

He thought that, if something similar happened again he would probably have stopped the class for a couple of minutes and speak privately to the person he believed to be most at fault. He thought that if he had acted immediately, then the student making the complaint would have thought that he was "dealing with the incident right there and then". He thought that he could "probably have nipped it in the bud at that moment". On reflection, he would have repeated speaking generally to the class about behaviour, without highlighting the offenders. What he would have done differently was speak to the recalcitrant students at the time of the incident.

He said that the course leader had been surprised that he had spoken to the class in the manner that he did. The incident happened on the third occasion that Ben had had this class. He said that problems can happen when one does not have any information about students prior to meeting them, that teachers are told "here is your class list and get in to it." He thought that a meeting with the course leader or an informal chat with another lecturer, prior to meeting a new group of students would be beneficial in the future.

5.6.4. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

Ben was concerned about all the students in this incident. While he felt that he should do something to placate the student he was worried about exacerbating the situation. The relationships in the class appeared to be complicated.

Ben considered the two students who were the cause of the upset to be outsiders in the class while the young woman, who had made the complaint, was popular with the other students. He was concerned that they were not ostracised any further, which is why he did not single the students out and remonstrate with them. Maintaining a good learning

relationship with all the students was important to him.

He was worried that the incident had affected his relationship with the student who had made the complaint:

> "I always felt a bit bad because for the remainder of the unit, I felt that that student felt that I had done her wrong. She was then very quiet in the class. Maybe she didn't trust me and I felt really bad about that......things became a bit impersonal and there wasn't anything really between me and that particular student."

5.6.5. Moral Reasoning

It could be said that Ben behaved morally and ethically in this situation. He demonstrated pedagogical tact. He acted in a manner that demonstrates *"thoughtful considerateness"* (Van Manen, 1995). He decided not to read whatever the students had written about the young woman because it might change his perception of the student who had written it. He was also worried about other staff:

> "I felt as thought I had sort of left it hanging and I thought that whoever got them after me would be suffering the problems because it was not necessarily resolved."

He demonstrated reflection and open-mindedness (Dewey, 1964, p.224-282, cited in Van Manen, 1995, p.34) when he struggled to do the right thing, speaking to the class later and apologising to them, if they thought that he hadn't handled the situation properly. He then raised moral and ethical points with the students, telling them that they should respect each other, even if they did not like each other. Although he said that he thought that a meeting with course leaders would be beneficial, prior to meeting new students, he did not want too much information on learners. His reason for this was

that he did not want to be prejudiced towards a student, based on any information received. He did want some information though as it would help him "to be more understanding of issues".

He said that the incident had made him "feel bad" but that the course leader had offered him support and approval of his actions.

According to Ben, he had been supported in his decision-making and judgements by the student's course tutor but would have liked to have some information about learners, prior to meeting them. Davina, whose story follows, also had concerns about lack of information on learners, prior to meeting them but she had her own solution to the problem.

5.7. Davina's Story

5.7.1. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

Davina was aged between forty and forty-nine and comes from a family of teachers. Her mother is a head teacher and her five aunts are all teachers. On leaving school, she started on an HND computing course which she did not finish because she became pregnant. She continued to study with the Open University to "keep [her] hand in."

After some years, she returned to education and obtained a degree in Computing. She has been teaching for ten years and has her TQFE, although she thought that "it was just useless" and did not teach her "anything tangible". She had been teaching for almost seven years before embarking on her TQFE and had been "really looking forward to it." The reasons for her disappointment were that she expected the course to be "practical". While the course might aid understanding about "what works" it did not help to put that understanding into practice. Davina expected it to help her "be a better teacher....and it didn't".

Some months after her graduation, one of Davina's University lecturers contacted her and asked her if she would consider teaching on the subject that she had chosen for her dissertation, which was systems development. She said that:

> "Up to that moment, I hadn't even thought about teaching. And then as soon as it happened, I thought, right, it is obvious. Originally, I wanted to do programming and that sort of thing."

She taught part time at the University before taking up a full time permanent position at the college.

5.7.2. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

In the questionnaire used during the first part of the interview, (Annex XX11), Davina allocated 25 points for subject knowledge; 25 points for process knowledge; 20 points for theoretical knowledge and 30 points for knowledge of learners. Davina thought that, in order to be effective and professional within the learning and teaching environment, teachers in Scotland's colleges require high levels of knowledge and skills in the subject that they teach because "If you don't have a good knowledge of your subject, it will show." The students will "pick holes in you eventually and they won't get answers to the questions that they are asking."

She also thought that practical knowledge (*techne*) of teaching was important and that teachers "definitely have to be good at organising". Davina stated that:

> "We have all done the running into the class, unprepared, and it is absolutely horrific when that happens, when something goes wrong and your plan has gone."

She stated that she had to have several plans before entering a class, she had to have "lots of different plans and different material ready" or her class could "fall apart".

Davina did not think that she had a high level of knowledge and understanding of learning and teaching theories (*episteme*). However, she thought that she was still good at what she does as she had a "knowledge and understanding of how people work" and that she understood "how people learn" but she did not think that this knowledge could "actually tie up with a theory…."

What she thought was most important, however, was a knowledge and understanding of learners:

> "Knowing your students, that is the key thing. Absolutely, definitely. Learners are getting younger and younger and more disengaged and we're asked to work with so many different types of learners. Em, asylum seekers, foreign students where English isn't their first language you really have to know where they come from and how to support them."

She thought than planning for a lesson depended on knowledge of the individual learner and that she would use different knowledge bases, depending on the class and the individual.

> "......if you are talking about different groups, your planning would be different. The same subject to an ESF [European Social Fund] group and an NC [National Certificate] learner or those who are fifteen or sixteen – you would definitely approach each one differently."

Getting to know her students was important to Davina. She tried to gain access to a class prior to teaching them and try to get three who "stand out" in her mind. Then she "cops their names" and starts to link them to other students. She said, "you know, Joey works with James, I get I can remember them quickly." She then proceeds to find out about the students, doing "ice-breakers and things". She said that it "helps with

retention, if you work at getting to know them."

Davina did not think that academic achievement was the main priority for her learners. She thought that she was "trying to build them up as people."

> "……it isn't just about academic….you know….distance travelled. I love that expression. The first time someone asked me, 'What is distance travelled? Is that about 2.5 cm?' I said no, perhaps when they first start in August they were late all the time and now they are early – lots of little things, distance travelled and I think that distance travelled is really important."

5.7.3. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

Davina talked about a class of Diploma students which feeds directly into third year at a local University. She considered them to be 'bright sparks" and spends time getting to know these learners.

> "I do an ice-breaker session for three hours. I tend to get them in a block of three hours; it is not a split sort of hour and a half like a lot of my other classes are. And I call it the ice-breaker day. We do a lot of things, like I put an egg-timer up on the board for 30 seconds and they have a list of five questions….lots of things, like, What is your Bebo name? What is your MSN name? Just stuff like that. And they have got 30 seconds to talk to one person and a big bell goes off and they have to move to the next person.
>
> And I do it too….so we all do it, you know…what is your Bebo name….and then I get them to do a little presentations about themselves. Maybe three slides, where you live, how old you are, where do you fall in your family, this kind of thing …are you an only child, what your favourite holiday was, And they type it up for me as well and after three hours they are like….oh you live next to me and so not only do I get to know them but they get to know each other.

> And I do one as well…you know I am forty….you know, and I have got a daughter who is nineteen. You know, it is nothing much but it is an insight to you and who you are and that definitely, definitely works and that class tends to be a really, really high achieving and high retention class."

Davina's disrupted space occurred when she tried to carry out the same procedures with a new and different class.

> "For some reason or other I hadn't done any research, I hadn't looked at who they were and I just sort of looked at my timetable. Right, HNC, we will be fine and then I decided that I would put them into groups."

Davina came into the class and introduced herself and told the students that she was going to put them into groups. She told the students what each of the group tasks would be and then, in order to "split up the friendship groups", she allocated a number from one to four to each student and asked them to sort themselves out. However, the problem was that:

> "Nobody did anything – they all just sat there and looked at me. I said, 'Okay, who has worked in a group before?' And I think that there was just two sort of mature students who were maybe in their twenties.
>
> I couldn't really believe it….This was meant to help them get to know each other. This was meant to be a little ice breaker thing as well. It didn't matter what I said, 'Right, let's make a decision, who is going to do what?' I couldn't get them to move. They just sat and looked at me."

She then thought:

> 'What am I going to do here?'

> "So at that point I said, "Okay, right, get your seats back in everybody." And I pulled them all into the middle of the room. I think that circles really work and they work in a computer room because students tend to have their backs to one another. So we went in and they all got in. I said squeeze in, I want every body's knees touching so that we are really close to one another and em I just did a wee sort of ice-breaker thing.
>
> What we done was, you just shout out the name of the person next to you – not your own name and you try it faster and faster and then you reverse it and then you get really confused and it just ends up with every one laughing. So we did that for maybe two or three minutes and then, em, I asked everybody to just speak to the person on their left and just ask them who would play them in a movie and what the theme song would be…."

She thought that exercises like those above are not:

> "....as embarrassing as saying 'I am'. So, if you are saying, this is John, it is different if you are talking about someone else....I hate that with anything"

Davina reported that she carried on with the icebreaker exercises for ten minutes, and then she said:

> "'Right, will you go back to your groups now?' And then we were off....

Davina thought that what was wrong at the beginning of the lesson was that the students did not know her, they did not "have any experience of how to start it; they didn't know where to go."

She said that, after this incident, she always did icebreakers with every new class, to ensure that the learners felt comfortable with her and with each other. Although she taught Computing and ICT, where learners traditionally work alone at computer stations,

Davina attempted to incorporate group work into her classes:

> "I mean they use the Internet for research, there's no reason why they shouldn't use it for group work. There's no reason why they should be on their own all the time."

She thought that working in groups improved the learner's ability to relate well with others and would improve their employability skills. Davina thought that no-one could have helped her or supported her when seeking resolution to solving the problem that arose in her disrupted space:

5.7.4. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

Her relationships with her learners mattered a great deal to Davina:

> "Especially for a lot of disengaged youngsters and they are not getting what I had at home or probably what you had at home. There is a generation that is coming up that doesn't have any support mechanisms. They don't get lifts anywhere. They're not members of any clubs – they don't seem to get on with their parents – well they are, as long as they are not annoying them. Whether it is parents, carers, fosters – they don't seem to have any kind of, **love net** (Davina's emphasis), beneath them, you know.

Davina reported that a lot of her learners did not "have that net" and that "somewhere along the line someone has to say **we care** (Davina's emphasis)." She thought her role, at the role of the college was to instigate an ethos of care of the learners.

> "I think that that is all it is, it is just a we care, that someone in your life cares about where you are….."

She worked hard at maintaining a good learning relationship with learners:

> "You know, I phone them up if they miss their classes. I am on Bebo a lot with them, I mean that is only students, it is not family or friends so much I have got Facebook for that. You know, I check it every night and there are usually wee messages ….I can't get this to work, can you tell me about this or I am no feeling well, I'll no be in tomorrow…it is just someone cares and someone goes on there every night. And I will be on at midnight and I will send you a wee message back to say………
>
> That works for me because I am a really Internet freak anyway. I was one of the first people to do Computing in Scotland in the HND in (town's name) and that is the way that I work but there's lots of different ways that you can make your students feel like that."

Davina took care to support new learners by ensuring that exiting learners left messages for the new recruits.

> "it is something simple that we do with our students. Messages from students who are leaving for those students who are coming in. Some of them are as simple as be on time, nothing has a bigger impact than being on time for your classes...don't miss your classes and you will be fine. It is something personal."

Davina had chosen to work in a college rather than a University, where she had been teaching prior to taking up her position in her college. Her reasons for this were in relation to the different learning relationships with students that existed in each institution. She thought that in Higher Education she did not get to know her students well, and that "you were sitting with one of those Madonna headsets on and a hundred and sixty students in a quiet room." At University, she did not get the opportunity to

meet learners in smaller groups and it was "very distant". She said that she "loves the difference" at college and that she knows her students "personally". Davina reported that she knew her learners problems and that, "they know me a little bit, enough about me to give them a feeling that they know me" She stated that she and her learners were "friends" and that that "just does happen at University."

5.7.5. Moral Reasoning

Phronesis emphasizes practical knowledge and practical ethics and, from her telling of her story of her disrupted space, it would appear that Davina was attempting to act "with regard to the things that are good" (Aristotle, translation D. Ross, 1984, p.1140b5). She appeared to act tactfully, (Van Manen, 1995, p.41), in as much as that she seemed able to perceive what was going on with the learners in her class and took steps to ensure that they felt comfortable and ready to learn. She also displayed sensitivity to the learners and was careful that the icebreaking sessions were not embarrassing.

Davina was engaged in particular work in her college which could be considered to have a moral and ethical component. She, along with three other colleagues, had been sent by the college to take part in a week long training programme delivered by an organisation called Columba 14 [7]. This organisation purports to be values led and its core purpose is to release the potential of young people who have weathered rough times. Davina and her colleagues had embraced the principles of the organisation and, through a serious of workshops, had been sharing the principles with other members of staff. They had also been sharing their practice and providing "*tips*" for staff on how to engage disengaged young people. Some months after the interview, an HMIe review of the college described this initiative as being sector-leading and innovative.

[7] http://www.columba1400.com

5.8. Eleanor's Story

5.8.1. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

Eleanor was aged between fifty and fifty-nine and had been teaching for twenty-nine years. She left school at seventeen and undertook a two-year course in Beauty Therapy at the one college in Scotland which was running such a course at that time. Eleanor said that the Beauty industry had "changed dramatically" over the years and that it had "really mushroomed and grown." On qualifying, Eleanor spent two years working in a residential health spa which she described as a "really wonderful experience." Eleanor began her teaching life at nineteen. As soon as she was qualified, she was asked to take an evening class. She said that, "The opportunities were there, the people who were equipped to do the job at that time were few and far between. I was in the right place at the right time."

Her current employers wished to start delivering Beauty Therapy provision. They contacted the college where Eleanor was teaching the evening class and invited her to attend an interview and subsequently offered her a full-time temporary position. She was then twenty-two, which she considered to be, "a little bit too young, to be honest." She found her early years' experience of teaching to be "really nerve wracking" because she was "young and because I hadn't any teaching experience."

Eleanor reported her own experiences of learning as having an impact on her teaching practice. For example, she said:

> "I think that, in your memory, you have lots of stored scenarios that have happened to you in the past. You have lots of stored ways of dealing with things because of the experiences you have had over the years.
>
> It is difficult to encapsulate but maybe in this bank of what you have in your mind of how you have coped with things over the years – perhaps you draw upon

> strands of the incidents which you take forward into challenging situations in your teaching."

At the time of the study, Eleanor held a middle management position in the college. When asked how she would describe her experience of her work at that moment she described herself as being happy in her job; motivated by what she does; inspired by the learners she works with and enthusiastic about what she does.

5.8.2. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

Eleanor believed that in order to be effective in the learning and teaching environment, teachers required a high degree of subject (*episteme*) and technical (*techne*) knowledge in equal measure but that knowledge of learners was more important than both of these. Subject knowledge was essential because:

> "....if the learner understands that the lecturer has a high level of subject knowledge, it inspires confidence. It is motivational for the student."

Eleanor thought that planning was important in order to "maximise the learner's time to the greatest effect." She believed that a lesson well planned and well delivered was, "a learning experience in itself" and that well prepared teachers modelled good organisational skills to their learners. She also thought that learners ought to be involved in the planning process and stated that she negotiated the timing of assessments with learners. Above all, Eleanor valued a knowledge and understanding of learners:

> "Social and emotional development of learners...I think that this is absolutely key to everything. Nothing else is worthwhile if you don't have these particular aspects nailed. As a starting point, my learners need to know that they are respected; that they are valued as individuals, that they are actively being encouraged and are held in positive regard. Because without these, learners will

> be less engaged, less productive and derive much less from the learning experience".

Prior to the interview, Eleanor stated that she did not think that she held theoretical knowledge in high regards. However, when considering the question for the interview, she had revised her opinion. The interview had made her "think more deeply": Eleanor thought that the concept of "positive reinforcement" had been important for her. She cited a time where she had a class of "twenty-odd people, boys and girls." The students were attending college in order to claim benefits and most of them did not want to be there. They had been "given a stark choice", either attend college or have no money and "that was the dilemma they were faced with." Eleanor set about asking the students to "perform little scenarios" about the benefits of the college and how they would promote it to someone else. Eleanor thought that "to a degree" this ploy worked because the students were having to "encourage other people to believe and, to an extent they started to believe and engage too." She found this "interesting."

Eleanor believed in having a "high expectation" of learners and that "people rise to your level of expectation". She thought that teachers should never "underestimate the pool of talent that (they) have in the room" and that teachers "shouldn't run away with the idea that because a handful of students are doing well in a class that they are doing well as teachers. They are not". She stated, "You are only doing well as a teacher if everyone in your class is engaged and doing well."

Eleanor thought that knowing learners was the key to behaviour management:

> "What I find is that if you try and get behind their personalities and try to figure out why they are behaving the way they are, we can communicate with them perhaps in a more meaningful way. And you can do it in a way that means something to them. I think that knowing the personality is getting to the root of

why the behaviour is the way it is."

5.8.3. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

Eleanor's disrupted space occurred when, as Head of School, she had "an upset lecturer and an upset student and neither the twain would meet". The learner (Chrissie, name changed) had been troublesome in class and some of the teaching staff had found her behaviour to be a cause for complaint. On one particular occasion, Chrissie had come to Eleanor in tears after being given a "dressing down" by a teacher when she had disrupted a class. The member of staff concerned had remonstrated and told Eleanor that they, "were not having this.....not having this in my class."

Eleanor thought that the Chrissie:

> "....really wants to do well. I think what is wrong with her really is low self esteem. She comes across as being loud and brass and aggressive. She says totally inappropriate things. She disrupts the lesson and a lot of it is that she is attention seeking, she needs people to focus on her, she needs the attention."

Eleanor reported that she had given the above advice to the staff member. In addition, to resolve the situation, she had said to the teacher concerned:

> "Look, don't react to her in the way that you reacted to her then....by stopping what you are doing and telling her off, making a point of focusing on her and giving her the negative attention that she is seeking. You know, what to do is, if it happens again, irrespective of how disruptive she is being, keep your back turned to her, don't even give her eye contact.
>
> Don't ignore her, obviously, but try to engage with her. If you stop doing that, it will extinguish gradually, gradually as she realises that she is not getting the reward of the attention."

Eleanor also had occasion to teach Chrissie. She said that "despite all the negativity, I knew that Chrissie wants to be good, she wants to do a good job." Eleanor described an incident where, in a practical class, Chrissie had shouted out and queried how the towels in the practical beauty class were counted out and counted in after the session had finished. Eleanor had turned to the whole class and said:

> "Right Chrissie, the salon manager (laugh), I said, Chrissie, the salon manager, wants you to add the towels as you are bringing them to the front of the room. So, can we all do that in future?"

Instead of ignoring or reprimanding the learner for shouting out, Eleanor had quickly utilised her idea. She said that it had put Chrissie, "on a high, thinking that her ideas had been taken on board." She reported that Chrissie's behaviour had "actually modified over the months. She is a lot better. I haven't had any complaints from the lecturers about her, which is absolutely great."

5.8.4. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

Relationships with learners and with her staff were of paramount importance to Eleanor. She advised the member of staff to "see through the behaviour" and recognise that the student was "just insecure, lacked self-esteem." At the same time she asked the learner to see things from the teacher's point of view, saying:

> "Your lecturer is not doing these things to reprimand you or to make an example of you in front of the class. I said, they are doing this because they care about your learning. I said, and your behaviour in class means that you are not learning as effectively as you should do."

Eleanor described the situation as being:

> "A balancing act, I have to respect the wishes and thoughts of the lecturer and trust their professional judgement and I also have to take account of the welfare of the students. Obviously, the welfare of the learner is paramount and I obviously have to try and communicate that to the lecturer – you know that we are their servants as it were, you know, we are here to provide a service and you know these are the recipients of the service that we provide."

Eleanor strove to maintain good learning relationships with both staff and learners. Her primary concern was that the learners were happy but at the same time she wanted the lecturer to know "that she was being supported too and that she wasn't being left with a difficult situation. She really is an excellent lecturer, really motivated. I didn't want to lose that."

She also felt "very much supported" in her job. She said that, "I think that we are all very lucky, we are supported in so many ways and the team supports one another." As Head of Section she liked to "work with a flat structure" and said, "I like all my staff to feel as though we are working on a par." She felt support by senior management and thought that there was support at "all levels."

5.8.5. Moral Reasoning

Phronesis has been described as "knowing how to apply general principles in particular situations.....it is the ability to act so that principle will take a concrete form" (MacIntyre, 1966, p.74). Birmingham (2004, p.318) holds that, "moral principles are important in a morally dilemmatic situation or in a conflict that must be resolved by a third party".

Eleanor's case, it would appear that she held fast to a particular set of principles and was "thinkingly acting" (Van Manen, 1995, p.45). She was sensitive to the welfare of the learner and the welfare of her staff. This sensitivity governed her actions. She

described Chrissie as being, "a nightmare, a real challenge", but that she, "didn't want to lose her" because she could "see her potential." Eleanor seemed to have the ability to sense "what is the appropriate, right or good thing to do on the basis of perceptive pedagogical understanding" (Van Manen, 1995, p.45) of this learner's nature and circumstances.

Eleanor appeared to have been struggling "to know how and what to do and to actually do something right" (Ibid. p. 44). So did George, whose story is to be told next.

5.9. George's Story

5.9.1. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

George was in the forty to forty-nine age group and had been teaching sports and fitness for eighteen years. On leaving school, he worked in a climbing shop for six or seven years.

> "……..the whole time thinking, I love this but it is no enough. So I went to night school for a couple of years – (name) College, and then I applied to do the BA Sport in the Community at (University's name)."

He was unsuccessful at his first attempt at gaining a place at University and took night classes for a further two years before reapplying and again being turned down. Then, it would appear, he demonstrated great tenacity:

> "I thought, no, I am not having this. This freaked everybody out. Normally, I wouldn't have had any sort of guts for this. I made an appointment with (name) who was the head man. I went up and asked to make an appointment and he was very kind enough to see me. We sat with tea and Jaffa Cakes. We spoke for an hour and then, thankfully, I was offered a place."

This is a story that he relates to his students:

> "When students come to me with a problem....they come to me with the problem with a box of Jaffa Cakes because I refer back to that story. You know….I tell them that I didn't get where I am by falling out of school and getting to University. There was a whole range of challenges that I had to overcome and they can see that, you know, and I think they respect that. You can relate to many of the things that are facing them. I give the Jaffa Cakes away, ah cannae eat them anymore!"

On being accepted on to the BA, Ian found himself in a dilemma because he was simultaneously offered a place on the police force. Ian said that it was his experience teaching skiing while working in the sports shop that influenced his choice as he, "really loved sports and really loved teaching."

George worked for six years on temporary contracts before securing a permanent position in his college. He described himself as:

> "one of these educational prostitutes who could work in three colleges in the one day. You work really hard and, you know, and I got lots of experiences in different colleges and that has all added to this rich tapestry."

He described the frustration he experienced while trying to secure permanent employment, "because, you know, part-time, no employment in the holidays, just married – we had taken on a flat – so I was working, taking on all sorts of ridiculous stuff to pay the mortgage." He believed that he eventually got a permanent post because it came to the attention of his manager that he had begun to look for other positions outside the college. Then he said that he then got a job, "in a matter of minutes."

George thought that he had benefited little from his experience of TQFE. He had been teaching for seven years prior to engaging on the course and thought that he had "learned nothing". He said that the course had provided "theoretical aspects" but in terms of "how to manage a classroom", he had learned "nothing, absolutely, nothing"

When asked to describe his experience of teaching at that moment in time he said, "frustrating, rewarding and challenging."

5.9.2. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

In the questionnaire used during the first part of the interview, (Annex XX11), George allocated 20 points for subject knowledge, 30 points for process knowledge; 20 points for theoretical knowledge and 30 points for knowledge of learners.

For George, ability to plan and exercise learning and teaching (*techne*) coupled with a sound knowledge and understanding of learners were the keys to effective teaching.

> "I think that successful education is about the planning of the content and the context that you are doing that, em, exercise. And, you know, experience dictates, sometimes we don't plan as effectively, you are relying on a lot of other experiences to come in, the fact that you have done it before. I think there's lots of people with all the knowledge and understanding in the world but how to plan it for a level which is appropriate for the learner is key for me. "

Knowing his learners was important for George because:

> ".....some of these learners come with a whole different baggage, if you like, that impacts on their ability to stay the distance. They may be the most motivated, they may have the knowledge and the motivation but you know, other things get in the road – just life – and it is knowing again....I spend a lot of time with the

guys making sure that we get things out in the open. If there is anything, so that I can potentially support and help, all the way through."

He said that, "We get a lot of graduates from (name ofTeaching Institute) and they just cannae teach. I would recruit people with a lot more life about them than just direct graduates...if you have got more about you, you can relate to the students at a level that the students can relate to."

George described his teaching as, "having a method in the madness. I definitely know why I am doing it. The group work that we do with students, there's a lot of thought taken...there's a lot of stuff that underpins some of the activities that we do....I suppose that is experiential learning theory."

For two years, George had also had some teaching time at a local University and found it to be "an absolute different animal." He used the "same methods of teaching" that he used at college and reported that he observed "shock at the emotions on the student's faces." He thought that the University students were used to a more academic approach and that he "tried to bring in the theoretical into the practical stuff". He reported good feedback. "The students all loved it, it was a bit different, you know."

5.9.3. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

George's disrupted space occurred when he was responsible for taking over thirty staff and students on a residential skiing trip in Italy. Unbeknownst to George, three of the students had secreted alcohol into water bottles and had been consistently imbibing during the over-night bus journey. On arrival at their destination, George found the students to be "staggering all over the place." One of the students, at twenty-six, was older than the other two and was loud and confrontational. George reported that he thought, "Oh my God, what is going to happen here. This is the start of a ten day trip. My line manager is here, my deputy head of school, I have got three other staff, and how

am I going to manage this, what can I do?"

George segregated the inebriated students from the others. He spoke to the rest of the group, stressing that this had never happened before and, "tried to build up the atmosphere. [He] didn't want to dampen down the atmosphere for the students." He then addressed the other three students, ordering an early night and an alcohol ban. He said that he expressed his disappointment which "is normally enough for anybody who is acting up." However, later that night it was brought to George's attention by another member of staff that the three students were continuing to drink alcohol. He said that, at that point, he "didn't make a great deal" but rose at five in the morning, woke the students, instructed them to pack their bags, drove them to the airport and paid for their flights home. He did not consult with other staff, saying it was his responsibility and that his manager would know that he, "would make the right call." George asked, "How do you get that in teacher education...how to manage a problematic student abroad?"

George spoke at length about the reasons behind the actions taken during his disrupted space. He was sure that he had made the right decision because he had the "best interests of thirty odd younger and impressionable students who were there to take part in a phenomenal opportunity." He thought that the two younger students who had to be sent home from Italy had been "led astray by the older guy." He said that he had been concerned when, on his return from the trip, he found out that the older student, unbeknownst to staff, had had an alcohol problem.

> "I was trying to be, at the time, to be compassionate and consider should he be put back on the programme but ultimately because he had been, challenged my authority in front of another forty students….and I am trying to maintain a level of respect and discipline, you know he was withdrawn from the programme."

George described this incident as being, "one that I still think about...did I do enough for

that young guy? He arranged counselling for the excluded student and spoke to his mother, explaining the reasons behind his decision to withdraw her son from the programme. George's principles, his moral code, appeared to be founded within the values of discipline and respect. He thought that he was, "doing his students no favours" if he took what he considered to be a soft option. The two younger students who were involved in the incident were allowed to stay on the course and were in the process of applying for an HND course. They were concerned that George might be "carrying some sort of grudge against them." George took care to reassure them, saying that the, "right students would be placed on the programme based on merit."

George reported finding the incident to be "awkward and intimidating" and that he had "learned a lot from it, even though [he] had been teaching a long time." George stated that setting stronger boundaries for alcohol consumption was, "in the locker for next year. That will be the first thing that we discuss with students."

George stated that he felt "extremely supported" in his job. He said, "My colleagues, we are all in the same boat. We have all worked together for some considerable time, so we all know each other's strengths and weaknesses." He said that he and his manager had "a sort of unspoken trust between the two of [them]."

5.9.4. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

George described many of his students as being:

> "A bit edgy, you know, they are young. I sometimes kid them on that I have got a criminal record....I call on my life experiences, I just like them to see that I am a normal person....they often come from challenged backgrounds, they come from secure provision...sometimes we get they guys with five highers and sometimes we also have got guys who have just come out of Her Majesty's prison. We need to work at homogenising the whole group. It is a challenge without a doubt."

Setting boundaries for his learners appeared to be important to George. He thought that some of his young male students think:

> ".....they are aw that and a bag of chips and you have to get them severely back in their box. But, you know, they have such an opinion of themselves they have to be challenged. At the end, I have been teaching for such a long time, students still phone me up for help and advice."

It was the relationships that he had with learners that kept him teaching in college;

> "When I am at (name of University), I teach to maybe eighty students and I never know their name. Whereas, these guys, where I teach twenty, I know their shoe size, I think that it is very, very important."

5.9.5. Moral Reasoning

It would appear that George, during his disrupted space had made every attempt to resolve the problem for the common good and to do what was "ethically practical" (Flyvberg, 2004, p.287). In considering the definition of morality which was outlined at 2.9.5., George was probably conforming to his organisation's Code of Conduct as there was probably an element of Health and Safety issues which influenced his decision. He also displayed pedagogical tact (Van Manen, 1995, p.45) in his sensitivity to the three students after the event.

The next teacher whose story is to be told is Lennie, who was introduced in Chapter Four, and who also had a moral and ethical dilemma dimension to his disrupted space.

5.10. Lennie's Story

5.10.1. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

Lennie was aged between forty and forty-nine and had been teaching brickwork for

thirteen years. He had been fifteen when he when to college on a six month course which offered him the opportunity of finding out about different trades. He chose brickwork and was accepted as an apprentice by a local company. He ran his own construction company and then he said, at thirty two, he had got to a stage in his life where he "didnae want to be lifting blocks out there, where it is cold all the time."

The member of staff who ran the construction department in the college lived in the same village as Lennie. One day Lennie met him in the pub and asked if he had any teaching work. He put his name down on a temporary register. It took some years before a position came up in the college when he was offered one day's teaching. He had been anxious about the work, stating, "teaching is a different animal aw the gither, I didnae know if I could teach". His days teaching quickly built up. Lennie worked for three years balancing his business with teaching before settling on full time teaching work. He was teaching for five years before entering teaching education. He found the experience to be:

> "....a joke. An absolute joke...what is that got to dae with teaching? Writing essays about....nonsense, eh? We had seminars...talks aboot crap. Me? I am a bricklayer, I am no an academic, ken. So ah was like....there you are wi your essay....absolute **nonsense** (Lennie's emphasis). TQFE? Rubbish. Ken what it was? Hoops...jump through them."

At the time of the interview he was a section leader. Lennie was also undergoing training to be an SVQ Assessor and had just completed on site assessment training. He said that on-site assessors on construction sites had to be double manned because they were often subject to intimidation:

> "We meet older guys who are saying they built that but there's nae proof they built that...there's things going on that's no quite right. You have to go in double

> because you can get threatened and all that. You never dae it yersel because they gang up on you, they kind of bully you into making sure they pass. But if it is no up tae the, ken, standard, it disnae pass, the paperwork disnae pass."

During his interview, Lennie spoke at length about the financial restraints that he faced while carrying out his work and the financial wrangles he had with management stating "this is war, you know."

When asked to describe his experience of being a teacher at that moment in time Lennie said:

> "Not as good as it has been in the past. Because of budget restraints. I feel frustrated … I love my job, make no mistake about that. I love my job. I love working with the laddies. But on the college side of it, there's issues."

5.10.2. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching;

In the questionnaire used during the first part of the interview, (Annex XX11), Lennie allocated 40 points to subject knowledge; 20 points to process knowledge; 10 points to theoretical knowledge and 30 points to knowledge of learners.

Lennie believed that, in order to be effective in learning and teaching, a teacher needed to know their subject and to have good skills in planning and execution of the learning process. For Lennie, however, "it's having a high level of knowledge about a learner's social and emotional development, that is the big thing."

> "......you need to know their background. (Place name) is known to be full of idiots, you know. A lot of these guys would come from backgrounds that mibbae shock a lot of us. They have mibbae got difficulties...if anything had happened at home....I think you need to know that. To plan for things..you need tae know the students."

Lennie reported that he did not think that he had any theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching, neither did he think it to be important for learning and teaching. What appeared to be important to Lennie was that he model the kinds of behaviours to students that they might find on a building site saying, "I will lay into them and I speak to them like they would he spoken to in a site and that's the way it should be." His reasons appeared to be that he was preparing his learners for their future career.

He also voiced concern that, perhaps, the managers in his college might not approve of his interactions with learners, saying, "See if my bosses walked in here and hear the way that I speak to them.....I would be out a job."

5.10.3. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

Lennie's disrupted space concerned an incident where, two weeks before the culmination of their two-year course, a male student, in front of the whole class exposed himself to the only female student. The students were all in employment and had been released for part-time study. Lennie described the female student as being 'Apprentice of the Year' and a "brilliant bricklayer." According to Lennie the male student had:

> "....taken his trousers down and stuck his willy between his legs and said, "You've got one oh they, haven't you?"

Lennie reported the female student screaming, running into Lennie's office and stating that she was not, "F*cking well having it." He described thinking, "How am I going to handle this?" He sent the class on a break and spoke to the young woman alone and asked her if she wanted to, "make it official". When she stated that she did, Lennie explained that, "well he is going to get sacked, there's no two ways about that. He is going to get thrown out the college." He told the young woman that the police would need to be involved and that he would have to take statements from the other students. When the students returned from their break, Lennie and two other members of staff

took statements as to what happened during the incident. Lennie found the student statements to be funny and said that he was, "pissing (him)self laughing, honestly." During the course of the day, the young woman reported the male learner as having apologised for his behaviour. She stated that she wanted to withdraw her request to make the incident official and involve the police. Lennie appeared to have mixed reactions to this. On the one hand, he said that he thought the male student should have been withdrawn from the course. On the other hand, he voiced relief saying that the college did not want adverse publicity and also that such a reaction might be unfair as the male student was only two weeks away from completing his course. This mixed view was further compounded by the fact that, while Lennie stated that he found the incident to be "really serious" he also found it to be "really funny."

> "I thought it was hilarious! (Laugh) I probably shouldn't be saying that. I thought it was hilarious. I was gobsmacked that a guy could do that!"

When the student's statements were being taken, Lennie reported having to frequently excuse himself from the room to hide his laugher from students.

> "Aye….it was nothing tae dae with the incident. The incident was serious. A serious, serious incident but it was the way these guys,…well these guys are nae the brightest bulbs in the box and the way they write things. It was like, I need to go…I need to get oot...and by the time I shut that door, the tears were running down my cheeks, like, honestly, I just couldnae listen to any more."

He said that it would not have been "professional" for the students to have witnessed him laughing.

The male student concerned in the incident received a final warning by the college and by his employers. The following week the incident was further compounded by the young women reporting that the same male student had been making insidious, sexual

comments to her. Lennie stated that, as there had been no witnesses to support her statement and, as the course was drawing to a completion, no action was taken by the college.

On reflection, Lennie voiced the opinion that, what he should have done was to immediately contact the male student's employers, instruct the learner to return to his employer and leave his fate in their hands.

5.10.4. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

Lennie's accounts of his relationships with his learners could be described as being multifaceted. On the one hand he spoke in a way that seemed to be intuitive about a learner of whom Lennie felt protective. The student was unpredictable and hyperactive and, when challenged, would storm out of the class and the college, returning to apologise the following day. Lennie instructed the student that, "you cannae walk off a site like that, so dinnae dae that here." He was careful not to confront the student in front of the whole class because "he could crack up and make an arse of himself in front of them" and expose himself to ridicule.

On the other hand his relationships seem to be predicated on a model of tradesman/apprentice rather than one of teacher/learner, saying:

> "I am a tradesman. I am a bricklayer. Because I have got a shirt and tie on, dinnae distance yourself from me….I am one ah yoose….I am here to learn you a trade…..Ken this is the way it is, that is the way it is. "

5.10.5. Moral Reasoning

Lennie's account of his disrupted space could be considered to be morally complex.

Considering the definition of morality that was outline at 2.9.5., it is unlikely that Lennie is conforming to his college's Code of Conduct, evidenced by his statement that if his bosses heard him speak, he would be "out of a job". It is also unlikely that Lennie's actions would be considered to conform to the values and culture of the teaching profession. While he considered the incident to be serious, at the same time found it to be a source of great humour. Although he did say that having students witness his laughter would be "unprofessional".

Oser (1991, p.100) believes that taking responsibility for problems is the mark of the professional teacher. Oser (ibid. p.105) suggests that one orientation to teachers' attempts to solve professional moral dilemmas is to *avoid* the situation. They do not want to take responsibility for the problem. A second orientation is that of delegation. The teacher does not want to make decisions for themselves but delegate the responsibility.

Lennie appeared to be aware of his responsibility when he thought that the student should have been withdrawn from the course but expressed relief when the young woman withdrew her demand for police involvement. In this respect he was delegating responsibility for solving the problem to the female student. He also appeared to be working within the delegation orientation when he said that if he encountered anything similar again, he would hand the issue over to the student's employer.

He neglected to follow up the young woman's accusation that the male student had continued to sexually harass her because her account could not be validated. Lennie reported that he informed the female student to:

> "........just get the next week in…So that is what I did, I played it doon..we had a week to go. I am no going to start trying to listen to what he is saying, unless he said it in the workshop and then I had to deal with it. But he is no going to say it

in here, so I left it."

Lennie's inaction is possibly in contravention of equalities legislation, under which the college has a public duty to ensure no learner is harassed on gender grounds and to take seriously any complaints on the grounds of sexual harassment.

On the other hand, perhaps Lennie was making a moral decision, weighting up the consequences of the incident for each of the protagonists. It was evident that he thought that the male student losing his job was a severe consequence for the male student. Perhaps he thought that, long term, he would suffer disproportionately to the female student. Perhaps he was acting out of a sense of compassion for the young man. In addition, it might be that he was acting out of a sense of expediency, for himself and for the college authorities.

However, applying Kant's Categorical Imperative to the situation and ask if what he did in this situation would be right (or wrong), in any similar situation, then the answer clearly is no. If any female student who went to her tutor and accused a fellow student of making invidious sexual comments and she was told to "just get the week in" and no action was taken, then, clearly, professional values, codes, as well as legal duties would be contravened. In Kant's terms, Lennie was attempting to set a different standard from the one which would be recognized in his learning community. This is evidenced by the fact that he said that if senior management learned of this incident, then he would be "out a job, if it got out." In this sense, then, his actions were immoral. Lennie was not acting out of a sense of duty to abide by the conventional standards for the teaching profession. Atkinson (1969, p.62) states that moral action overrides expediency and that moral standards are of overriding importance. If Lennie was acting out of a sense of compassion or of expediency, then his actions were morally wrong because he was not acting out of a sense of duty.

In mitigation, perhaps his actions arose out of an unpreparedness to deal with the situation. Perhaps his uncontrollable laughter is a sign of his discomfort, as Tirri (1999) found that teachers report themselves to be ill prepared to deal with ethical dilemmas in their work. He did say that he had found the whole affair to be a, "*learning curve.*"

The final story to be told is that of Vickie, who had been teaching for thirty years.

5.11. Vickie's Story

5.11.1. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

Vickie was in the fifty to fifty-nine age gap. Originally a maths graduate, Vickie's teaching career had included secondary and special education as well as the college sector. She had also spent some years teaching in the prison service. She taught science in a secondary school for some years and left because she felt:

> ".....constricted by the curriculum and the need to get people through exams and there was, you know this test and the next test and you added all the tests up.....you put them into a set for the next year and it all just became so boring."

She took up a post as a maths teacher in a special school. Vickie reported enjoying working in this school and although they needed a maths teacher she could "have really been doing anything". She enjoyed the "freedom to teach what the kids needed you to teach them rather than going through exams and the treadmill of it". She said that she got to know the learners, their "lives and all that."

Vickie spoke about being particularly challenged when teaching learners with learning disabilities. She had to ask, "How does somebody **learn** (Vickie's emphasis) how to do that?" She learned how to "break it all down" and to "chunk the learning" for her learners. She described it as being "creative" because if one way did not work she had

to "find **another** (Vickie's emphasis) way of doing it." She said that she had to "make it realistic and practical" and that she "enjoyed that".

Vickie also reported enjoying managing the behaviour problems of her learners in the special school, saying that she asked, "What's behind that behaviour?" She said that it was "all about problem solving" to her or "that side of it was."

Vickie said that she felt enthusiastic about her job. "I just enjoy…I love teaching…I just love it and I would not want not to teach. If somebody gave me a job where I wasn't teaching, I would be unhappy. I like to teach."

5.11.2. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

In the questionnaire used during the first part of the interview, (Annex XX11), Vickie allocated 15 points to subject knowledge; 20 points to process knowledge; 50 points to theoretical knowledge and 15 points to knowledge of learners.
Vickie believed that a high level of knowledge of learning and teaching theory was the priority for effective learning and teaching:

> "You can unconsciously do all the right things but unless you actually realise **why** you are doing it then you are never going to be an improving teacher, I don't think. Because you are not knowing, you don't know what that **structure** is that you, you are developing on, if you like. Your theories is your structure, that is the thing that you are going back to every time to help you problem solve every time...that is my view."

Unlike everyone whose stories have been told so far, Vickie considered knowledge of learning theories to be much more important than knowledge of learners.

> "You can't have the whole lesson taken over with somebody's emotional…that

> is the skill, isn't it? You have got to understand what is going on but at the end of the day you are a teacher, you are not a social worker. I have seen some teachers in the past who end up not teaching because they are too overwhelmed with the kid's problems and stuff like that."

Vickie spoke about what she called a, "sort of magic moment." She described encountering classes of young people in special education, where they refused to engage with the lessons that she had planned. She said:

> "You think, **right** (Vickie's emphasis), I need to do something else here and you go...ah, I know and an idea would just come out of nowhere...It would be ah, we will just do such and such...and then you could **click** (Vickie's emphasis), into the feeling that the class had at the time. It just seems to click in your head, you know, and I have always wondered, "Where does that come from?" And how sometimes, those lessons turned out to be far better than the ones you had planned, to the enth degree. Quite interesting to think how that comes about…."

For Vickie the pleasure and satisfaction of teaching came from being able to be creative and flexible. She described relishing developing new courses and provision and described 'ticking boxes' and over reliance on 'worksheets' as being an anathema to her. Vickie found her experience of schools as to be, "a **factory** (Vickie's emphasis), method of teaching". She stated that, "you get people who come from schools to FE and they can't cope with the latitude that FE gives you sometimes and flexibility. You have to have them to get the book and work through it. You have to try to wean them off the book and to think for themselves."

Vickie described the challenges that she faced when teaching maths to young men in prison where there was no external context. She tried to teach them:

> "How **great** (Vickie's emphasis), it was to solve something, to practise doing puzzles right and stuff like that, you know. If you ever get a puzzle right….you think, that is good and I have finished it! To try and get across that excitement and interest in the sort of abstraction of it all and actually, that was what really worked for them, they really enjoyed it…you know and they enjoyed just getting the thing right and **proving** (Vickie's emphasis), something, if you know what I mean."

Vickie tried to explain to me what she considered her view was about learning and education:

> "But because your belief is that education is about….learning is about something else, you have to make sure that they **experience** (Vickie's emphasis), something that is….certain things that I am teaching people is that I am wanting to **understand** (Vickie's emphasis), it intrinsically and link it up with their other experiences….because that is how I think learning takes place…you experience something…you link it up to what you already have experienced or what you already know and then it becomes part of your basic body of knowledge and information."

5.11.3. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

In her narrative, Vickie mentioned several disrupted spaces that she had encountered in the learning process. One concerned a learner in a class of students who Vickie described as having "really challenging behaviour." She described the learner as, "being off the wall". She tried speaking to the student but realised that he was not going to listen to her. The learner was swearing and using abusive language, rather than reprimanding him, Vickie decided to pretend that she was doing a survey and to write down everything that he said:

> "It was effing this and effing that and this is effing…. and I said, "Right you are saying this, that and the other." And he said, "Aye, that's right and I am getting pure mad with it tonight…and I am going to be off my effing….."
>
> And I said, "Right, so you are going to get really mad. So do you mind if I write this down?" And he looked me and he said, "Are you writing all that stuff down?" I said, "Yes….it is just between me and you." Then he said, "I look mad there don't I? (Laugh)"

Vickie stated that remonstrating with the learner would have been useless but that when she adopted the surprise tactic that she did, the learner had occasion to view his behaviour in a different light. In the end, she "ripped all the paper up and he just sort of calmed down."

5.11.4. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

In Vickie's narrative, she spoke more about the abstraction of teaching than about the relationships that that activity incurred. At the time of the interview, her college had just undergone a severe restructure and she had recently been appointed to a new management position. She was about to leave supported learning, where she taught learners with disabilities and about to move into another vocational area. She spoke about the supportive relationships that she had had with her colleagues.

> "My only worry is that I am going to go into functional type of teaching. In our workroom it is a buzz, it is a buzz. In our workroom people have got ideas and people are coming out with…oh have you thought of doing that and oh, I have tried this and that worked with so and so. It is all about the learner and how to teach these things that they find very difficult…that is basically what it is about. All the staff are motivated, I have not come across anybody in all my…..well, yea, you have come across a few people…but the majority, 90% of people, are just really thoughtful about the learning process and how things happen and how

> do people learn and I hope I am not going to go into ......how to deliver this module mode, if you know what I am saying. I don't like that."

Vickie described her college at that moment as being "sad" and "having a lot of hurt and sadness going on." She appeared to speak with discernment about colleagues stating that, in the wake of the restructure many were "tired and not well motivated at the moment and they are feeling pretty upset." However, she went on to say that:

> "I have to say that the staff made a fantastic job of making sure that the students were happy. That is what the staff here are good at. They are very student focussed and no matter what we were going through we always deliver for the students. They are our number one priority. And that is what I like about here, you know."

5.11.5. Moral Reasoning

It could be said that Vickie displayed pedagogical tact (Van Manen, 1995, p.41) during her disruptive practice. Pedagogical tact requires perceptiveness, understanding and insight. She was aware that remonstrating with the learner about his behaviour would have been useless. She then adopted a creative approach in order that he change his behaviour in the context in which they were both working.

Vickie spoke at some length about the difficulties that the staff in the college had recently gone through as a result of restructure. She spoke about it with some insight, saying that there were "scenarios" where someone had been offered a position but that they would "still be in tears because of somebody who didn't get the job." Yet those who did not win positions could "still say, congratulations, well done, you know. They had the self awareness to be able to do that, they were confident enough in themselves not to be bitter and speak behind people's back. It was good, you know."

She said that when she got her job, "I felt like somebody who had escaped a burning building and there were other people inside. I really did, you didn't feel, well, I did feel pleased, but I felt about the other people, you know. They are all good, honest hard working people."

Oser (1991, p.105), stated that an acceptance of responsibility is the mark of the moral and ethically professional teacher. Vickie expressed a strong commitment towards the new staff for whom she was going to be responsible, when she took up her new position in the college.

5.12. Summary

This Chapter told the stories of six teachers against a framework of five themes which emerged from a hermeneutic phenomenological reflection of the data. The following Chapter will provide a summary of the remaining teachers' stories. The same five theme framework which was used in this Chapter will also be harnessed in the next.

Chapter Six

6. A Collective Description of Seventeen Teachers' Experiences of the Phenomenon: Disrupted Spaces

6.1. Introduction

Van Manen (1990 p.33) advises those engaged in hermeneutic phenomenological studies to balance the research by considering parts and whole. The previous Chapter considered parts of the whole, that is, six of the individual teachers' stories. This Chapter will summarise and synthesise the remaining teachers' stories within the themes that were identified in Chapter Five. Not all the stories will be told within the themes. They will be chose because they "told of something particular" (Van Manen, 1990, p.120). That means that their story had something to say that explicated the essence of the phenomenon that was disrupted spaces in the learning process and the teachers' experience of that phenomenon.

6.2. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

Some of the teachers reported their own experiences of learning as having a powerful and significant impact on their teaching practice. Some had personal experiences which they thought shaped the teachers that they were. Helen, Computing and ICT, for example said that, "at the age of eleven we had a family tragedy that changed the course of my life". She thought that this experience had given her "insight" into her learners. She said that she could "kind of read them as soon as they come through the door." Helen thought that this insight helped her to help her learners.

Several of the teachers' early experiences, both positive and negative, in school or at

work acted as knowledge resources which could inform teaching strategies. Melanie, Business Management, was critical of her school teachers. "I found it all quite condescending, I found it, em, you know, they assumed knowledge and if you didn't know what they were talking about and that, you were thick". Melanie resolved to be a different kind of teacher from the ones that she had known. On the other hand, Colin, Law, described himself as a "consumer" in as much as that he had taken part in many classes and lectures over the years. He thought that he emulated teachers that he had known.

Alan, who said he was asked to leave school early, described the impact that the lectures in college had made upon him when he returned to education:

> "I went on the Scottish Wider Access Programme. And I felt that things like Maths, which totally switched me off when I was at school – suddenly I seemed to be really interested in it. I have to say that it had a lot to do with the delivery from the teaching staff because instead of just teaching you calculus they would give you real life examples, you know. He would be telling you about differentiation and he would be leaning on the window, for example. I can still remember these examples, you see, after fifteen, sixteen years. He would be leaning on the window and he would be talking about rate of change. He said, if I leaned here for thirty-five years without moving, that window would eventually cave in but if I took a hammer and I hit it quicker, the same thing would happen.
>
> And then he would go on to, he would be talking about trigonometry and he would say, "See my brother, you know, he's a joiner and because he disnae know basic maths he disnae know that he is holding his hammer wrong and he could get the same job done with a lot less effort if he could just move his hands in and make a better angle," and stuff like that. I was absolutely fascinated with this stuff, you know. Then I would look into maths and think, that's great…you

> could see the practical…you know…side of things. It was just a totally different experience, without a doubt.
> I never forgot it."
> **Alan: Computing & ICT**

Alan reflected on the impact that these lecturers had had on his teaching stating that he felt that they were "drawing on their life experiences". He felt that the teachers had had experiences of the workplace from which to draw and that those experiences influenced the teachers that they had become. He felt that they had shown an interest in him, perhaps because of their own life experiences, and that they had been role models for him.

6.2.1. Chequered Working Biographies

Five of the teachers had always worked in the field of education, taking the route from school, to University and teacher education. On the other hand, the majority had chequered working biographies. Tracey, for example, had been a nurse for twenty years and Quentin had accumulated fourteen years in the same profession before they found their way into teaching in colleges. Ian had twenty-five years as a graphics designer behind him, before he left his employment, taking on a part-time teaching position which he hoped might leave time for freelance work.

Various teachers had spent some time combining teaching with employment in other areas. For example, after graduating with Honours in English and French, Pamela was a marketing manager in London for seven years before she re-trained as a beauty therapist. She then balanced the management of her own salon with part-time teaching before, eventually, settling on a teaching career. Kieran segued from fourteen years of employment as an electrician to full-time lecturer through a succession of part-time contracts, lasting five years. Colin studied for a second degree, in Law, while teaching full-time. On qualifying, he then dropped to part-time hours and combined teaching

with practising contract and business law.

Alan, Computing and ICT, and George, Sports and Fitness, after less than happy school careers, had spent some time in work before going back to education.

> "Ah worked in dead jobs basically. For a while I worked in a brickworks, it was really heavy duty manual work. Dirty stuff and then I got a job in a tyre factory…again heavy duty manual work but repetitive and boring – that type of thing. I was there for about four and a half years, I think. Then, eventually, I realised that people were right, you know, I could do better for myself and by that time I was a wee bit more mature. So, I was ready for education."
>
> **Alan: Computing & ICT**

Alan said that he had wanted to "get into teaching because I wanted to help people like myself, for whatever reason that they were disengaged."

Melanie had just completed her probationary year as a secondary school teacher. She had been a risk management consultant and worked and travelled abroad before taking time out to have a family. She retrained as a teacher because she felt that she had been "talked out of it" by her father when she was younger. She said that she had a "calling just to do it". It had "always been in the back of [her] mind." Now she valued the years that she had spent in industry:

> "I like the idea of having life experience, work experience, industry experience and then going teaching about it. I think, all these things that I have done make me a better teacher – all the things that I am teaching, I have actually done them, or can relate to them…"
>
> **Melanie: Hospitality and Tourism**

Orla said that she brought her industrial experiences into the classroom:

> "When something goes wrong, you relate your experience and tell students what happened when you worked in a salon. I often do that.......I talk about my experiences with clients....I talk about my previous experiences when in classroom situations."
>
> **Orla: Beauty Therapy**

6.2.2. Teaching Qualifications

Alan, Fiona, Melanie, Roger, Susan and Vickie all had teaching qualifications before taking up employment. Helen, Janice, Neil, Orla, Pamela, Tracey, Ursula and Quentin had undergone their TQFE after taking up a permanent position. Ian, Creative Arts, was currently studying for his TQFE, after teaching for four years. Kieran, Electrical Engineering, was also in the process of studying for a teaching qualification, after teaching for nine years.

Colin, Law, had been teaching in his college for twelve years and was still waiting for an opportunity to undertake teacher education saying that he had, "expressed the desire to go on TQFE several times" during staff development interviews. Orla, Beauty Therapy, had been teaching part-time for eighteen years with no teaching qualification before she decided to self-finance her professional development in teaching.

6.2.3. Experiences of TQFE

The teachers' experiences of TQFE were mixed. Some teachers considered the experience of teacher education to be worthwhile. Quentin, for example, found it to be,

> "....very useful. It was very useful in terms of basically framing what I did already. It enabled me to think much deeper about what I was doing."
>
> **Quentin: Healthcare**

Ursula, Social Science, and Janice, Creative Arts, found the experience to be beneficial because they met other people from other colleges or disciplines. Orla, Beauty Therapy, enjoyed learning the practicalities of teaching, not the theoretical side and felt really motivated in the year after she finished the course. Kieran, Electrical Engineering, felt that undergoing the TQFE helped him to better understand and relate to the stresses that his students were under to meet assignment deadlines. Pamela was most enthusiastic about her experience:

> "I only did my TQFE two years ago. I absolutely loved it. I loved it. It was [name] University but they came in-house to do it. I absolutely loved it. Scared at the start thinking, Oh My God, what if I am absolutely pants at this. But I absolutely loved it and I learned **so** (Pamela's emphasis) much from it."
> **Pamela: Beauty Therapy**

Fiona stated how difficult it was for some staff to be seconded on to TQFE.

> "Yea, the amount of folks who are sitting waiting on getting their TQFE here, they are just sitting waiting and waiting, they have got no contract, they have no TQFE they don't know what is happening. They are told, well wait until you are permanised and then we will send you on your TQFE….yes, they really have got nothing, they are kind of left hanging waiting to see what is going to happen. It is terrible."
> **Fiona: Biology & Anatomy**

6.2.4. First Experiences of Teaching without Qualifications

Various teachers pointed out how stressful their first experiences of teaching had been. Orla, Beauty Therapy, for example stated that when she thought about it now, "it was quite scary". The previous teacher had left work for her. The students were young and she "probably wasn't much older than them." Orla reported that she had "wanted to be their best friend" or wanted them to see her "as their best friend". Now she realises that

"you can't always do that." She thought that she had had "great fun" and had "great laughs" and hopefully, "managed to get the work done". Orla thinks that she was much more intimately involved with her early learners than she is now.

Quentin, Healthcare, had been a nurse for several years when he decided to leave and train in alternative therapies. He provided work-place experiences for students and was asked by the college to teach physiology and anatomy as well as varieties of massage. When he started teaching, he was unaware of the level that his students were working at and that it was "quite freaky. I didn't know what I was teaching". Quentin reported that he had "never actually worked in a college of Further Education" and that he had to completely redesign his methods of working in order to ascertain how to teach them. He reported initially getting the level of teaching wrong for the students and that the students "ripped into" him. He reported that there were some "worst days of my life scenarios, it was awful."

Ian, after many years of employment as a graphic designer, had been teaching for four years and was currently undertaking his TQFE. He said that he had based his delivery style on his school experiences but that he had to revise this approach:

> "When you are starting.... because you have got so much to learn....the pressure is constant, it is horrible. I was used to pressure and deadlines but this is constant. And I am apparently over-delivering, which means I am making too much work for myself and I think I am. I do too much for the students, or I did too much for them. I am having to learn to step back and let them do more for themselves."
>
> **Ian: Creative *Arts***

6.3. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

In Chapter Four, at 4.8.1., it was made clear that the teachers were asked to consider four

categories of occupational knowledge and provide points to the categories they considered to be necessary for effective teaching. A table of the points allocation can be found at Annex XXIII. How the teachers' allocated their points varied considerably. Out of a total of 2,300 points 683 points (30%) were allocated to Subject Knowledge; 590 points (29%) to Technical, Practical or Process Knowledge; and 665 points (25%) to Knowledge of Learners. The teachers allocated only 362 points (16%) to Theoretical Knowledge of Learning and Teaching.

What follows is a summary of the teachers' responses to the questions in the questionnaire.

6.3.1. Subject knowledge

Most of the teachers considered subject knowledge to be essential. Colin, Law, allocated 50 points to Subject Knowledge in the Questionnaire. He believed that if teachers "tried to teach a subject" that they were "ignorant of", it would be "disastrous". Subject knowledge was important for Roger, History and he allocated 40 points to Subject Knowledge in the Questionnaire. He was writing his sixth book, and believed that he was "original" in what he was teaching and that it kept him "enthusiastic". He believed that if teachers were not enthusiastic when teaching "students pick up on it quickly". Winnie, Communications, agreed with Roger because teachers "need knowledge in order to inspire people to understand". She also thought that teachers need "a real passion and enthusiasm" for their subject otherwise the students would not become engaged. For Winnie, subject knowledge was also important because the students "ask really difficult questions and those questions need to be answered." Her points allocation was more evenly spread, at 25 for Subject Knowledge; 25 for Process Knowledge; 20 for Theoretical Knowledge and 30 for Knowledge of Learners.

Ursula, Social Science, allocated 40 points for Subject Knowledge and thought that if she did not know her subject, "very quickly everything breaks down. There would be no

respect or trust for you. I think you are short changing the students if you didn't know your subject". Alan, ICT and Computing, also allocated 40 points to Subject Knowledge which he valued highly because, "the students would no be long in picking up on areas that you are weak on and as soon as you lose a bit of credibility, you have had it." Neil, Tourism and Business Management, again allocated 40 points to Subject Knowledge which he considered to be important because students had part-time jobs; needed information to progress and saw the teacher as "the person with the answer." Neil considered being able to provide students with answers as being a "huge responsibility".

Pamela, Beauty Therapy, allocated 50 points to Subject Knowledge and said that the minute she did not know what she was talking about, she would "lose all confidence." She did not want to be one step, but five steps ahead of her learners. For her own professional integrity and self esteem, she needed to be confident in her subject knowledge. Susan, Early Education, Childcare, on the other hand, thought that she "learned together with her students" and sometimes she and her students negotiated the learning. She thought that she had "got by fairly well" without always having a high level of subject knowledge. She thought that she had the "skills of a teacher", meaning good process and technical knowledge, and that had been enough and that sometimes she had been learning from the students. She thought that her skill lay in highlighting student experiences and saying:

> '…..right, you have experienced that, so how can this new knowledge help you in the future, how can we use this knowledge to support other experiences?'"
> **Susan: Early Education, Childcare**

Susan's points allocation, like Winnie's was evenly spread across the four categories of knowledge.

Helen, Computing and ICT, thought that high levels of subject knowledge depended on the class being taught, that she could teach some classes without high levels of subject knowledge because she had good classroom management skills. In this regard, Helen's point of view was akin to Susan's and her points allocation was again evenly spread across the four categories.

The teachers did not consider subject knowledge alone to be sufficient for effective teaching. Fiona, Biology & Anatomy, thought it was more about, "being able to relate it to other things" and allocated 15 points to Subject Knowledge. Kieran, Electrical Engineering, who allocated 30 points to Subject Knowledge, stated that anyone could be employed to teach as long as they had subject knowledge and all the teaching resources were supplied to them. In Kieran's terms, however, they would be "delivery donkeys."

6.3.2. Practical Knowledge (techne)

Practical skills and expertise in the management of the learning process (*techne*) was also considered, by most, to be necessary for effective teaching. Of the total points allocation, 590 points (29%) was given to this category of knowledge. Alan, ICT and Computing, allocated 40 points to Technical Knowledge and thought that if teachers did not "possess the skill set to plan and manage the class" they were "asking for trouble". Ian, Creative Arts, allocated 30 points to Technical Knowledge and thought that a person would, "drive themselves demented if they pretty quickly didn't acquire the skills of planning, execution and management of learning." Roger, History, again allocated 30 points to Technical Knowledge but thought that he had been teaching so long, planning and execution of the learning process was "kind of second nature." For Neil, Travel and Tourism, planning and management were important because, otherwise, students might not get the qualifications that they had enrolled for:

> "You can have a great teacher who can deliver the subject, works well with the students but if they have not properly planned, if they have not properly

> coordinated, if it is not properly recorded, if they did not meet the criteria of a unit or whatever, then, the student might be enriched but may not necessarily be able to get the qualification. It is important that people understand the process, that there is a format to it. There's unit specs, there's recording procedures; you need to set assessments; you need peer group assessments; you need to be subject to external verification...it is all part and parcel."
> **Neil, Tourism and Business Management**

Interestingly, while Neil extolled the importance of Technical (process) knowledge (above), he only allocated 15 points to this category of knowledge. He allocated 40 to Subject Knowledge, 30 to Knowledge of Learners and 15 each to the other two categories. Why he did this is a possible flaw in the research as I did not explore or question him about this discrepancy. The above data, from Neil's talk, emerged from the latter half of the interview and not the first half, which discussed the questionnaire.

Melanie, Business Management, allocated 35 points to Technical Knowledge and asked, "If you can't plan it and execute it, where are you?" She said that she got "quite excited" about planning and executing a lesson because no two lessons are the same, even though the same subject is being taught. The learners are different and there are "different emotional and social factors" in different classes. She said, "You think the class is going to be a mirror image of yesterday and it is not." She reports being "aware of the student who gets twitchy" and what she needs to do to "keep him on board." Melanie reported knowing that she had to get "from point A to point B" but how she did that depended on her planning. She stated that, "Sometimes I have to change the *plan* on my feet, the learners in front of you need you to do different ways to plan and deliver."

For Helen, Computing and ICT, although her largest points allocation went to Knowledge of Learners, she too thought that planning, preparation and reflection were

essential for classroom management because if teachers "go in blind" they are "going to create chaos" for themselves in they are unprepared. Importantly, for Helen, planning meant that she could reflect and evaluate the learning experience. She stated, "I always ask myself what I think I have done wrong. If I have done something wrong, well, I will try another route. That is a good teacher." Helen thought that if a teacher did not "self reflect" then they "shouldn't really be teaching" because the "kids aren't going to learn anything at all. It is all about learner engagement and evaluation.

6.3.2.1. Planning for Teaching Subject; Planning for Teaching Learners

It is important to stress that for some of the teachers a high level of practical knowledge (*techne*) was related to subject knowledge. Technical knowledge (knowing how) related to how the subject was to be taught, which is akin to Shulman's (1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge For others, planning related to knowledge of learners. Knowledge of learners came first because it was the teachers' cognitive knowledge and social knowledge of the learners that shaped their lessons, not only how they planned them but also how they delivered them. This knowledge could be likened to Beijaard's (1995, p.751) "pedagogical knowledge" or Turner-Bisset's (1999. p.45) notion of social knowledge of learners. Cognitive knowledge or universal, epistemic knowledge of learners did not enter the discussions.

6.3.3. Theoretical Knowledge (episteme)

Theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching (*episteme*) did not appear to be highly valued by the teachers. The total number of points in the questionnaire amounted to 2,300. Of this number, 362 points, or 13% of the total number, were allocated to Theoretical Knowledge. Pamela, Beauty Therapy, allocated 10 points to Theoretical Knowledge of Learning and Teaching and thought that perhaps she was utilising learning and teaching theories in her practice but was not "conscious of them" when she was teaching. Alan, Computing & ICT, also allocated 10 points and stated that he "couldn't rate" teaching theories; Roger, History, allocated 15 points and thought that,

"formal sort of teaching theories don't register too much" and Kieran, Electrical Engineering, allocated 5 points and thought that lecturers (he did not use the word "teachers") did not understand learning and teaching theories until, "somebody actually points it out to them, what they are actually doing and then they realise...they are actually doing that". Helen, Computing & ICT, allocated 15 points and stated:

> "Knowledge of teaching theories? I probably don't know a lot about teaching theories as if somebody asked me to write an essay giving the theories. But I probably have the skills that I know would apply to these theories, although I don't know the name of the theory. Does that make sense?"
> **Helen: ICT and Computing**

Ian, Creative Arts, allocated 10 points and appeared to feel quite strongly about learning and teaching theories.

> "All these theories have taken what people are doing and laying it out and telling people that this is what it looks like and I think it is a damn cheek. Educationalists should be doing that. That is unfair, some of the theorists write it out well. That is the difference, the really good ones, you can skim through their work and get the practical application of it and think, that is good, I could use that, that is useful. But other ones go on about it and disappear backwards and go round about it again and quote Aristotle and all these people....and it is an academic indulgence."
> **Ian: Creative Arts**

On the subject of learning theories, Pamela said:

> "See the disappointing thing about doing my TQFE? See after I had done it, I had learned so much and I was so full of it. But I feel as if it is fire-fighting in here. There is no time, no quality time, to reflect because the minute you finish one thing you are on to another. I think, I don't have time to catch my

> breath...learning theories, aye, in a great, wonderful world but not in practice."
> **Pamela: Beauty Therapy**.

Some of the teachers, like Kieran, Electrical Engineering, thought that they probably utilised theories of learning and teaching that had perhaps been assimilated through teacher education. These theories had been integrated into their practice, had become an everyday way of working and were not particularly acknowledged, or recognised by the teacher. Considering their current practice in relation to current thinking on learning and teaching did not feature in the discussions. The one notable exception to this was Vickie, whose story was told in the previous Chapter.

6.3.4. Knowledge of Learners

A social knowledge of learners (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p.45) was highly regarded by many staff. 25% of the total points allocation was given to this category of knowledge. Alan, Computing & ICT, while allocating 20 points to Knowledge of Learners observed that "having a genuine rapport with learners goes much farther than many educational ideals". He stated:

> ...if you feel that you have a class of pupil that has been unsuccessful…they might have a learning disability, they might have behavioural issues they might have….in fact 80% of our students seem to have a lot of difficult stuff going on in their background – if you don't take account of their personal, their social, their emotional needs, then they are just going to switch off…so..where you would go in and prepare a lesson for an hour, say, eh…with these guys you need to go in, you need to be flexible…if something happens, if something's kicked off on a Monday..you come in…something's happened at the weekend – you need to be a lot more flexible in your planning – to allow for them to get what they need to get off their chest.

> You need to take them aside, find out what's going on and investigate the background – that kind of thing.
> **Alan: Computing & ICT**

Ian, Creative Arts allocated 30 points to Knowledge of Learners and stated that, "it is a given that you need a higher level of knowledge and skills to support a learners social, emotional and personal development. You have to be a social worker." He went on to say, "I don't think you can dodge that, you are just dealing with people and if you are dealing with young people and if they are young and vulnerable, that's double scores."

Orla, Beauty Therapy, said that she gave the "social and emotional support of learners a 'high'". Some of her learners required support that was not "necessarily teaching support".

> "They come in with so many issues...they can hardly look at you and can hardly string a sentence together. They don't communicate. Just, you know, the things that go on in their lives. It is quite amazing."
> **Orla, Beauty Therapy**

Quentin, Healthcare, allocated 40 points to Knowledge of Learners and reported that in the previous year there had been some "really critical incidents" in the class. At some point in this class he stopped "being a teacher/lecturer and suddenly became the classroom manager". He said that if the "people were not **managed** (Quentin's emphasis) effectively, then learning **couldn't** (Quentin's emphasis) occur". Quentin reported that there were "so many social and personal issues" and that the students were "practically fighting each other in the class". He said that teachers in this situation need "to have a personality that is switched on to managing relationships" and that if they did not have this skill "nothing is going to happen." Quentin stated that if teachers have not "sorted out the undercurrents" then the class "will just disintegrate". He said that, "it is

like trying to keep a handle on the class and enable the learning to emerge **within** (Quentin's emphasis) the class rather than just assuming that because you have planned A, B and C, the class is going to go like clockwork (laugh)". He reported that teachers need *"the personal and social skills to actually work with the class."*

6.3.5. Doing Less with Learners

Ian, Creative Arts, and Kieran, Electrical Engineering, spoke about having learned to "do less" with learners. Kieran said, "One thing you do learn is, year on year, is to do less and less." By this he meant that new staff, when nervous, "do more" and "just keep talking" which means that "the students don't have a chance to say a thing." According to Kieran, new staff "don't want to look stupid, so they just blurt it out." He stated that:

> "As you progress, year on year you see that, if you just hold back, just that little bit and let things come that wee bit further forward….sometimes you have to go and run after them, pull them back but sometimes, you sit back and they will come to you. Whereas, actually it would be easier if I just wrote everything up on the board and they copied it down. That would be easy but, you know, they won't learn."
> **Kieran: Electrical Engineering**

Ian agreed with Kieran's viewpoint. He had been teaching for four years and said that he had been "over delivering", by which he meant that he had been doing too much for the students and that that was a danger in those who were new to education. He said that he had been "steadily trying to learn when not to do the work". When he first came to teaching, he thought that colleagues were "lazy" and not doing their job but now he had "got the insight – it is the students who should be doing the work."

6.3.6. Different Horses for Different Courses

A strong theme in the teacher narratives was that, for effective practice, they mostly

needed high levels of knowledge in the subject they taught, in the planning and execution of teaching (*techne*) and a high level of knowledge of learners. How they used that knowledge depended on the level of subject being taught and on the learners (in terms of cognitive ability but also in terms of their personal, social and emotional needs). If they were teaching at Higher National level, they needed to be up to speed on their subject. However, if they were teaching a different class group, for example, with younger learners with more emotional and social difficulties, then their skills in classroom management and in managing relationships came more to the fore.

Tracey, Healthcare, spoke for several of the teachers when she said that all categories of knowledge were important and that "depending on the student or the student group" that teachers were working with, then "different factors will be important." Tracey said that, if teachers were "dealing with students who have got lots of additional learning needs and maybe from quite deprived backgrounds" then knowledge of the social and emotional development of learners would be more important than "your teaching theories."

> "It doesn't matter what you know about teaching theories. They may be totally irrelevant in that situation because you have got to be able to build a relationship with that person first."

According to Tracey, if she was teaching at HND level, "subject knowledge is **really** important." She said that subject knowledge and knowledge on how to plan and manage (*techne*) that subject is "key", particularly when learners with "difficult personal, social and emotional problems" are involved. In Tracey's opinion, the reason planning was important for such learners was that "lots of different things" might need to be done to "keep their attention" and that learning might need to be delivered in "small chunks." She reported having one class for four hours and that, if she was not organised and structured in her planning she would "run out of steam."

Vickie, Supported Learning, said that the different categories of occupational knowledge were "just the arrows in (her) pack" and which arrows were used depended on the subject, subject level, context and learner.

6.4. Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Teacher Actions

As has already been stated that the majority of the teachers' critical incidents involved their relationships with learners. Space precludes the telling of them all. However, in order to help the reader get a flavour of the nature of the incidents, six will be summarised below.

6.4.1. Colin : Law

Colin's interruption in the learning process transpired when, during the previous two or three years he had modernised a course about conveyancing. He wanted to move away from the more "traditional" methods, using "lectures and handouts and all that kind of stuff". His difficulty was that he needed access to computers and was continually being timetabled for a traditional classroom. He had discussions with his Head of Department who wanted to know why he needed a computing lab for a law class. Colin said that he tried to explain that," I am trying to take this to another level, where we are actually saying to the students, this is the kind of industry software that you could use with maybe the bigger firms and give them experience as well." At the time of the interview he still did not have access to a computing lab. He was taking his class in the library where there was access to computers but he was marshalling his arguments for the future.

On the face of it, Colin's disrupted space was about learning resources but essentially it was about different views of learning. He was tackling and seeking to overcome assumptions about how his subject should be taught.

6.4.2. Helen: Computing and ICT

Helen, Computing and ICT, was a Head of School and her incident was complicated. It involved a class, full of poor attendees, which did not look as though it was going to meet its learning outcomes as the end of the block approached; possible official student complaints; a lecturer who "was not comfortable teaching the subject" and an occasion where the lecturer concerned was late for class because "she had to speak to another student whose aunt had died the night before and whose sister had tried to commit suicide that morning".

Another Head of School, who thought that the late lecturer had neglected to turn up for class, replaced her with another member of staff who had more subject expertise, without consulting Helen. Helen had to juggle all the relationships, including those with the students, aggrieved staff and a Head and Deputy Head of School, whom she felt intimidated by.

She felt that she had not handled the situation well although she had managed to get her member of staff "back on side very quickly" and had appeased the other Head of School because "confrontation back and forth wouldn't be worth the stress." She thought that she should have been aware that the member of staff teaching the class hadn't had sufficient expertise in the subject. She put a system in place to prevent the situation happening again. She thought that she had been naive, thinking Heads of School would be supportive of one another and that it really was "all about looking after number one." She said that although her colleagues weren't threatening she "felt intimidated", which, according to Helen, is "really stupid" because she is "quite a strong woman". She reported feeling "off guard" because the Head of School said that he had stopped an official complaint being made by students.

6.4.3. Pamela : Beauty Therapy

Pamela's disrupted space occurred when she was teaching a group of young women who were aged between fifteen and sixteen. The students came from some of the poorest

communities in the college catchment area. Although Pamela had worked in sales and marketing for several years, she then retrained as a beauty therapist and ran her own business. She described herself as being new to teaching when the incident occurred and as being 'naive'. She said that she had thought that everyone was like herself, that is, wanting to learn and she reported being "shocked" by some of the learners and their lifestyles. According to Pamela, "I just didn't know some things existed" and said that some of the student's stories, "about what they had done the night before, like about staying out all night and getting totally buckied" had "opened her eyes." (Note: "Buckied" is a Glaswegian term for drinking Buckfast, a form of cheap, strong alcohol).

In a beauty class, Pamela had asked a student to assume a client role and to get on the bed. The student had resolutely refused. Pamela had taken the student to the member of staff with pastoral responsibilities for the student. The student had been verbally abusive to Pamela and was subsequently dismissed from the course. Later, as a student herself undertaking the TQFE, she found that she was anxious and nervous when being asked to do anything in front of a class. Recalling the incident with the student now makes her "cringe."

As a matter of routine, Pamela now offers her learners the opportunity to anonymously provide any information that they think would be a barrier to their learning. "See the things that you get back.... ...both my parents are drug addicts. I have failed at everything...I want a chance....you think...just heart breaking wee stories, you know." Pamela stated that she now realised that the student in the incident probably had refused to do as she was asked out of a lack of confidence, rather than defiance. Previously, her manager would not give Pamela groups with more vulnerable learners because she was "very black and white" but now she has "matured and got a bit of wisdom" and is now "the complete polar opposite."

According to Pamela, if a learner was late for class, she used to think that was a sign of disrespect. Now, before she "weighs in" she finds out more about the student as, "you

don't know what they have had to cope with before they come in." "It all depends," she says, "it all depends on the learner...it's about working out the different needs of the different ones."

6.4.4. Alan : Computing and ICT

Alan's (Computing and ICT) disrupted space occurred when he spoke to an HND computing student whom he strongly suspected of cheating. He suspected she was getting someone else to do her work for her. He said that he had informed her that he should carry out an official investigation but that he would just give her a "wee warning." However, the student made an official complaint about him to the Principal. He said that he had been "gutted" because the previous week he had been "out in the rain, in my shirt and tie, changing her tyres for her". The result of the incident was that Alan always now, "goes by the book".

6.4.5. Tracey : Healthcare

Tracey, Healthcare, reported her disrupted space as involving a group of nursing students, where one particular student appeared to be being treated less than favourably by some others. Tracey "didn't know what to do" because the student involved would not speak to her about what was troubling her. What she did was, she mocked up a picture of a nurse and presented this picture to the class. She asked them to discuss and list the values which were inherent to nursing practice. At the end of the session, she asked the class why she had carried out this exercise. One of the students who "had not been very nice to the other student" responded and said, "I know, because I behaved inappropriately towards….." Tracy's response was to thank the student for being honest and said that the class should finish because she thought that there was "some conversation that they needed to have." The students appeared to have gone away and resolved their differences.

She found the incident to be "really hard" and reported that she was "feeling on the

spot." She said that she thought that, "any minute they are going to throw something at me and I am not going to know what to do....I am not going to know how to respond to them." She had asked another colleague to sit with her in the class while she asked the learners about their values.

On reflection, she had been pleased by how the incident turned out and thought that she had handled it well. She was troubled, however, thinking that some of the learners, who were not involved, might have been worried about why she was carrying out the exercise that she did. Tracey reported that "getting students to think about their values, what has influenced them, what has helped them to get to this point, is an important factor in her teaching. She said that there were, "you know, certain people, need I say, that should not be nurses." She saw it as being part of her job to, "maybe weed them out" and that "maybe they need to be directed somewhere else." Tracey said that, "I found dealing with this incident even more nerve wracking than standing in front of a few hundred people delivering training, which I have done...that was easier than dealing with that situation where I had eighteen students."

6.4.6. Orla: Beauty Therapy

Orla's disrupted space concerns a "young, very young, quiet" student, who is "quite poor at her work and lacks a lot of confidence". According to Orla, the student was working with a client and Orla was "almost constantly" reminding the student what she had to do. The student's guidance teacher approached Orla and "sort of said that (she) kept interfering". Orla said, "It got me thinking, I shouldn't have kept doing that. I thought that I was helping her, explaining things, she thought that I was interfering and wished I would just leave her alone.

This situation presented Orla with a dilemma. On the morning of Orla's interview for this study, the student had had to wax a client's eyebrows. It was her first time and Orla had asked if she could watch but the student declined. Orla said, "I thought, right, I will

give her space." However the student dropped wax on the client's eyelashes. A situation arose where the client was distressed and the student was "flapping about". The upset student was adding to the client's distress and Orla had to be "very firm" with the student in order to calm her down.

Orla blamed herself for the whole situation saying, "I knew I shouldn't have left her, it is really all my fault and not hers." She did not know how to deal with the situation because she would normally take such incidents to the whole class for discussion as a learning experience. However, this student begged her not to do that. Orla said, "I am stuck and I don't actually know what to do." She said that her "natural instinct" was to go in and help the student but that the student "seemed to be nervous" around her. Orla was aware that it was a "lack of confidence" on the part of the student because "she is so young." Orla state that she "felt bad" because she had given the student "her space". Orla reported that it was her intention to speak to her colleagues and hoped that she was not alone in having this reaction from a student.

All of the above stories are about learning relationships in some form of another. Alan felt let down by a learner with whom he thought he had developed a good learning relationship. Colin was engaged in a battling relationship with a manager who did not understand how Colin was trying to teach. Tracey was struggling to develop a learning relationship with her learners which facilitated their awareness of the kinds of relationships that are necessary for human flourishing and wellbeing. Helen was juggling relationships with learners, lecturers and colleagues. Orla was searching for a way to support a learner who appeared to reject and misunderstand all Orla's endeavours to help her learn.

All of the teachers' narratives were peppered with talk about their relationships with learners.

6.5. Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships

Alan, Computing and ICT, thought that a "genuine rapport" with learners goes "much farther than many educational ideals." Alan spoke for several of the teachers when he said that "80% of our students seem to have difficult stuff going on in their backgrounds" and that understanding and managing their "personal, social and emotional needs" was "crucial". Alan, again, spoke for several when he said that if teachers didn't "have the right personality" then "half of the lessons are kind of lost on the audience."

Many staff spoke about the nature of students that they taught. For example, Davina, Computing and ICT, said that they "were getting younger and younger and more disengaged." Neil, Travel and Tourism, said that how he interacted with his students depended on "the audience" and it was important to understand if they were "NCs, HNCs, mature learners or youngsters who have been forced to go through school and come to college because their parents want them to or because they had been to get Bursaries because they can't get a job or whatever."

Neil, also spoke for several when he said that he "tried to find out about students" and that he shared personal information or what was "professionally okay to tell them." He said that he "shared personal stories, told them different things" and often listened to the students' "personal stories." Neil reported that "rather than just telling students what to do, a huge connection has to be made between the teacher and the learner if the students are going to learn."

Helen, Computing and ICT, thought that, in her opinion, staff were "social workers in quotes" and that they had to "spot the learner" and "try to understand them, you have got to know things that are happening in their lives." Helen reported that some of the students, "were carers too, you know, they are not all kids." Susan, Early Education/Childcare, reported that meeting the students needs placed great demands on

her and that they were "constantly knocking" on her door. Susan talked about students as "families" and that she had to manage "areas of families in college." Susan stated that sometimes she had to say to students, "Sorry you are too demanding at the moment and you have to do that by yourself because I have got another class".

Pamela, Beauty Therapy, stated that, "Some students are just great, really motivated and want to learn but others, you know, well they are just in here out the road of the buses."

Helen, Computing and ICT, said that she had "one wee boy on a level four just now." She reported the learner as being "challenging" but that she knew that "he would come round eventually." Helen reported that "the other day" she had asked this learner what was good about the college. According to Helen, when the learner replied, he had asked her to remember the previous year when he had "come in from social work". Helen, apparently, had told him that "anybody could do anything, it is just a matter of self belief." The student said that Helen had taught him "so differently from any school teacher because you didn't shout and ball."

Helen stated that, "Well, I just thought that that says it all, really."

6.6. Moral Reasoning

The teachers in the study might not have described their actions in their disrupted spaces as having a moral element. However, in actual fact, according to Oser (1994), every act of teaching has a moral dimension. Tirri (1999, p.31) also suggests that "many educational conflicts require decision-making from a teacher". Hanhimaki and Tirri (2009, p.108) state that "to respond to a situation in a moral way, teachers must be able to perceive and interpret events in ways that lead to ethical action." Interpreting the teachers' narratives, the conflicts that required moral decision-making were in relation to "doing what was right" in terms of managing their own relationships with learners; managing and supporting inter-student relationships; managing staff; managing staff to support learners; handling student complaints about them; handling apparent cheating by

learners; handling difficult colleagues. Many of the teachers' displayed "pedagogical tact" (Van Manen, 1995, p.44) and had a moral intuitiveness, a sensitivity and openness to learners.

The teachers' narratives also uncovered attitudes and judgements about learners and an apparent aspiration to be fair, open-minded and non-judgemental towards the learners.

6.7. Support

All the teachers were asked who could have helped them during their disruptive space and what kind of support did they think they had in their job.

Many said that, in relation to the disrupted space itself, no one could have helped them. It was a situation that they needed to resolve for themselves. What was common in the teachers' narratives, however, was that they received general support in their work from colleagues.

Ursula, Social Science, felt that she worked in a "good section" and that was where the support came from. Quentin, Healthcare, thought that what helped him was that he had a "very good working team". Pamela, Beauty Therapy, spoke for several when she said that she got support from "colleagues, yes but not higher than that, no definitely not, definitely not and I find that so, so disappointing". Winnie, Communication, reported that "a lot of the support comes from informal chat" with colleagues. Winnie stated that:

> "It would be much nicer if we had a mentoring system and somebody did work with a new member of staff and an older member of staff worked with a younger member of staff and you could learn from each other. Something more of a formal system but also something personal."

6.8. How the Teachers Felt about their Job

During the interviews, the teachers were asked to provide up to five words which described how they were feeling about their job at that particular moment in time. Eight of the teachers, Eleanor, George, Ian, Melanie, Orla, Tracey, Fiona and Janice portrayed their work as being challenging. Fiona also described her job as being interesting and fun.

Four teachers, George, Ian, Melanie and Ursula said it was rewarding. Eleanor thought that she was happy in her job and felt motivated, inspired and enthused. Melanie felt her job to be tiring and fun as well as rewarding. Lennie felt frustrated, saying, "I love my job, make no mistake about that. I love working with the laddies….but on the college side of it…there's issues."

Susan, Fiona, Helen and Ian described their job as being stressful. Helen was enthusiastic about her work. She said, "I feel, very strongly, that FE is a fabulous sector" Pamela felt fulfilled, saying, "I love my job when the door is shut, but I had all the other stuff. I love my interaction with students. I hate all the other crap that goes with it." Quentin was the only individual who was uniformly negative in describing how he felt about his job:

> "Despondent, I am going through a very bad patch at the moment. I am at that point where I am at, between us, I am actually at the point of saying I don't see myself doing this very much longer. I have actually reached the point where I am just not happy here. I feel stressed. I am actually valued but I do feel a bit despondent. But I am despondent."
> **Quentin: Healthcare**

6.9. Summary

This Chapter gave an account of parts of the teachers' stories that explicated the essence

of the phenomenon of disrupted spaces in the learning process. It described some of the teachers' backgrounds and learning biographies; it elucidated the chequered working biographies of the teachers; it told of some of early experiences of teaching which shaped the teachers they had become; it explained some of the teachers' thoughts, attitudes and beliefs about teaching and it described some of the teachers' disrupted spaces.

The next Chapter will discuss the teachers' accounts in this and the previous Chapter in order to ascertain whether or not the research aim had been met.

Chapter Seven

7. Reflecting on the Emergent Themes

7.1. Introduction

This study sought to provide an illuminative account of how teachers in Scotland's colleges experienced the learning process by determining the nature of their professional judgements when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process. The central question was:

> *"What was the experience of teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges when encountering a particular pedagogical issue or interruption, either fortunate or unfortunate, in the learning process?*

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was adopted. The phenomenon under investigation was disrupted spaces or interruptions in the learning process. This Chapter will interpret and discuss the teachers' narratives in order to explicate their experience of the phenomenon. It will identify strong themes which seem to lie at the heart of the phenomenon.

7.2. Thinking about Themes

In order to "get at the notion" (Van Manen, 1990, p.79) of the phenomenon being addressed, five themes were identified in order to "give shape to the shapeless" (Van Manen, op.cit.., p.88). As Van Manen indicated, "a theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand" (ibid. p.87). These themes provided "structures" (ibid. p.79) for the teachers' experiences and they have been utilised in the previous two

Chapters in order to explicate the teachers' experiences of the phenomenon. However, the reduction of an experience into themes can be a technical process.

The main purpose of phenomenological reflection is to grasp the essential meaning of something (ibid. p.76). It is about trying to ascertain what experiencing the phenomenon was really like for those experiencing it. The only way that a phenomenological researcher can do this is through the use of words. As Van Manen says (ibid. p.152) "writing is the method." The very act of writing, under the identified themes, can objectify the experience and create distance between the lived-experience and a real understanding of that experience. It could mean losing sight of the ambiguities, uncertainties, contradictions and confusions that can constitute the lived experience of a phenomenon.

In order to stay true to the nature of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, when discussing and interpreting the teachers' stories, I sought to write phenomenononologically. That is, "the untiring effort to author a sensitive grasp of being itself" (Van Manen p.132). In addition, I sought to "maintain a strong and orientated relation" (ibid. p.131) to the text, not only as a researcher but as a teacher and as a human being.

7.3. A Conversation

Van Manen (ibid. 151) counsels researchers adopting a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to research to provide text that is rich and text that is deep. In explicating the findings in Chapters Five and Six, I have attempted to provide this rich and deep text. By doing this, I have endeavored to elucidate the social world of the teachers through the descriptions and accounts that they used to make sense of their actions. I sought to be open-minded during this course of action and often, it was through writing that I came to some appreciation of the teachers' lived-experiences (ibid. p.127). My understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology is that it makes the ontological

assumption that reality does not exist independently, but rather is a process of how several parties negotiate meaning.

Therefore, I invite the reader to join with me in this interpretation process. I see the reader as being one of the parties involved in negotiating the meaning that lies within the text. The text, the examples of teacher narrative, was, of course, chosen by me and has already been filtered through my background assumptions but I endeavored to make it comprehensive enough for another to make their own analysis and judgements. My attempts to reach an understanding of the meanings within the text; an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon and an analysis of where *phronesis* might exist in relation to the teachers' thoughts and actions can only be part of the story. It is the reader who can supplement the additional parts of the story that I have overlooked. I see this study as a conversation, between the teachers, the reader and myself.

The interpretations that follow are my interpretations of the teachers' talk. The reader might discern different fundamental meanings as we each, as human beings, bring or own meanings to bear in the situations which constitute our lifeworld. It is probably the nature of human science research to be inexact but that inexactness encapsulates what it is to be human.

The Chapter which follows this one will discuss where *phronesis* might be evident in the teachers' narratives. It feels presumptuous for me to make pronouncements on whether or not a teacher is wise or has acted wisely. I can only say where I think I have seen *phronesis,* it will be up to the reader to decide whether they agree with me or not. As Rorty (1979, cited in Orton, 1997, p.580) said "for hermeneutics, inquiry is routine conversation."

7.4. What was the Teachers' Experience of Disrupted Spaces?

In the interviews, most of the teachers described their experiences as memories and Van Manen (1990, p.9) stated that phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld "as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively, rather than as we categorise, or reflect on it." As the teachers were being reflective, it was difficult to ask of the data, "What is this experience like?" (Van Manen, p.9.) The teachers' narratives included talk about past experiences and recollections. It was not 'pre-reflective'. The recollections were "a gathering of the kinds of understanding that belong to being" (Van Manen, p.132). However, Finlay (no date-b, p.2) advises that a "person's sense of past, present and future constitute the horizons of their temporal landscape." So, in an attempt to "get at the notion" (Van Manen, 1990, p.79) of the phenomenon, all the teachers' talk is considered, because it is assumed that all their life-experiences contribute to who they are, as human beings. It is as human beings, with diverse backgrounds, knowledge and personalities, that they experience the phenomenon.

Finlay (no date-b, p.2) states that phenomenologists, in the process of writing and rewriting aim, "to go ever deeper, to identify multiple layers of meaning and lay bare certain truths." The themes that were identified in order to reach some notion of the essence of the phenomenon were in relation to the teachers' backgrounds, their occupational knowledge, their thoughts and beliefs about learning and teaching and their relationships with learners. These themes will now be discussed in order to attempt to "identify multiple layers of meaning and lay bare certain truths."

7.5. Background, Learning Biographies and Personal Constructs

7.5.1. Early Learning Experiences

The teachers' experiences as learners would appear to have had an influence on their teaching practice and decision-making. Experiences from school, both positive and negative appear to have been recognised as a knowledge resource. Melanie, for example, was determined to be a different kind of teacher from the ones that she had

experienced and Ben said that he based his teaching, "around teachers that [he] liked." Colin said that he had been a "consumer" and had spent many years observing teachers. Lortie (1995, cited in Borg, 2004, p.275) described teachers as having served their apprenticeship of observation. Teachers have spent years observing how the job was done during their school years. According to Borg (2004, p.275), this means that new teachers have a set of default options that they draw upon in times of uncertainty. This appears to have been the case with some of the teachers in the study. They had their "default teaching option." As the observations were carried out as learners, not as teachers, perhaps these default options were determined by a desire on the teachers' part to avoid or reproduce the same kind of effect on their learners that their teachers had on them.

7.5.2. Vocational Experience and Values

Most of the teachers had strong vocational knowledge and experience of the workplace or industry. Only seven of the teachers, Davina, Helen, Vickie, Fiona, Colin, Roger and Ursula did not have substantial industrial or professional experience prior to entering teaching, having come straight to teaching from University, albeit Davina and Helen took time out to have a family. Colin, however, now divides his time between teaching and practising conveyancing law. Thirteen of the teachers had substantial professional or industrial experience which was relevant to the subjects they teach. Alan and Ben had been in employment prior to practice but had retrained and their experiences were not directly relevant to their subject area.

According to Salisbury (2009, p.427), the industrial and professional past of the teachers reflects a common pattern of "late entrants" in the FE teaching population. Several commentators have reflected on the diversification of the FE workforce as a result of the teachers' original vocational cultures (Avis, 2005; J. Robson, 1998, 2002, 2006). Robson (1998, p.603) found teachers in Further Education Colleges to have "dual professional identities". That is, one as a teacher and one as a subject specialist. She

reported that this dual professionalism shaped many FE teachers' actions and approaches to learning. Lennie, for example, several times described himself as being "a brickie". It seemed to be clear to me that Lennie's professional identity was shaped by his affiliation to the construction trade. He reported saying to his students:

> "I am a tradesman. I am a bricklayer. Because I have got a shirt and tie on, dinnae distance yourself from me….I am one ah yoose….I am here to learn you a trade…..Ken, this is the way it is, that is the way it is. "
> **Lennie : Construction**

Dual professionalism could also imply conflicting cultures and standards. Colley *et al.* (2003, p.487) suggests that the '"vocational culture'" of FE is the "guiding ideology of practice". Colley *et al.* (ibid. p.487) also suggest that the vocational cultures in subjects such as Lennie's "privileges logical thinking .....and judgement divorced from the 'human side' of problems" and that it "fosters the overt expression of physical signifiers of masculinity that...permeate the relevant physical environment." An assumption could be made that Lennie's actions and decision-making in his disrupted space were guided by an affiliation to the mores, practices and culture of the construction industry rather than by pedagogical standards and values.

Colley *et al.* (ibid. p.487) also propose that the vocational cultures of caring occupations, such as nursing, childcare and beauty therapy underpin teachers' actions and the expectations they have for their learners. For example, in these occupational areas, there is a belief in the values of empathy, warmth, consideration, kindness, helpfulness and thoughtfulness. This would certainly seem to be the case in this study. In several of the teachers' narratives, including that of Eleanor, Quentin, Susan and Pamela, there were references to the kinds of behaviours and values that guided their practice and which they expected of learners. Tracey, for example, spoke of the "values that the learners needed to be nurses" and her disrupted space involved the inculcating of those values in

her students.

7.5.3. Vocational Knowledge Valued

Many of the teachers mentioned employing their vocational knowledge to influence their practice. Orla, for example, spoke of utilising her vocational experiences in the classroom. Working biographies appeared to be highly valued. Melanie thought that her vocational experiences made her a "better teacher" and George criticised those who came straight to teaching without life-experiences behind them. He stated that, if he could, he would encourage more appointments of staff "with a lot more life about them than just direct graduates" as this life experience facilitated a deeper understanding with learners. By this he meant teachers who had had vocational experiences prior to entering teaching.

7.5.4. Personal and Emotional Knowledge

The teachers in the study also shared personal and emotional information with their learners. Ben, for example, told his learners about his "day to day life" including what he had been doing the night before; Davina shared personal knowledge with learners during classroom activities, or "just enough" to "give them a feeling" that they knew her. George shared his 'Jaffa Cakes" story with his learners. Neil "shared personal stories" and told his learners "different things". The teachers would appear to share their own personal biographies with learners in order to inspire or motivate them, or to inculcate or introduce a particular skill. This finding is similar to that of Salisbury *et al.* (2009, p.427) who found that the teachers in their study "brought their biographies suffused with workplaces stories and significant life events into the classroom and these were used unproblematically as an important knowledge base."

To summarise, from the teachers' talk, it became clear that, for many, vocational knowledge and values shaped their practice and many also shared their vocational and personal experiences with their learners. This vocational element was a strong thread in

relation to many of the teachers' experiences of the phenomenon. The values inherent in various vocational areas would appear to be in Colley's terms (2003, p.487), the "guiding ideology of practice". Much of the narratives, too, concerned inculcating skills and behaviours in learners in order to help them access employment. Ben, for example, told the class in his disrupted space that their behaviour "wouldn't be tolerated in the workplace".

In order to continue to try to grasp an understanding of the teachers' experiences of the phenomenon, it is crucial to scrutinise their occupational knowledge. The reason being, that it is this knowledge that the teachers' utilise when deciding how to act in their disrupted spaces. Therefore, the occupational knowledge of the teachers will now be considered.

7.5.5. Occupational Knowledge

All three interpretations of *phronesis* which underpin this study require occupational knowledge. As Oser (1994, pp.57-58) suggests, "in order to decide freely on one's acts" one must have the "necessary knowledge." Eraut (1994), in his account of the professional knowledge of teachers argues for its complexity. The heart of this complexity is that there are two broad bands of teacher knowledge, one that is codified and formal and one that is personal and tacit.

In this study, the teachers' formal knowledge composed of two elements, formal subject knowledge and knowledge on how to teach that subject, or what Young (2008, p.176) termed 'specialist pedagogic knowledge". Formal subject knowledge came through two routes. Firstly, what could be described as academic knowledge, i.e. Social Science, was accessed through University. Secondly, what could be broadly described as vocational knowledge, i.e. Electrical Engineering, was accessed through pursuit of professional qualifications during workplace practice.

For Alan, Fiona, George, Melanie, Roger, Susan, Vickie and Winnie access to formal pedagogic knowledge followed directly from University and they were all qualified as teachers before practice. Eleven of the teachers accessed formal pedagogic knowledge through the Teaching Qualification for Further Education while they were teaching. Two of the teachers were in the process of accessing this formal knowledge, through part-time study and two of the teachers had yet to access it.

Most of the teachers had been teaching some time without access to formal pedagogical knowledge. The idea of staff teaching without formal pedagogic knowledge was a problem and one that had to be wrestled with.

The reason that it was a problem was that, in Smith's (2007, p.3) and Brunstad's (2007, cited in ibid, p.3) models (Figures 1 and 2) and in the conceptual framework which guided this study (Figure 3), it was assumed that when **theoretical** (*episteme*) and **practical** (*techne*) knowledge are drawn upon and examined during disrupted spaces, then practical wisdom, professional decisions or *phronesis* can emanate from the process.

I was working on the assumption that *episteme*, in this case, was theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching. So, if teachers, did not have formal theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching, i.e. through teacher education, did that mean that *phronesis* was not achievable for them?

7.5.5.1. Theory

Orton (1997, p.576) helpfully explains that, for Aristotle, theory included three subcategories. One is theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) which, for Aristotle (1962: 1141a17 cited in Orton, 1997, p.576) "is the most precise and perfect form of knowledge". Theoretical wisdom is dependent on intelligence (*nous*) and scientific knowledge (*episteme*). Aristotle (1962: 1139b32-34 cited in Orton, 1997, p.577) stated that "when a

person believes something (based on syllogistic reasoning), and when the starting points or principles on which the beliefs rest are known to him or her, then that person has scientific knowledge." To put it very simply, or even crudely, intelligence (nous) helps us to grasp the "starting points or principles", and scientific knowledge (*episteme*) enables us to make conclusions based on the principles. Theoretical wisdom implies both intelligence and scientific knowledge.

All of the teachers had formal knowledge in their subject. So, based on Aristotle's description of *episteme*, they all had scientific knowledge (*episteme*) but it is in their **subject** area. Some of the teachers also had scientific knowledge of learning in addition to theoretical subject knowledge. Practical skills (*techne*) could be learned through formal training (to some extent) and through practice. Practical knowledge which has been accumulated through practice can encompass what others describe as craft knowledge, practical knowledge and personal practical knowledge (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Eraut, 1983, 1988; Fenstermacher, 1994; Hoyle & John, 1995). Brown and McIntyre (1993, p.17) define craft knowledge as "that part of their professional knowledge which teachers acquire primarily through their practical experience in the classroom, rather than their formal training, which guides their day to-day actions in classrooms which is for the most part not articulated in words and which is brought to bear spontaneously, routinely, and sometimes unconsciously on their teaching."

Therefore, I came to understand that my conceptual framework was somewhat flawed. I had assumed that, for *phronesis*, teachers needed to draw upon scientific, theoretical knowledge (*episteme*) in **learning and teaching** (or in education), which was accrued through formal education and practical knowledge (*techne*) and, when this knowledge is examined and deliberated upon, in disrupted spaces, *phronesis* can emanate from the experience. However, I came to realise that the teachers could draw upon theoretical **subject** knowledge (*episteme*) and practical skills (*techne*) which had been accrued

through practice. The model could still be applied, it could still work. However, some teachers could draw upon both scientific **subject** and **pedagogic** knowledge and on practical skills which had been accumulated through both formal and informal means.

My earlier thinking had another deep flaw. In thinking about epistemic knowledge in my conceptual framework, I failed to take due cognisance of Turner-Bisset's (1999, p.43) admonition that pedagogic knowledge or knowledge of learners is divided into cognitive and social knowledge. Cognitive knowledge of learners could encapsulate universal, epistemic knowledge and context specific knowledge about a particular group of learners (see 2.5.4). Social knowledge of learners would be deemed to be indispensible for some practices (see 6.3.4).

Epistemic knowledge could be in relation to the subject, learning and teaching and learners.

In addition, the teachers also had vocational knowledge as well as personal knowledge and experience from which to draw upon, while making decisions within their disrupted spaces. As Goodfellow, (2001, p.4) suggests that *phronesis* is a way of knowing that involves expert knowledge including personal as well as professional knowledge.

To explain further, some teachers, for example Tracey, might be drawing upon theoretical subject knowledge in their disrupted spaces. Tracey's scientific knowledge was in the field of nursing and she also had extensive experience of nursing in practice. Knowledge accumulated through experience could be both universal and specific. It was also apparent, through her talk, that she had a strong affiliation to the vocational culture and values of nursing. She also appeared to have cognitive, contextual knowledge and skills of her learners. She had formal theoretical knowledge, through her TQFE. She referred to being "very much into Brookfield" saying that she "liked Brookfield a lot" (Brookfield, 1995, 2006, 2010). Tracey had allocated 25 points to

theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching in the questionnaire (Annex XXIII). Therefore, as in Figure 7, below, Tracey appeared to be drawing upon all these categories of knowledge.

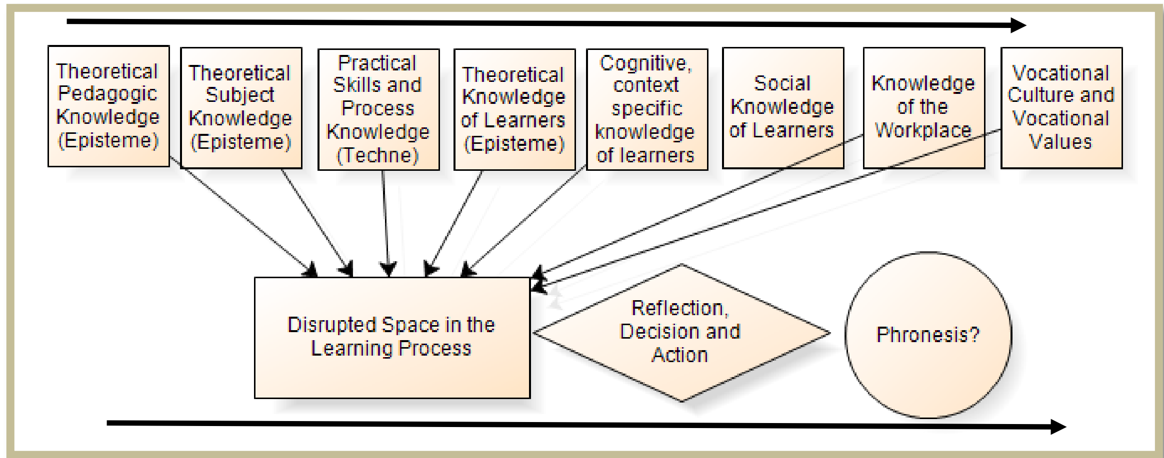

Figure 7

In her interview, Tracey said that she described herself as being "a reflective person" and that "reflective practice is hugely important in nursing" and, in her mind, to education. She thought that what she did during her disrupted practice was "linked to the cornerstone of being reflective" and that if she had not been reflective she thinks she might have "acted impulsively" and the situation "wouldn't have had the outcome that it did." It could be said that Tracey's analysis of the context determined her actions, which was informed by and contributed to her practical wisdom.

Colin, Eleanor, George, Ian, Janice, Kieran, Lennie, Melanie, Neil, Orla, Pamela, Quentin, Susan and Tracey all had strong vocational experiences and backgrounds which were relevant to what they were teaching. In all of these teachers' narratives of their experience of the phenomenon, they made reference to their vocational experiences and backgrounds.

In her interview, Vickie was the participant who most valued theoretical knowledge of

learning and teaching, allocating 50 points to this knowledge in the questionnaire. Having a Masters Degree in Special Education Needs, she also had theoretical knowledge of learners. It would also appear, from her narrative, that she had context specific knowledge of the learners that she was working with as well as social knowledge. She did not have a vocational background. The knowledge that was being drawn upon in her disrupted space could be expressed in Figure 8, below.

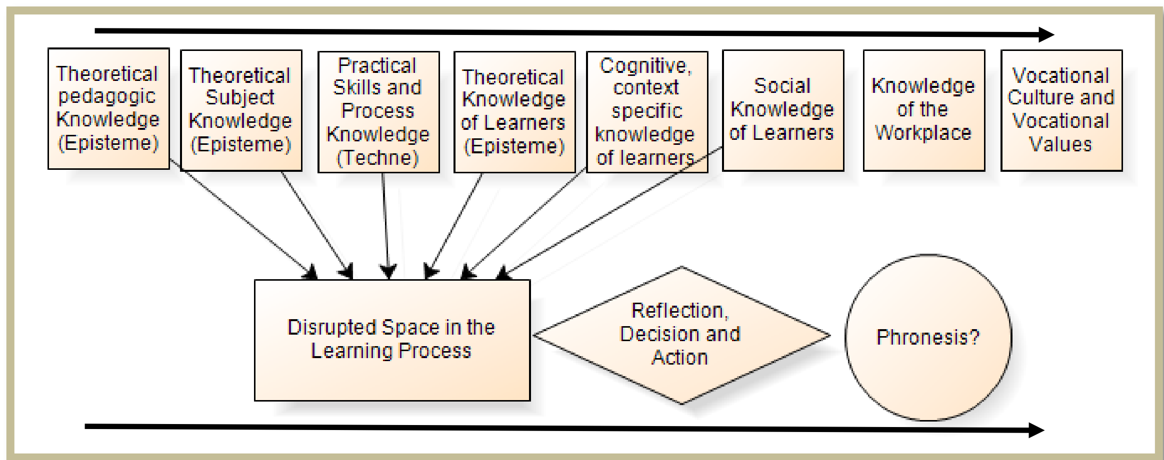

Figure 8

Two of the teachers, Alan and Kieran, were undertaking their TQFE and were in the process of accessing formal pedagogical knowledge. Colin had been teaching for twelve years without access to this knowledge but he had access to formal theoretical subject knowledge and experience of the workplace to draw upon. In his disrupted space, Colin could be drawing upon several categories of knowledge, including theoretical subject knowledge but not theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching.

See Figure 9, overleaf.

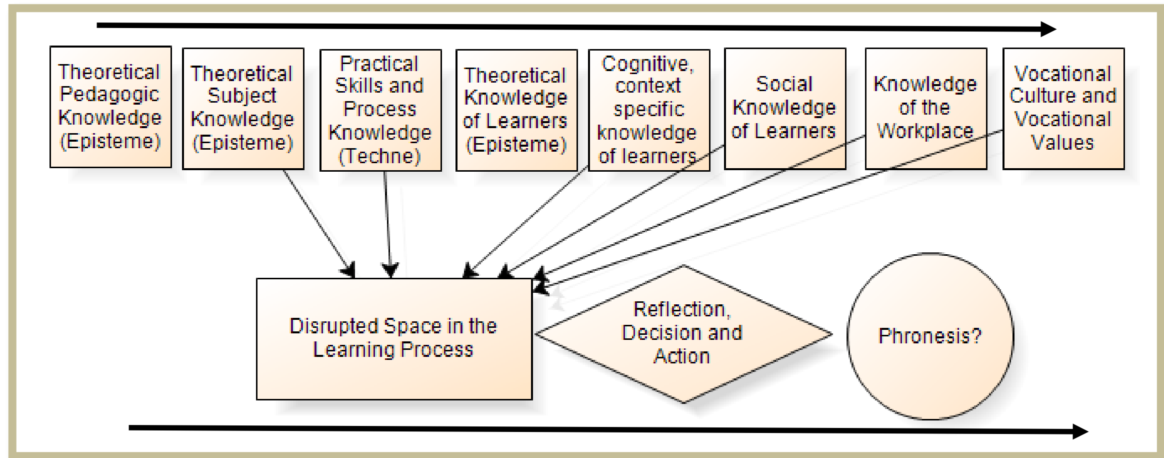

Figure 9

I came to realise that all of the teachers could be drawing upon epistemic universal knowledge, either in their subject area, in learning and teaching or in relation to learners. They could draw upon one or several of these areas of epistemic knowledge and their technical knowledge and when examined during disrupted spaces, then practical wisdom or *phronesis* could emanate from the process.

In the process of reflecting on the teachers' narratives and on the information that was accrued through the questionnaire, I was struck by the fact that most of the teachers regarded theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching less highly than the other three categories of knowledge. 362 points (16%), out of a total of 2,300, were allocated to Theoretical Knowledge of Learning and Teaching. Although the teachers did not appear to value theoretical knowledge, in their narratives, it was evident that theories of learning and teaching were being used. I was also curious as to know what knowledge in relation to learning and teaching influenced the practice of those, such as Colin and Ben, who had yet to access formal educational training. This question will be addressed later, on considering the second of the five themes which emerged from the explication process of the data.

7.6. Thoughts, Attitudes and Beliefs about Teaching

The teachers were asked what body of knowledge they most valued for effective practice, subject knowledge, theoretical knowledge (*episteme*), process knowledge (*techne*) or knowledge of learners.

What body of knowledge the teachers' most valued varied and the reasons that it was held in high regard varied. For example, Eleanor regarded knowing your subject well as being motivational for learners while others, such as Ursula and Alan, thought that having a high level of subject knowledge established their credibility with learners. Helen valued her technical knowledge (*techne*) and felt that she could teach in several subject areas within reason, because she had skills as a teacher. She could be "*just one page ahead of the learners*." By this, it would appear that she meant that she had a high level of process skills. She said:

> I think it depends on the class that you are dealing with. I think I could go into a class where I don't have a high level of the subject knowledge but I could still do a good classroom management. I don't mean to be big headed here but I think, not at degree levels or that, at the lower levels, I could probably go in and feel quite confident at teaching the low level, at the NC level, even though I am not a subject specialist in it. I have got teaching skills but I would never feel comfortable going into a class where I feel that I have got no subject knowledge on it and I can't do it.
>
> I feel as though there are lots of things I could teach because I can teach, even though there are certain areas where I know I am not going to be comfortable in that subject area. I probably could never teach Art to a 5th Yr Higher class but I could probably go into a primary school and teach some art or into a first year school....but if it was something specialised, I really couldn't do it.
>
> **Helen: Computing & ICT**

Helen's point of view is in opposition to that of Shulman (1987) who stressed that not only did teachers require sound content knowledge, or knowledge of subject but also pedagogical content knowledge, or knowledge of how to teach that subject. He described pedagogical content knowledge as including:

> An understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons (Shulman, 1987, p.9).

It is also unlikely as to whether Thomson & William (2008) would agree with Helen as they considered teachers to need strong content knowledge in order to ask good questions, interpret learner responses and to provide appropriate feedback. In their opinion, teachers also need good understanding of content in order to adjust their teaching, based on student understanding of the context (ibid. p.15).

It is also unlikely that Vickie would agree with Helen, as she was of the opinion that teaching learners with disabilities or additional requirements for learning required deep theoretical knowledge of learners and learning and teaching:

> "Teaching learners with special educational needs, you need to learn to slow down the learning, tease it all out, ask "How does somebody **learn** (Vickie's emphasis) how to do that?" Then break it all down and then ask, "what do I have to do before they get to **that** point?" ….. It becomes more sort of….creative…you can be more creative….you can also…because you have to keep doing the same things, you have to find **another** way of doing it…and you can find ways of doing that….and you have to find ways of transferring learning in different contexts….and you can make it realistic ….and practical"
> **Vickie: Support for Learning**

Shulman (ibid. p.9) said that an assumption exists that most teachers begin with some expertise in the content that they teach, which may be an unfounded assumption. A serious topic of his research was the varying degrees of subject matter competence and incompetence of teachers (ibid. p.9).

It would be my view that, in order to teach all students to a high standard, teachers need to understand their subject matter deeply, so that they can help learners create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another and address misconceptions.

Perhaps there is an emerging picture that those who teach less able learners require more 'relationship' and less 'subject' knowledge. Perhaps, then, there is a danger that, in such a picture, teachers might be underestimating how critical subject knowledge is at the lower levels.

Whether or not Helen's is a voice which represents a substantial number of staff in the sector, and the possible implications for learning and teaching, could be an area of further research.

7.6.1. Knowledge of Learners Held in High Regard

Almost universally, the teachers held knowledge of learners in high esteem and, from a scrutiny of their narratives, it would appear both social and cognitive knowledge was valued (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p.45). Ben, for example, wanted social knowledge in order to have a "personal feeling" with his learners. George on the other hand, valued cognitive knowledge of learners, so that he could better plan and organise the students' learning. George also valued social knowledge of learners in case it "impacts on their ability to stay the distance". He spent a lot of time "getting things out in the open" and offering support to learners. Quentin said that teachers need to "have a personality that is very switched on to managing relationships" or learning would not happen.

7.6.2. Theoretical Knowledge not Highly Valued

From the teachers' talk, it would appear they did not value theories of learning (*episteme*) and they spoke in very practical ways about learning and teaching. The teachers did not use vocabulary such as acquisition or participation metaphors (Sfard, 1998) of learning but, in unpacking their narratives, models of learning appear to emerge. When Ben says that, with a quiet HN class he had to, "basically stand up and say, look, this is what you need to know" that would appear to be teaching as transmission in action. The transmission model also seemed to be in operation when Neil said that his students needed information for employment and saw him as "the person with the answer." Perhaps Neil was teaching utilising a Lockean model of learning (see Chapter One 1.1) and saw his learners as "empty cabinets waiting to be filled" (Phillips & Soltis, 2004, p.17)

In Neil's talk, learning as 'having', or the acquisition metaphor, was implicit. He thought that if a teacher was not organised and properly planned, the student might be "enriched" but might not get the qualification. Acquisition did not appear to be so highly prized by Ben, Davina and Ursula. Ben believed that "learning was about more than achieving qualifications" and that if students did not pass his course then he did not consider it to be a failure. A possible comment on this point of view is that qualifications could be regarded a currency of learning

Davina stated that she tried to "build [her learners] up as people" and that their "social and emotional development" was "absolutely the key to everything." For Ursula, learners "gaining social skills" and "feeling more confident" or learning "life skills" was "just as important as gaining an Intermediate One in Care." Ursula thought that, for some learners, she was, "developing the person more than teaching them...it is almost like teaching through the backdoor." This finding, or learning about being more than qualifications, was also evident in a study of Further Education lecturers by Robson (2004), where staff thought that they provided "added value" to learners, over and above

the subject that they taught.

The participation metaphor, or learning as 'doing', was evident in much of the teachers' narratives. Kieran and Ian both said that they had had to learn "to do less" and ensure that their students did more, or, according to Kieran, the students "won't learn." According to Oser (1994) teaching students to be responsible for themselves and for their own learning is a moral motivation underpinning any existing teaching activity (ibid. p.62). Oser (ibid. 62) went on to say that it is seldom that teachers state that they must set conditions that allow learners to take responsibility. Oser was writing about teachers teaching in schools. Whether not undertaking to "do less" for learners, perhaps to prepare them for the workplace or for Higher Education, is a feature of Further Education, is outwith the limitations of this study but could be another interesting area for further research.

"Learning-as-participation" (Sfard, 1998, p.6) could also be evident in Susan's narrative when she spoke about learning together with her students and both she and Eleanor spoke about negotiating learning with their learners. Quentin talked about learning emerging **within** a class (researcher's emphasis). It would appear that Davina subscribed to the view that learning was a "social process" (Coffield, 2008; Hodkinson, *et al.*, 2004; James & Biesta, 2007; L. S. Vygotsky, 1962) and she seemed to go to great lengths to ensure that her learners got to know each other as people, even going as far as setting up and using social networking sites. Vickie's narrative would appear to concur within a Constructivist view of learning (Dewey (1959-1952), Piaget (1896-1980), Vygotsky (1896-1834): see Chapter One 1.1) when she said, "you experience something…you link it up to what you already have experienced or what you already know and then it becomes part of your basic body of knowledge and information."

So, while the teachers did not talk about or seem to value theoretical knowledge (*episteme*), it would appear that different theories have been accommodated in practice.

Argyris & Schon (1974) called this *theories-in-use* and suggested that there is a theory consistent with what people say and a theory consistent with what they do. Argyris, Putnam & McLain Smith (1985) suggest that Espoused Theory is the world view and values that people believe their behaviour is based on and Theory-in-use is the world view and values implied by their behaviour. In other words, they are suggesting that people are often unaware of their theories-in-use.

Harkin (2005, p.169) suggested that educational theories are tried and tested through formal teacher education. If they don't work, they are discarded, if they do work they become part of what Moon (1999, p.53) described as, "a useable network of knowledge that further guides practice." It was evident in the study that the teachers' had "theories-in-use" which had become part of their practice. As Kieran said, educational theory did not appear to be understood by staff until "somebody actually points it out to them...and then they realise they are actually doing that." Perhaps this is an explanation for the teachers' apparent lack of high regard for theoretical knowledge in learning and teaching? Their Espoused Theory was that theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching did not impact on practice, but in actual fact, theories-in-use were evident.

One clear exception to the notion that theoretical knowledge (*episteme*) did not appear to be valued was Vickie, who was quite adamant that, for her, universal knowledge was a priority for effective learning and teaching. She said that, even though "all the right things" were being done, unless a teacher could articulate **why**, then they were never going to improve.

7.6.3. Theories-in-Use

In a two-year long study into twenty-seven teachers in Wales, Salisbury *et al.* (2005, p.4) found that the teachers spoke about learning in a "common sense" way. Rather than articulating abstract, universal theories, the teachers in this study revealed what Salisbury *et al.* (2009, p.435) describe as "folk models" deriving from personal

experience. When teachers did speak about "theories" of learning, they were rooted in the nature of their relationships with learners and, therefore, "particularistic" rather than universal. The findings in this study would seem to be concomitant with Salisbury's. In a recent journal, Salisbury *et al.* (ibid. p. 435) ask "to what extent do FE teachers need to be able to verbalise theorised pedagogic rationales and give detailed explanations about the how, what and why of teaching and learning?" Salisbury *et al.*'s argument seems to be that, if the learners were doing well does it actually make any difference if their teachers could not theorise about learning? It is a good question but one that they do not answer.

What was plain, from the teachers' talk, was that they drew from different sources of knowledge on different occasions. Vickie called her occupational knowledge as being "the arrows in the pack" and which particular arrow she chose depended on the learner, the subject and the context. It was already stated that the teachers in Scotland's colleges teach a diverse range of programmes to a diverse body of learners. Perhaps the wide range of different arrows that are required to meet the diverse student body and the diverse curriculum in Further Education is unique to the sector?

Considering the notion of 'folk models' or 'theories-in-use' brought me back to thinking about Colin and Ben and what knowledge in relation to learning and teaching influenced their practice.

7.6.4. Another Arrow in the Pack?

Phronesis is the priority of the particular and, as Aristotle (1976, pp 1139b 18-36, cited in Flyvberg, 2004 p. 288) said, sometimes knowledge of rules (universal knowledge) is inferior to specific knowledge, and "some people who do not possess theoretical knowledge are more effective in action [especially if they are experienced] than others who do possess it."

In this way, perhaps, Colin and Ben could appear to teach well, without having access to theoretical, universal knowledge because they knew how to teach – they had specific, technical knowledge, accrued through practice and their own '*theories-in-use*'. A model for Colin and those like him, with vocational backgrounds but no formal teacher education could be as follows, at Figure 10, below.

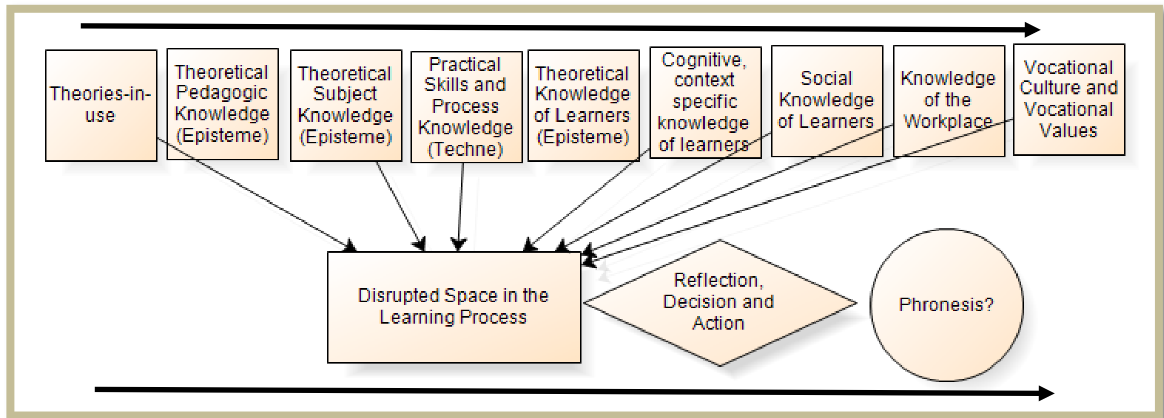

Figure 10

A model for Ben and those like him, with academic subject knowledge, no vocational background and no formal teacher education could be as follows at Figure 11, below.

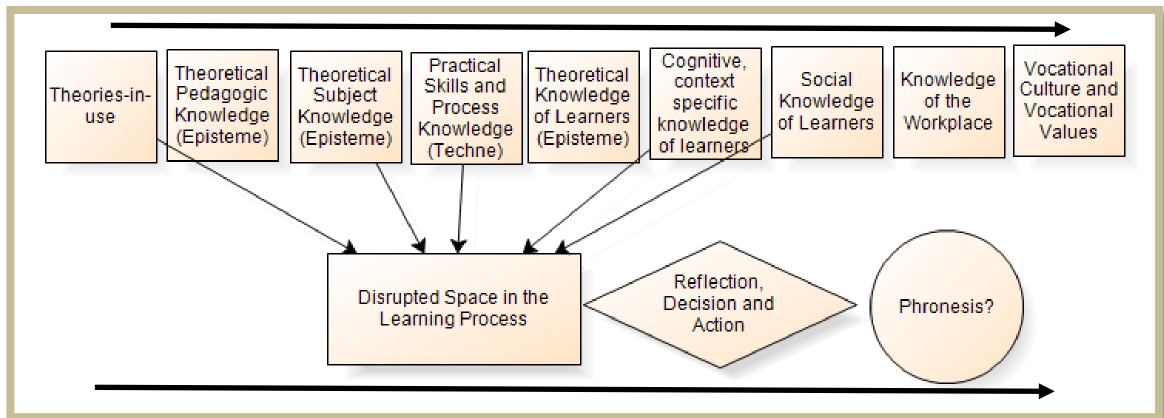

Figure 11

7.6.5. Interaction between the General and the Concrete

So, teachers like Colin and Ben are drawing upon on specific practical knowledge, theoretical subject knowledge and utilising their theories-in-use when encountering disrupted spaces. Is this enough for *phronesis*? For Aristotle, (1976, pp 1139b 18-36, cited in Flyvberg, 2004 p. 288) knowledge of the universal **and** the specific was required for *phronesis*. It requires an *interaction* between the general and the concrete (Flyvberg, 2004 p.285).

I would suggest that there is an issue here for the sector to grapple with. Salisbury *et al.*'s (ibid, p.15) question is a good one. Does it matter if teachers in colleges are unable to verbalise '*theorised pedagogic rationales'* if they are able to scaffold the learning for learners and get the job done? Or, as Vickie suggested, for professional practice, even though teachers are doing '*all the right things*', in order to improve, do they also need to know **why** they are doing all the right things? In addition, do they need to be able to articulate that '*knowing why'* knowledge provided they are capable of exploiting their '*knowing how*' knowledge?

In response to Salisbury *et al.*'s question one might say that it is a mark of professionalism for a teacher to embrace a clear definition of learning, which reflects their beliefs and practices and which they can defend, if challenged. I agree with Vickie, it is not enough to be able to teach effectively. It is also necessary to be able to have some understanding as to why that teaching is effective (or otherwise) in order to improve practice. If one does not have a framework for learning how can one legitimately accept or reject the worthiness or relevance of any new or emergent theories?

I would put forward the view that the apparent lack of high regard for theoretical knowledge in learning and teaching should be a matter of concern for the sector and a matter for formal teacher education.

7.6.6. Another Question

An additional question that arose was, "Where did Colin and Ben's '*theories in use'* come from? Colin had been teaching for twelve years, Ben for four. They had not had the opportunity to try and test educational theories that Harkin (2005, p.169) suggests are acquired through formal training. In both their interviews, they suggested that their early practice was shaped by their *"apprenticeship of observation*" (1995, cited in Borg, 2004, p.275). They also said that they had changed their practice over time. How did that happen? Was it through experience or through legitimate peripheral participation through the community of practice that they found themselves in? (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

I would tentatively suggest that this is indeed the case, that teachers such as Ben and Colin acquire their knowledge of teaching and learning as a process of social participation in the learning community that they do indeed find themselves in. Knowledge could be accrued through informal discussion with and through support from colleagues. It could be accrued through private study, continual professional learning activities provided by their college or other providers, such as the national support organisation Scotland's Colleges. I would suggest, however, that the issue of how teaching staff in colleges, with no formal pedagogical knowledge, acquire their '*theories-in-use*' is worthy of further research.

7.7. Learning Relationships

The teachers' talk revealed the importance the majority of them placed on their relationships with learners. The narratives displayed a strong concern for the social and emotional well-being of learners. Orla, Beauty Therapy, for example, was extremely concerned for the emotional welfare of the student in her disrupted space. Helen, Computing and ICT, talked about managing "families" of learners. George, Sports and Fitness, and Davina, Computing and ICT, chose to work in colleges rather than universities because of the nature of the learning relationships in colleges. George said

that, in universities, he did not know students' names but in college he knew their *"shoe size"*. Davina referred to her learners as being her "friends".

Susan, Early Education/Childcare, reported the pressure that striving to meet student demands made upon her. The demands of the learning relationships appeared to impact strongly on some of the teachers. Alan had felt "gutted" when a learner had made an official complaint about him because he thought he had provided this learner with strong educational and personal support. Tracey found managing the inter-class relationships "really hard". Many of the teachers' mentioned the often challenging and difficult life experiences of some of their learners. For example, Pamela talked about her students' *"heart breaking wee stories"*. The teachers' stances resonate with the findings of others in relation to the emotional labour of staff and an ethic of care which is seen to characterise Further Education (Avis *et al.* 2003; Robson, 2009; Salisbury, 2009).

From the teachers' talk, it would appear that most feel that their work is rewarding and fulfilling. It would also appear, from the narratives, that the teachers think that their job is challenging and pressurised. For example, Ian, Creative Arts, reported that "the pressure is constant, it is horrible" and Pamela, Beauty Therapy, stated that she "didn't have time to catch her breath". Many of the teachers stated that they had good support from colleagues but felt less than supported by their managers or by their colleges as a whole. Pamela was "disappointed" by this fact and Winnie thought that a systemic system of support for staff, for example, a mentoring system, would ease the professional and emotional burden.

It could be argued that the depth of knowledge that the teachers had in relation to their learners and the importance that they seemed to place on this learning relationship is a characteristic of Scotland's colleges. If this is so, then, perhaps a formal recognition of this relationship and the possible emotional labour that is seemingly essential to manage this relationship is required. Formal recognition might pave the way to systemic support

systems for staff to support their learners.

7.8. Added Value?

I was interested in Ben's point of view (5.6.2), that learning was about more than achieving qualifications. On the face of it, this point of view might concord with Robson's (2004) and that teachers in Further Education believe that they provide 'added value' to learners in relation to the quality of support and the quality of the learning relationships. However, this assumes that the learner gets the qualification plus the additional support.

In Ben's case, it would appear that he values additional learning that is unrelated to the qualification. The additional learning might be in relation to an increase of learner confidence and if the learner achieved this knowledge as well as a qualification, then that is, indeed, added value. However, if the learner did not achieve the qualification.....would that not be failure in the eyes of the learner? The learner might see qualifications as a currency of learning, irrespective of whether or not Ben thought that the learner might have acquired value-added knowledge merely through the process of participation in the process of learning.

I agree with Ben, that learning is more than about achieving qualifications, but if learners do not achieve the qualification, what exactly is it that they have learned? The issue of how to recognise "distance travelled" (see Davina, 5.7.2) or how to recognise the additional value that learners accrue though participation in learning has been a problem for the sector for some time. It has been resolved, to some extent, through personal learning planning. I am confident it will continue to be an issue, particularly in relation to the new education initiative for Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence[8] which was implemented in August 2010. Discussion of Curriculum for Excellence is outwith

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[8] http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp

the limitations of this thesis but the issue of accrediting distance travelled continues (The Scottish Government, 2009).

7.9. Summary

This Chapter sought to discuss and interpret the teachers' narratives in order to explicate their experience of the phenomenon of disrupted spaces. Strong themes emerged from this interpretation process which would seem to lie at the heart of the essence of phenomenon. These themes are: vocational values and vocational orientation; differentiated knowledge use, dependent on learner, level and context; a sharing of vocational, personal and emotional knowledge with learners; a practical rather than a theoretical orientation towards learning; a covert rather than an overt recognition of theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching and a commitment to learning relationships that work within an ethic of care. This last theme suggests a possibility of the emotional labour of staff. Many staff report on steadfast support from peers. However, a formal recognition of emotional labour might necessitate systemic systems of support. This could entail recognised and sustainable mentoring support for all staff.

The staff spoke about learning in practical rather than theoretical terms and did not appear to value theoretical knowledge. However, it was apparent from the teachers' talk that *theories-in-use* were evident. This finding gave rise to the question as to whether or not staff in Scotland's colleges should be able to articulate *'knowing why'* knowledge if 'knowing how' was being applied effectively. I put forward an answer to this question and suggest that it is a mark of professionalism for teachers to have an explicit definition of learning which is their own, which reflects their beliefs and practices and which they can defend, if challenged. I also put forward the view that the apparent lack of high regard for theoretical knowledge should be a matter of concern for the sector and for formal teacher education.

The Chapter also raised the question as to where teachers who enter teaching in colleges without formal pedagogical knowledge acquire their '*theories-in-use*'. It could be said that knowledge of learning and teaching for such staff accumulates through a process of social participation in the learning community that they find themselves in. I would suggest that this is an area for further research.

The following Chapter will consider where *phronesis* could be seen in the teachers' narratives. It will also consider the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical framework that was adopted and the strengths and limitations of the data collection methods which might have affected the findings.

Chapter Eight

8. Where is *Phronesis*?

8.1. Introduction

This study aimed to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff in Scotland's colleges and the extent to which *phronesis* both contributed to and emanated from the process. This Chapter will consider the teachers' narratives about their disrupted spaces and interpret the text against the three interpretations of *Phronesis* that was identified in Chapter Two. It will also consider the usefulness of the Aristotelian model in the education of Further Education teachers and in their continual professional development. In addition, this Chapter will review to what extent the study's theoretical framework affected the findings. It will also consider the strengths and weakness of the data collection methods.

8.2. The Disrupted Spaces

Previous Chapters have outlined the nature of the teachers' disrupted spaces. It could be said, that a composite picture of the various disrupted spaces, which were identified by the teachers, might serve to illustrate the dynamic complexity of the sector.

Six of the teachers' stories were described relatively fulsomely in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven a further six stories were condensed. Due to space limitations, I will interpret the six stories which were outlined in Chapter Six and 'look for *phronesis*' because these texts are richer. Using the richer texts for interpretation will allow the reader to enter into the conversation and bring their own meanings to the text. The reader may or may not agree with my interpretation. I consider the possibility that the

reader may have their own view as being a strong point in human science research. Perhaps a consequence of the rich conversations which can emanate from a struggle to explicate our lifeworlds is a small chink of understanding about what it is to be human.

8.3. Looking for *Phronesis*

In Chapter Two it was argued that *phronesis* has a set of characteristics. It is a form of knowledge and reasoning that is moral and ethical and orientated towards the common good. It involves a flexible relationship with the universal and the particular and it is acquired with experience. *Phronesis* is also context-specific. According to Noel (1999 p.283) *phronesis* seeks to answer the question, "What should I do in this situation?" Three interpretations of *phronesis,* drawn from the work of Noel (1999) and Feldman (1997) were outlined in Chapter Two. These interpretations are:

- The Rationality Interpretation
- The Situational Interpretation
- The Moral Character, or teaching as being Interpretation

Six of the teachers' narratives will now be reviewed against the above three interpretations, in order to deduce whether or not *phronesis* contributed to or emanated from their actions in their disrupted spaces. It must be stated that this review is merely my point of view and the reader may not agree with the points put forward. It could be argued, though, that all judgements of *phronesis* are subjective, particularly if regarded from the phenomenological perspective that they are context and person specific.

I want to say, however, that whether or not the teachers acted wisely or made wise decisions was not the primary aim of this study. The research aimed to illuminate how teachers were experiencing the learning and teaching process. Utilising the concept of *phronesis* was a means towards this aim.

Nevertheless, I now invite the reader to consider the following interpretations and reflect on whether or not they think the teachers were practically wise.

8.4. Ben

Aristotle defined *phronesis* in the Nichomachean Ethics as 'a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man' (translation D. Ross 1984 p.1140b5). It would appear that Ben, in seeking a resolution to the classroom difficulties he was facing, was struggling to act in a way in which it was beneficial to all the students. It would appear that he acted in a deliberative reflective manner and examined his own beliefs and actions. It could be said that Ben was acting within the rationality interpretation of *phronesis* (see 2.6.1). He sought to answer the question, "What should I do in this situation?" through practical reasoning. Audi (1989, cited in Noel, 1999, p.276) provides a definition of the rationality interpretation of *phronesis:*

> "Practical reasoning makes actions that are based on practical reasons intelligible as conduct in accordance with one's practical judgement; these actions, in turn, are based on at least one proposition the major premise of which is held as a guiding principle and is, in a reasonable person, at least prima facie correct (p.28)"

Phronesis is a sense or a tacit skill for doing the ethically practical (Flyvberg, 2004, p.287). Ben displayed pedagogical tact (Van Manen, 1995) and behaved ethically and morally in his disrupted space. He sought to ease the situation between the students. He made a conscious, decision not to read what was written about the learner. He didn't want to be prejudiced towards the other two students. It would also appear that he displayed open-mindedness (Brunstad, 2007, cited in Smith, 2007, p.3) as he was prepared to review his decision-making and to share his thoughts with his class.

Phronesis requires experience (Flyvberg, 2004, p.288) and also emanates from experience. As Gibbs (2007 p.233) puts it, "practical wisdom [is] developed through experience of practical judgements". It could be said, then, that Ben, as a relatively new teacher, was accumulating practical wisdom through his experiences not only of this disrupted space but also through an accumulation of different experiences. In addition, as he was ready to review his decision-making and to consider what he might do differently in the future, it would appear that he was prepared to harness this practical knowledge (*phronesis*) when making judgements in the future.

Ben considered knowledge of his subject to be important for effective teaching and considered technical knowledge (*techne*) to be of less importance than knowledge of his learners and an ability to develop, manage and maintain effective learning relationships. He admitted to having no theoretical knowledge (*episteme*). He could be drawing upon '*theories-in-use*' but it was not clear whether or not Ben had the knowledge or experience necessary for the situational or moral character interpretations *of phronesis.*

8.5. Davina

Phronesis emphasises practical knowledge and practical ethics and, from her telling of her story of her disrupted space, it would appear that Davina was attempting to act "with regard to the things that are good" (Aristotle, translation D. Ross, 1984, p1140b5). She seemingly displayed a real concern for the welfare of her learners and took considerable steps to ensure that they felt comfortable and safe in her class.

In her disruptive space, in seeking to answer the question, "What should I do in this situation?" appeared to perceive all that was involved in the situation and could be an example of "teaching in action" (Feldman, 1997, p.769). Davina's disrupted space appears to sit within the situational interpretation of *phronesis* (see 2.6.2).

Although her narrative appeared to be rooted in the particular and did not appear to draw

upon theoretical knowledge, she could, however, be drawing upon her "useable network of knowledge that further guides practice" (Moon, 1999, p.53). In Davina's disrupted space she displayed discernment of the learners' discomfort in class and quickly analysed the situation. She drew upon her prior experience and elements of her occupational knowledge when deciding to act. Her actions were oriented toward the good of the learners, as well as her own good and she made a real effort to connect with their needs and ensure their well-being. She altered her future practice as a result of the knowledge gained during her disrupted space.

Birmingham (ibid p.317) considered virtue in teaching to be expressed in actions such as caring for students and ensuring just treatment for students and for colleagues. It would appear that Davina, could lay claim to being virtuous with the context of her lifeworld, as her accounts of her experiences centred on actions taken to ensure both her learners and her colleagues were cared for and supported.

Davina stated that she had not considered being a teacher until it was suggested to her by somebody else and then "*it was obvious*" that that was what she should do. She involved herself in work that went over and above her job description and was involved in creative and innovative practice in her college. Oser (1991, p.100) stated that taking responsibility is the mark of the ethically professional teacher and Davina took responsibility for her learners, for example by phoning them if they missed classes. Back (2002, p.3) advises that the development of ethical morality arises from education and experience. As Davina had some considerable experience of teaching, it could be assumed that her ethical standpoint had accrued from this experience.

She talked about corresponding with learners late into the evening. She shared some personal information with learners and described learners as being her "friends". It would appear to me that Davina is a teacher who could be described as a teacher for whom teaching is a way of being human. Dunne (1993, cited in Noel p.284) stated that

"*phronesis* is not a cognitive capacity that one has at one's disposal but is, rather, very closely bound up with the kind of person one is" (p.273). To me, this description fitted Davina.

Davina also appeared to provide practical reasoning for her actions. It could be suggested that, from Davina's narrative, her behaviours and actions fall within all three interpretations of *phronesis* and, within the specific context under consideration, could be described as being a *phronimos* or a wise teacher.

8.6. Eleanor

Eleanor's disrupted space was not solely situational, as in the case of Davina and George, in as much as that it did not rely on one incident. Her space was multi-dimensional. As a Head of School, her space involved a learner, a lecturer and herself. She had a learning relationship with the learner and a management role with the lecturer. Her space involved her personal interactions with the learner as well as support for the lecturer to manage her relationship with the same learner.

She appeared to apply pedagogical tact (Van Man en 1991) to the situation when saying that the learner "wanted to be good" and that her negative behaviour derived from a lack of self confidence. In addition, pedagogical tact was evident when she advised the teacher to "see through" the learner's behaviour and acknowledge the fact that there was a struggling young person underneath. Perhaps this was an example of Dunne's (1993, p.292) phonetic insight, where we can have unique insights into certain practical situations due to our experiences and personal relationships with the intricacies of those situations (Noel, 1999a, p.282)

Phelan (2005b) describes discernment as being "a teacher's capacity to see the significance of a situation, to imagine various possibilities for action and to judge ethically how one ought to act on any given occasion" (p.10). Eleanor's talk described

her own disrupted space with the learner when she herself was teaching. She appeared to demonstrate discernment in her reaction to the learner's possible disruption. She turned the situation around and, rather than reprimanding the learner for shouting out in class, she utilised the learner's suggestions as worthy of recognition and praise. In turn, she appeared to have greatly increased the learner's sense of self-worth.

I would suggest that Eleanor's narrative, like Davina's, also sat within the moral character, or teacher as being, interpretation. This is not to say that her narrative separates her from the rationality or situational interpretation as Noel (1999, p.284) makes plain that all interpretations of *phronesis* can be found in the moral character interpretation. From her talk, Eleanor could be said to display the elements of a "virtuous character" (Dunne, 1993, p.283) in this specific context. It could be said that she displayed ethical goodness and pedagogical tact (Van Manen 1991) in her decision-making and for ethical decision-making, one must have moral character. Noel (1999, p.285) explains that *phronesis* is gained from experience and from experience one learns to act morally.

It is unclear as to whether or not Eleanor interacted with theoretical knowledge as well as practical knowledge. However, as with the case of Ben and Davina, perhaps she was utilising '*theories-in-use*'.

Eleanor also appeared to provide practical reasoning for her actions. It could be suggested that, from Eleanor's narrative, her behaviours and actions fall within all three interpretations of *phronesis* and, within the specific context under consideration, could be described as being a *phronimos* or a wise teacher.

8.7. George

George seemed to provide evidence of Fenstermacher's (1999, p.103) practical arguments. He sought to answer the question, "*What will I do in this situation?*"

through practical reasoning. Like Ben, George showed commitment to what he was doing and was able, to some considerable degree, to explain and justify himself. (Noel, 1999, p.276)

He provided defensible decisions for his actions during his disrupted space based on moral and ethical decisions. He acted for the common good in as much as that he was aware of the interests of all the parties involved. When he came back from the residential, he took care to contact and counsel the three recalcitrant students and appeared to maintain an open-minded and non-judgemental attitude to them.

While Fenstermacher makes clear that the notion of practical reasoning is not an easy one to capture (ibid. p.102), George would appear to be acting within the rationality interpretation of *phronesis*. His disrupted space was also situational and he stated that the knowledge gained from the situation would influence his practice in future. Like Davina, his talk was rooted in the particular and it was unclear as to what extent George drew down upon scientific or universal knowledge. However, he was an experienced teacher and perhaps he was influenced by '*theories-in-use'*. It could be said that, in his disrupted space, George displayed elements of practical wisdom.

8.8. Lennie

Lennie's disrupted space was complex and situational. Oser (1991, p.202) stated that teachers need to consider their principles which define their professional responsibilities when seeking to resolve dilemmas when normal activities are interrupted. In Lennie's narrative, when he sought to answer the question, "What do I do in this situation?" it would appear that he was working within a "vocational culture'" which Colley *et al.* (2003, p.487) suggest is the "guiding ideology of practice*"* in Further Education colleges. Lennie stipulated that he did not hold theoretical knowledge in any high regard and in his disrupted space whether universal knowledge rather than particular knowledge was considered is debatable. On the one hand, it would appear that universal knowledge

was not considered, for example, perhaps knowledge of Equality legislation might have guided his decision-making in a different direction. On the other hand, it could be said that he displayed awareness of universal knowledge in relation to professional values and Code of Conduct because he said that "he would be out of a job" if his superiors were to be aware of his actions.

It could be said that, in Lennie's disrupted space, he was drawing upon on theoretical knowledge of his subject, knowledge of the workplace, knowledge of learners and practical knowledge (*techne*). It could be said that he reflected-on-action and maintained that he would act differently should a similar experience occur in the future.

From my own experience and knowledge of colleges, I am not unfamiliar with thinking such as Lennie's. It could be said that such thinking emanates from the vocational culture and ethos which exists in the subject area. His arguments were such that he was fitting his students for the culture that they would find themselves working within. There would appear to be little doubt that Lennie was efficient at applying his technical and subject knowledge and ensuring that his students achieved their goals. He had recently been selected as an SVQ assessor for the construction trade.

Orton (1997, p.578) makes the distinction between production and action and states that "teaching is obviously a productive activity." Teachers produce something, that is, achievements in learners and that may be a goal in itself. However, according to Orton, action, or how teachers go about achieving these goals, should, in Aristotelian terms, also be orientated toward human flourishing and well-being. Whether or not Lennie's actions were wise or unwise and were orientated towards human flourishing and well-being are, I would suggest, open to interpretation.

The learner in Lennie's disrupted space exposed himself to a female student. Official action was dropped because the young woman withdrew her complaint after the young

man apologised. According to the young woman, he then went on to make invidious sexual remarks to her during the course of the following week. The question could be raised as to what that young man learned apart from how to build walls? Lennie reports that he took no action when the young woman reported the male student making remarks to her, on the grounds that he could not verify that the remarks had been made and that "there was only a week to go" until the students finished the course. The possible consequences for the young man, as a result of his behaviour, might have been removal from his job and Lennie made it plain that he thought that this would have been an excessive repercussion.

Applying the definition of morality that was outlined at 2.9.5 in this thesis, it is unlikely that Lennie's behaviour was concomitant with the Law. Equalities' legislation places a general duty on public bodies to eliminate discrimination and harassment on gender grounds and there is a probability that the female student could claim harassment under the law. It is also unlikely that Lennie's actions would conform to his college's Code of Conduct, evidenced by the fact that he said that "he would be oot a job" if his superiors found out. In addition, Atkinson (1969), reflecting Kant's Categorical Imperative, stated that, "moral standards must be in some way strictly universal, not subject to arbitrary exceptions or limitations of scope" (p.2).

It might be that Lennie, in making his decisions, was considering what he thought was best for all parties concerned, including himself. Atkinson (1969, p.92), however, also states that morality and moral decisions must override expediency and that moral standards must be conceived as being of paramount importance. It would appear that Lennie was acting outside what would be considered the conventional standards of moral conduct of the teaching profession, as understood by any member of that profession.

In this sense, then, Lennie's actions were immoral and, therefore, he could lay no claim

to practical wisdom in this instance.

8.9. Vickie

Vickie was the longest serving of the teachers and the only participant who talked about theories of learning. Her disruptive space involved a learner who was displaying negative behaviour. It was focused on action and was situational. It would appear that Vickie employed "phronetic insight" (Noel, 1999, p.282) in her handling of this practical situation. She talked about being able to "click into the feeling that the class had at that time." I would suggest that, in her disrupted space, she drew down upon her considerable experience of teaching as well as knowledge of students and personal relationships with learners. She knew what to do as a result of her experience as a teacher. (Fenstermacher, 1994, p.12). In addition, she appeared to display pedagogical tact (Van Manen 1995) or a moral intuitiveness, a sensitivity and openness to learners (ibid. p.44). She seemed to sense "what is the appropriate, right or good thing to do on the basis of perceptive pedagogical understanding of [learners] individual nature and circumstances" (ibid. p.45)

Vickie also stated that she loved teaching and wouldn't be happy if she wasn't teaching. It could be suggested that Vickie, like Davina and Eleanor is a teacher for whom teaching is a way of being. In her narrative, she repeatedly spoke in relation to what was good for others. Back (2002, p.3) suggests that phronetic knowledge relates to the question, "How can I live my life so my life will be good and leads to my well-being?" Perhaps thinking about others was one way for Vickie to consider her own happiness and well-being.

The way that Vickie talked about her decision-making in relation to her teaching career in general would suggest to me that she had gained *phronetic* knowledge. The reasons that she gave for her decision to leave secondary education and enter special education, for example, could be related to her attempt to live a life that would be good and lead to

her well-being. It could be suggested that, for Vickie, teaching was a way of being human and that she falls within the Moral Character or teaching as being interpretation of *phronesis*.

From her narrative it is unclear as to Vickie's reasons for her actions, therefore it is difficult to ascertain whether or not her actions and behaviours fall within the rationality interpretation of *phronesis*.

8.10. Where was *Phronesis*?

Phronesis is the type of thinking that enables human beings to act in ways that are good, sensible and conducive to well-being (Orton, 1997, p.570). I would suggest that, from their narratives, Ben, George, Davina, Eleanor and Vickie all demonstrated thinking, within their disrupted spaces, that fitted within this description.

Phronesis is essentially moral. Applying the definition of morality which was outlined at 2.9.5 in this thesis, Lennie's actions would appear to be immoral. Therefore, I would suggest that Lennie could lay no claim to practical wisdom in relation to the decisions he made and the actions that he took in his disrupted space

The question that arises for me now, is how might the findings from this study help colleges in any way?

8.11. *Phronesis* in Teacher Education

Further Education in Scotland is unique within the educational firmament. Formal pedagogic knowledge is not a requirement for practice, as it is in schools. The learner body encompasses learners of primary school age to learners aged eighty or over. It includes all creeds and abilities. The curriculum spans almost all levels in the Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework.

Phronesis requires knowledge and *phronesis* in teaching requires drawing upon occupational knowledge. The previous Chapter suggested that the various teachers in the study drew from different categories of knowledge dependent on the learner, level and context that they found themselves in. I suggested that this might be a particular characteristic of Further Education teachers as the range of learner abilities and the diversity of the curriculum can only be found in colleges. Schools do not teach Level 7 and above and Universities do not teach below Level 7. Colleges do both.

Some of the teachers drew heavily on their theoretical vocational knowledge and experience of the workplace. Others drew upon their theoretical subject knowledge and technical knowledge gained through practice. All valued their knowledge of learners.

The participants in the study had varying viewpoints as to the usefulness of the TQFE. An independent review of the TQFE was undertaken by Tribal Consulting (Walker, *et al.*, 2008) and their report was published in February 2008. A number of participants in the study noted concerns about the fitness for purpose of the TQFE qualification for college teachers. The report (ibid. p.11) stated that the issue of fitness for purpose of the TQFE was beyond the scope of the study but that there was clearly a concern about the qualification that needed to be addressed.

I would like to argue that using the Aristotelian model of teaching, utilising the concepts of theory (*episteme*), production (*techne*) and practice (*phronesis*) is a useful model for thinking about teacher education in Scotland's colleges. *Phronesis*, in this case is "an understanding of specific concrete cases and complex or ambiguous situations" (Kessels & Korthagen, 1996, p.19). In addition, as *phronesis* is essentially moral (Wivestad, 2008) and as Oser (1991, p.100) stated professional moral knowledge is not always systematically related to successful professional actions, utilising the concept of *phronesis* in teacher education would provide an opportunity for considering moral knowledge in teaching.

8.11.1. *Episteme, Techne* and *Phronesis*

Several commentators make a case for an Aristotelian view-point in teacher education. Orton (1997, p.570) for example, argues for an Aristotelian model of teaching, utilising the concepts of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. He states that all teaching utilises theoretical wisdom, specifically in subject matter; it is concerned with production because it is related to student achievement and is concerned with practice, or "means-to-an-end" thinking or "actions which are good and sensible and conducive to well-being" (Orton, ibid. p.570). He thinks teachers need all three of the Aristotelian virtues for effective teaching, which are *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*

8.11.2. *Techne* and *Phronesis*

Back (2002) is also in favour of utilising the Aristotelian virtues in teacher education but he is in favour of stressing the usefulness of *techne* over *episteme*. It could be said that the teachers in this study, like those in Salisbury's (2009, p.435), spoke about learning in a 'common sense' way. Data from the questionnaire (Annex XXIII) suggests that the teachers valued *techne* over *episteme.* Therefore, it is probably safe to say that they would agree with Back.

Back (ibid.) says that teachers need to know how to teach and that has to be learned on the ground and through experience and argues that it is "essential that teachers learn how to create their own practical knowledge, knowledge that will have meaning for them and will help them to act successfully in confusing and perhaps dangerous situations" (p.4).

Back (ibid) casts doubt on the role of theory in relation to teacher education. In this regard, he differs from Orton, who stressed that the usefulness of the Aristotelian model was that it drew on all three knowledge bases, that is *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. Back derives his argument from the ideas of Gadamer (1975, cited in Black, 2002, p.4) and states that "in an age of uncertainty, there is no practical advantage; it is even, perhaps, ethically dangerous to transmit doubtful theories or rigid pedagogic

technologies." Which theories he considered to be doubtful or rigid is unclear. However, Back (ibid) puts forward the notion that teacher education could adopt an Aristotelian model which emphasised technical procedural knowledge (*techne*) and *phronesis*, or how to go about teaching using practical knowledge and practical decision-making which is oriented towards the common good. In this model, theory would take a lesser role and *techne* and *phronesis* would come to the fore.

8.11.3. 'Knowing Why' and Knowing How'

Back's (ibid) viewpoint echoes the question that was raised in Chapter Seven. That is, should staff in colleges be able to articulate 'knowing why' knowledge if 'knowing how' was being applied effectively? (Salisbury *et al.* 2009, p.15).

In response to this question, I would say that it is not enough to teach effectively, a professional teacher ought to know *why* their teaching is effective (or otherwise) and to be able to articulate their understanding of the factors which contribute to this effectiveness (or otherwise). Staff need to be able to articulate 'knowing why' knowledge in order to be able to incorporate or reject new ideas and to be able to improve practice. Such an understanding can only be attained through epistemic, theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching.

The thinking behind the above question, that is, "Should staff in colleges be able to articulate 'knowing why' knowledge if 'knowing how' was being applied effectively?" relates only to theory (*episteme*) and production (*techne*). That is, if staff can do the job, do they need to be able to articulate why they can do it?

It does not consider practice which is *phronesis*, which also relates to "*knowing how*" but is differentiated from *techne* because of all the characteristics already outlined, including its moral and ethical component. Production (*techne*) has no moral element, it is about producing something. *Phronesis* has a moral component.

Korthagen and Kessels (1996, 1999) also put forward the notion of utilising the concept of *phronesis* within teacher education because "it is concerned with an understanding of specific concrete cases and complex or ambiguous situations*" (Kessels & Korthagen, 1996, p.19).* They do not deny the place of theory (*episteme*) in teacher education, just that they also promote *phronesis* because it is rooted in the particular and allows the teacher to perceive what is happening in a situation and creates flexibility for action

8.11.4. TQFE

Utilising an Aristotelian concept for teacher education in Scotland's colleges could facilitate a conversation about what knowledge is deemed to be required for effective teaching and what knowledge is valued. What was clear from this study was the range of knowledge being utilised by teaching staff. Teachers embarking on the TQFE could have been teaching for some time and have a range of knowledge that they already bring to bear in their practice. See Figure 12, below.

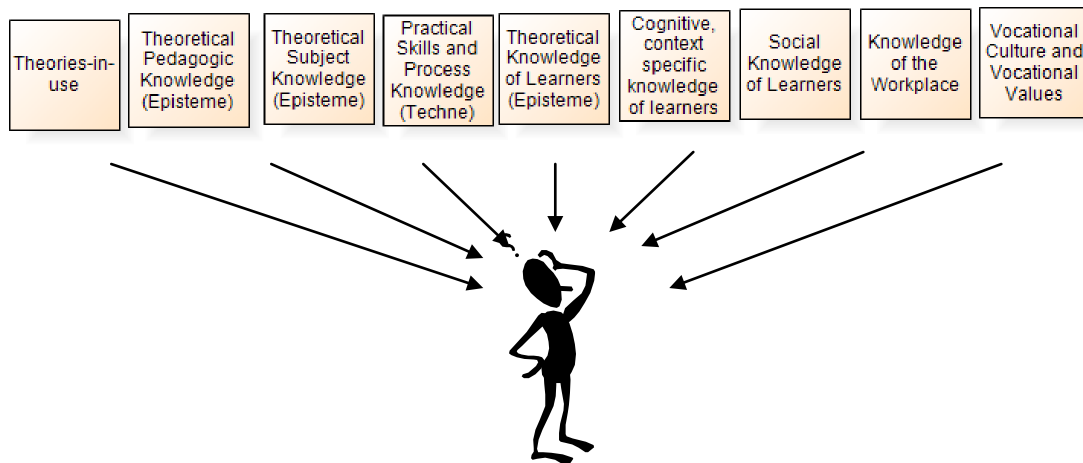

Figure 12

Teacher education programmes for teachers in Scotland's colleges could make use of the above illustration presented at Figure 12. It could facilitate an understanding of the knowledge that is already being utilised by teachers in their practice. It could help to

explore what knowledge is deemed to be necessary for effective practice. It could help to identify gaps in individual teachers' knowledge base and lead to differentiated programmes of learning which the teachers deem to be fit for purpose.

8.11.5. Moral Knowledge

The Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* in teacher education could also help practitioners develop their artistry by exploring problems of practice that cannot be solved by a straightforward application of established theories. It would help teachers like Lennie to reconsider their own assumptions and reasoning processes. It would also provide a framework for the consideration of the moral and ethical dilemmas that confront teachers in their everyday practice. Moral and ethical issues could be raised within the discourse of professionalism and professional practice.

I would go even further and suggest that considering *phronesis* in teacher education could lead to an accumulation of moral knowledge which would be considered as a necessary component of the occupational knowledge of teachers. I would like to see moral knowledge being added to the illustration at Figure 12 (p.227).

8.12. *Phronesis* in Continuing Professional Development

I would suggest that the three concepts of *phronesis* could be useful in teachers CPD. *Phronesis* seeks to answer the question, "What do I do in this situation?" CPD sessions could utilise case studies similar to the ones presented in this study. Utilising the idea of disrupted spaces could help teachers explore practical solutions to everyday problems. Smith (2007, p.3) suggested that it was in these situations, in disrupted spaces that professional learning took place. This kind of work could facilitate, "an understanding of specific concrete cases and complex or ambiguous situations" (Kessels & Korthagen, 1996, p.19). It could raise awareness in teachers of all the necessary elements of knowledge, *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis* but carried out in a cooperative, collaborative environment, it could support any lack of experience on the part of

teachers.

It could also help teachers like Lennie to reconsider their own assumptions and reasoning processes, and the moral components of their every day decision-making. Oser (1994, p.117) believed that any single teaching act undertaken in the classroom, or in any teaching setting, has a moral dimension. However, it is in disrupted practice, when normal teaching routines are interrupted that teachers need to consider principles for solving dilemmas (Oser, 1991, cited in Tirri, 1999, pp. 32-33). Considering case studies of disrupted practice and the role of *phronesis* could facilitate reflection on moral and ethical decision-making and contribute to a body of moral knowledge.

8.13. A Quick Review

So far, this Chapter has considered six teachers' narratives about their disrupted spaces and interpreted their text against the three interpretations of *phronesis* which were outlined in Chapter Two. It has also considered the usefulness of the Aristotelian model in the education of Further Education teachers and in their continual professional development. The Chapter will now consider how the strengths and limitations of the theoretical framework affected the study findings. In addition it will reflect on how the strengths and limitations of the data collection methods might have affected the findings.

8.14. Theoretical Framework

How did the theoretical framework affect the findings? The framework assumed that a teacher's subject knowledge, theoretical knowledge (*episteme*), process knowledge (*techne*), and knowledge of learners could guide the decision-making of teachers during disrupted spaces. It also assumed that teachers' personal biographies, learning biographies, level of teacher education and subject specialism could influence a teacher's decision-making.

The conceptual framework assumed that, when theoretical and practical knowledge were harnessed to make decisions within disrupted spaces, then *phronesis* could emanate from the process. *Phronesis*, as knowledge and gained from this experience, could be utilised and join the armoury of teachers' professional knowledge. The rationality and situational interpretations of *phronesis* were incorporated into the framework. The concept of *phronesis*, as a way of being, was not incorporated into the framework but the concept was assumed and acknowledged during the process of the study

This study set out to reach some understanding of the learning process in Scotland's colleges and how teachers were managing that process. This was a wide and almost indefinable area for anyone to set out to investigate. The theoretical framework was devised as a means to investigate this wide subject area. Using the concept of *phronesis* and the notion of disrupted spaces meant that the occupational knowledge of teachers could be considered. The reason being, that *phronesis* is about knowing how to draw down upon occupational knowledge and about knowing how to apply that knowledge when deciding how to act in particular situations.

Utilising the Aristotelian virtues of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis* allowed for an exploration of the types of knowledge that teachers were drawing upon during their disrupted spaces. This paved the way for the finding that the teachers were oriented to a practical rather than theoretical orientation towards learning. It also allowed for the finding to emerge that the teachers were drawing upon a wider range of knowledge than the theoretical framework assumed. This knowledge included vocational and personal knowledge and knowledge and experience of the workplace. It also included social and personal knowledge of learners. The theoretical framework also facilitated the understanding that the teachers were drawing upon different categories of knowledge at different times, dependent on the learner, the level of work and the context.

Utilising the concepts of disrupted spaces and critical incidents meant that I could get access to some of the every-day stories and incidents that constituted the working lives of teachers in colleges. The teachers' points of view on how they were managing these incidents shed some light on what was happening during the learning process in Scotland's colleges. Employing the concept of *phronesis* permitted an exploration into the possible moral and ethical components of teachers' actions because *phronesis* is inherently moral and orientated towards the common good, human flourishing and wellbeing..

The disadvantage to using *phronesis* as a theoretical concept to guide the study was that *phronesis* was a slippery fish to catch. It was very difficult to discern, from the teachers' narratives, the existence of *phronesis* or to establish whether the teachers' actions were wise or unwise. I attempted to surmount this problem in three ways. Firstly, guided by the work of Noel (1999) and Feldman (1997), I unpacked the different interpretations of *phronesis* and settled on three. This framework helped to facilitate an interpretation of the teachers' texts.

Secondly, when seeking to determine themes in order to "get at the notion" (Van Manen, 1990, p.79) of the phenomenon being addressed, I married the themes which emerged through the coding and interpretation of the transcripts with the characteristics of *phronesis*. For example, *phronesis* is deemed to be context-specific and about discernment and intuition. Therefore, two of the themes against which the teachers' texts were analysed were **Practical, Pragmatic and Context-Dependent: Ways of Teaching** and **Discernment, Intuition and Interaction: Learning Relationships.** In this way, I hoped that *phronesis* would not just be a focus of the study but that the concept would permeate the study.

Thirdly, it was difficult to discern what knowledge was being drawn upon in the teachers' disrupted spaces. *Phronesis* requires an interaction between the general and

the concrete, the universal and the particular. The knowledge that the teachers were drawing upon became a matter of interpretation. Therefore, it was made very clear that the explanation presented was merely my point of view and the reader was invited to join the interpretation process. The ontological assumption proffered by phenomenology, which that reality does not exist independently but that it is a process of how several parties negotiate meaning, allowed this action to be taken.

The theoretical framework adopted by this study had much strength. It provided a robust scaffold which set the guiding parameters for the investigation. It also allowed for exploration. It was not too constricting. This ensured the collection of data that was rich and meaningful. It also provided a framework for data analysis and explication of the findings.

8.15. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Data Collection Methods

One weakness in the data collection methods was that the sample was a large one. Twenty-three was a large number for a phenomenological study and it led to the accumulation of a great deal of data. Giorgi (2008, p.37) recommends at least three participants because, as he puts it, “At least three participants are included because a sufficient number of variations are needed in order to come up with a typical essence.” He argued for at least three participants because it would make it easier to discern the differences between individual experiences from the more general experience of the phenomenon. On the plus side, while twenty-three participants afforded a great deal of data, it could be said that the individual experiences, taken together as a whole, provide a composite picture of what life might be like for teachers in Scotland’s colleges at the present time.

Phenomenology was the methodology adopted. This methodology orients the researcher towards an explication of the data in the context of anecdotes or stories. Space limited the explication of twenty-three stories. Therefore, I was faced with the challenge of how

to present the findings. This was a problem that took some time to grapple with. I sought a solution to the dilemma by adopting Van Manen's (1990 p.33) advice to those engaged in hermeneutic phenomenological studies, that is, to balance the research by considering parts and whole. Six teachers' stories were told in order to provide an explication of the phenomenon and the remaining teachers' stories were summarised, thereby providing an idea of the whole. The six stories were considered as parts and the remaining teachers' accounts were summarised in order to flesh out, or provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon.

The interview was the data collection method of choice. The theoretical framework necessitated the gathering of biographical details on the participants, this necessitated a semi-structured approach to the interviews and the participants were sent information prior to interview. This action presented a methodological problem, as phenomenology directs researchers to study the lifeworld as it is lived and before pre-reflection. Harnessing two different approaches in interview was found to be the solution to this difficulty. The first half was semi-structured and collected biographical details. The second half adopted a phenomenological standpoint and allowed the participants to talk freely about their experiences of the phenomenon.

Meeting the first research question necessitated putting together two small questionnaires (Annex XII and Annex XIII). The first questionnaire (Annex XII) was provided for the participants prior to interview and it was their discussion of the questions that provided the data on the teachers' learning biographies. The second questionnaire (Annex XII) was based on the work of Beijaard (1995) and was initially put together in order to elicit some understanding of the teachers' professional identify. What it did do was help to elicit the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about learning and teaching. The 'points' system gave an indication of what categories of occupational knowledge the teachers most valued and, during interviews, they justified their position. The teachers had varied opinions as to which categories of occupational knowledge were

most important for effective teaching and they apportioned different 'points' to the four categories of knowledge. Out of a total of 2,300 points, 683 points (30%) was ascribed to Subject Knowledge; 665 points (29%) to Knowledge of Learners; 590 points (25%) to Technical Knowledge and 362 points (16%) to Knowledge of Theoretical Knowledge of Learning and Teaching.

The utilisation of this second questionnaire was a strong point in this study. Its use indicated the possibility that the teachers did not hold theoretical knowledge in as high a regard as other categories of occupational knowledge. In addition, discussing the questions provided rich data on the teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching.

8.16. Summary

This Chapter considered six teachers' narratives about their disrupted spaces and interpreted the text against the three interpretations of *phronesis* that was identified in Chapter Two. These interpretations were the rationality, the situational and the moral character or teaching as being (see definitions at 2.6). I invited the reader to enter the interpretation process. I deduced that *phronesis* could be seen in five of the teachers' stories but concluded that practical wisdom was not evident in the decision making and actions of the sixth, namely Lennie.

The Chapter then went on to consider how the findings from the study might benefit Scotland's colleges. It put forward the notion that the Aristotelian concepts of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis* could provide a useful model for the training of teachers in Scotland's colleges. It could pave the way for a conversation about what knowledge is deemed to be useful or valid for effective teaching in colleges, for example vocational knowledge (knowledge of the workplace), moral knowledge, social and cognitive knowledge of learners. Gaining a greater understanding of the varieties of knowledge necessary for practice could help to identify gaps in individual teacher's knowledge i.e. theoretical knowledge of teaching and learning. It could also allow for consideration of

the knowledge that teachers in colleges are already utilising before they are put forward for teacher education. In turn, this could pave the way for differentiated programmes of learning for the teachers which they might deem to be fit for purpose.

The Chapter also suggested that the case studies, based on disrupted spaces and utilising the concept of *phronesis* could be useful in teachers' continual professional development. Utilisation of such case studies within workshops or programmes of learning could help teachers develop their practice through analysing practical problems and looking for practical solutions. It could also help teachers accumulate a body of moral knowledge.

The Chapter also considered the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical framework and the data collection instruments.

The following Chapter will consider whether or not the research questions were answered and whether the aims of the study were met. In addition, it will reflect on the extent to which the methodological aim was achieved through the research design and about ways in which the research design might have been improved. It will also consider the extent to which the central question was answered and provide recommendations for further research.

Chapter Nine

9. Conclusions

9.1. Introduction

This study sought to provide an illuminative account of the learning and teaching process in Scotland's colleges and how some teachers in colleges were managing that process. It aimed to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and matured from the course of action taken.

This Chapter will consider to what extent the research questions and the aim of the study were met. It will also consider the extent to which the methodological aim was achieved through the research design and how it might be improved. Finally, it will reflect on the extent to which the central question was answered and provide recommendations for further research.

9.2. Research Questions and Research Aim

The study aimed to know more about the learning and teaching process in Scotland's colleges and how it was being managed by teachers. It aimed to find out about the professional judgements that teaching staff made during an interruption in the learning process, a disrupted space. The study would appear to have met this aim in as much as that a great deal of rich data emanated from the interviews with the participants on the various situations that they described as being interruptions in the learning process.

One finding that stemmed from the data was that the majority of the teachers cited an incident which featured their relationships with their learners. Perhaps this is a direct result of asking the question in relation to the learning process as it is the quality the relationships in the learning process that have a central influence on the quality of the learning (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2004, p.8)

The first research question was designed to find out about the teachers' learning biographies. There were several reasons for this. The first was the assumption, drawn from the work of Beijaard (1995; 2000) and Turner-Bisset (1999), that teachers' beliefs and learning biographies can shape their decision-making. Secondly, the notion of teaching-as-being, or the third interpretation of *phronesis* that was used in the research, assumed that teachers' actions, as human beings, were influenced by a variety of factors inherent to them as people. The third was an assumption that knowing a little bit about the teacher might lead to a greater understanding of their experiences of the phenomenon. For the phenomenologist, a person's past, present and future constitutes and shapes their lifeworld and the meanings that they bring to their experience of the phenomenon.

This first research question garnered a great deal of data which was useful for the study. For example, it afforded the finding that the teachers utilised their vocational, personal and emotional knowledge with their learners and that many had a vocational orientation towards learning. It also afforded the information that several of the teachers based their teaching practice on their observations of their own teachers. Importantly, obtaining biographical details from the teachers and knowing a bit about who they were as people, helped to facilitate a greater understanding of their experiences of the phenomenon. It helped me to try to understand the phenomena in the respondents' own terms.

Importantly, meeting the first research question necessitated drawing up the 'points' questionnaire (Annex XII) which indicated that the teachers in the study appeared to

hold theoretical knowledge in a lower regard than other areas of occupational knowledge. In addition, discussion of the questions afforded a great deal of data on the teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching.

The second research question was the central question and asked the teachers to about their experiences of the phenomenon and I will consider this question later in this Chapter. The third and fourth research questions, asked the teachers to reflect on their decisions and actions during their disrupted space and what, if anything, might have been helpful to them during the incident.

These latter questions afforded less data and I think the reason lies in my skills as phenomenological interviewer. A major flaw in the research was that the teachers mostly said that they would have not have done anything differently in their disrupted space. I should have asked them their reasons for taking the actions that they took. During the interviews, I did not spend enough time unpicking the reasons for actions. If I had done this, it could have provided better information on the reflection process that is necessary for *phronesis*. It could also have provided greater insight as to the knowledge that was being utilised in the disrupted space. If I had more data on why the teachers did what they did their disrupted spaces it might have been easier to discern whether or not *phronesis* had emanated or contributed to their actions.

9.3. Theoretical Aim and Theoretical Framework

Some discussion on the theoretical framework which guided this study took place in the previous Chapter. The theoretical concepts of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis* married with a phenomenological standpoint made for a highly conceptual study and one which afforded many methodological difficulties. Whether or not *phronesis* contributed to or emanated from any of the teachers' actions in their disrupted spaces became a matter of subjectivity. As already stated, it might have been easier to ascertain the existence of *phronesis* if I had asked the teachers the reasons for their actions. In the end, whether or

not *phronesis* was evident was open to question. If I was to do this study again, I would concentrate on the knowledge that the teachers thought that they were utilising in their disrupted space, how they think they came by that knowledge and what were their reasons for their actions. Whether or not this could be achieved utilising a phenomenological methodology would take some thinking through. Perhaps it is an area for further study.

Using *phronesis* as concept to guide the study was also challenging. Marrying the concept to research in learning and teaching was difficult, especially when there appeared to be no empirical examples from which to draw ideas and guidance. Some of the characteristics of *phronesis* were used to identify the themes against which the teachers' narratives were interpreted. One of these characteristics was a moral and ethical element and it is an essential component of *phronesis*. There is a moral and ethical thread that runs through the study but I think that a lack of a deep enough explication of this thread is another flaw in the thesis. This component opened up a whole theological and philosophical discourse that was outwith the limitations of the study and also exposed my scant knowledge of each of these domains. However a real attempt was made to provide a definition of morality which underpinned this thesis and against which the actions of the participants was judged.

Whether or not the teachers' actions were moral or ethical is open to interpretation, as indeed the concept of *phronesis* is open to interpretation. The moral dimension is an area that was thin in the study but any further work in the area would have taken me outside the limitations of the study. I was interested in the moral and ethical standpoints of the teachers because Scotland's colleges do not have a Professional Body nor do they have a national Code of Practice. I think that this is another potentially rich area for study in its own right.

A different theoretical framework might have allowed for a less challenging study. For

example, the teachers could just have been asked about their experiences of the phenomenon. This in itself would have provided rich data. However, the concept of *phronesis* allowed an exploration into the occupational knowledge of teachers. A less exacting framework might not have allowed for this. The theoretical framework was developed as a means to learning more about the working lives of teachers in colleges and it allowed for an exploration of teacher knowledge and teacher actions. Therefore, I consider the framework to be complicated but effective.

9.4. Methodological Aim

Phenomenology was the methodology of choice. The methodology allowed access to the rich stories that the teachers had to tell. It allowed for a search for the essence of the phenomenon, which meant digging deep into what might constitute the learning and teaching process for the teachers in the study. It allowed me to be part of the research by adopting a hermeneutic approach, based on the work of Van Manen, which did not advocate the use of bracketing.

A question that arose was whether or not it was sufficient to strive for rich descriptions of lived experiences or were there further aspects that were required of the phenomenological researcher. For example, were phenomenological researchers required to have a phenomenological stance or attitude? From my reading of Van Manen, I thought that the answer was yes, a phenomenological stance should permeate the whole research and I tried to remain true to this requirement throughout the study. This was particularly evident when I came to write up the findings. Initially, I had put together graphs and models and then came to realise that these would not be concomitant with the interpretive, descriptive stance of phenomenology and I removed them.

Initially, I was reluctant to adopt phenomenology as a methodology because of its challenging nature and a worry about my lack of abilities. However, I found utilising

phenomenology as the framework for this research a fruitful and worthwhile learning experience. I did worry whether the area under investigation was too wide for a phenomenological approach and whether interrupted spaces in the learning process could be subjected to phenomenological reductions. But the design allowed for an exploration of the relationships that the teachers had with their learners and the meanings that they brought to bear about learning and teaching, within the context of the disrupted space.

If the methodology could be improved upon, it would be a deepening of my knowledge of phenomenology as a methodology and my skills as a phenomenological researcher. I think that the adoption of phenomenology as a framework to guide research makes particular demands upon the researcher. It requires a discipline in the interview and a real orientation to the phenomenon and the person being interviewed. I think that the researcher has to genuinely adopt the ontological standpoint proffered by phenomenology, which is that reality does not exist independently and that multiple and different lifeworlds can belong to different human existences and realties.

9.5. Findings

How did the findings answer the central question? The central question was:

> *"What was the experience of teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges when encountering a particular pedagogical issue or interruption, either fortunate or unfortunate, in the learning process?"*

This study sought to provide an illuminative account of the learning and teaching process in Scotland's colleges and how the teachers in colleges were managing that process. Through an interpretation of the data, strong themes emerged which seemed to encapsulate the essence of the phenomenon, which was an interruption in the learning process.

These themes included the robust **vocational values and vocational orientation** which were present in much of the teachers' experience of the phenomenon. They included **differentiated knowledge use** on the part of the teachers, dependent on the learner, level and context. They included the teachers' **sharing of vocational, personal and emotional knowledge with learners.** They included the teachers' **strong commitment to learning relationships that worked within an ethic of care.** This theme suggested the possibility of the emotional labour of teaching staff and a formal recognition of this emotional labour might lead to systematic systems of support for teachers. The themes also included a **practical rather than a theoretical orientation towards learning** by the teachers although it was evident that they were utilising their own '*theories-in-use*'.

The final theme suggests a covert rather than an overt recognition of theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching. This led to the suggestion that, in order to improve practice, teachers require an understanding of why their teaching is effective (or otherwise). In addition, teachers should to be able to justify their stance, if required. This understanding (and justification) can only be accrued through theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching. The study suggests that the teachers' view of theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching is an issue for the sector and for teacher education.

It has already been said that, compared to the school sector there is relatively little research into becoming and being a teacher in Further Education (Jephcote, *et al.*, 2008; Wahlberg, *et al.*, 2005). In addition, that there is very little research into the Scottish Further Education context. It could be said that this study has made a contribution to the body of knowledge on the working lives of teachers, in particular to the working lives of teachers in Scotland's colleges.

9.6. Further Research

Carrying out this study has highlighted several areas which I think would be worthy of further research. The first research question, which collected data on the teachers

learning biographies, generated a great deal of data which was outside the limitations of this study. The teachers told interesting stories about their industrial and professional past and their reasons for choosing to work in Scotland's colleges. Their narratives also included information about what it was like to leave a vocational area and start to teach that subject without any prior teacher education. Many of the teachers also talked about their struggle to gain full time permanent employment as teachers.

At the time of the study, forty-seven percent of teachers in colleges were working on temporary contracts. It can take many years for some staff to access a permanent position. There is no way of knowing the exact numbers of staff who work on a temporary or supply basis. While the Scottish Funding Council collects annual statistics from colleges on the number of staff on temporary contracts, these are snap-shot statistics. There is no analysis of the ebb and flow of temporary staff that may come and go throughout the year or how long a member of staff remains on the temporary register. Some of these teachers will be qualified to teach and some will not.

In this study, I asked the teachers how many years they were teaching before they were able to access teacher education. (See column eleven, Annex XXII) Seven of the teachers held teaching qualifications before practice. The remaining sixteen staff accrued a total of ninety-seven years of teaching without formal teaching qualifications. Colin had been teaching twelve years without formal qualifications and Orla had been teaching eighteen before she self-financed her teacher education. These facts surprised me. I have no way of knowing whether or not the length of time Colin and Orla spent teaching without qualifications is unusual in the sector. However, considering the idea of teaching for twelve or eighteen years without formal teaching qualifications gave rise to the question as to how teachers who enter practice without these qualifications manage the learning and teaching process and this might be an area of further study,

A phenomenological exploration into the lifeworld of temporary teachers, as teachers,

could be a fruitful area for study. It could investigate how teachers who enter practice without formal pedagogical knowledge acquire their "*theories-in-use*", before they access formal teacher education. It could shine a light on the knowledge use of staff, how they manage the learning and teaching process. It could pave the way for support and fit-for-purpose initial teacher education for such members of staff.

Secondly, some of the teachers', for example, Helen (see 7.6) questioned the requirement for sound content knowledge in some teaching situations which would counteract the opinions of Shulman (1987) and Thomson & William (2008). Whether or not Helen's is a voice which represents a substantial number of staff in the sector, and the possible implications for learning and teaching, could be an area of further research.

Thirdly, a moral and ethical thread ran through this thesis. The literature on morality and teacher education (Colnerud, 1997; Hanhimaki & Tirri, 2009; Mason, 2007; Sockett, 1993; Tirri, 1999) suggests that teachers do not usually consider the ethical implications for their actions and often are ill prepared to deal with ethical dilemmas in their work. There would appear to be no study on the ethical decision making of teachers in the post compulsory sector. I consider this to be an additional area worthy of further research.

Finally, I would like to address the "knowledge questionnaire" that was used during the second part of the interview. Initially, when I was drawing up the questionnaire, I wondered if any correlation could be drawn between the subject taught and the occupational knowledge that teachers' valued.

Later, on analysing the data, it could be seen that there were some differences of opinion among the teachers. For some, their points allocations were evenly spread. While others veered more in one direction than another. For example, Colin, who taught Law, allocated 50 points for subject knowledge and 15 points for knowledge of learners. Janice's points were almost the opposite of Colin's. She taught Creative Arts and

allocated 20 points for subject knowledge and 50 points for knowledge of learners. I wondered if the points allocation in any way indicated a preferred teaching style or embraced a particular philosophy of learning. For example, did someone teaching Law have a predisposition towards Locke's (1632-1704) view of learning and adopt a style of teaching as transmission? Furthermore, did someone teaching Art have a predisposition towards learning through experience? (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978) In carrying out the interviews, I had expected Vickie, who taught learners with learning disabilities, to allocate a high number of points to knowledge of learners. I was surprised when she did not.

Pursuing this line of inquiry would have been outwith the limitations of the study. However, Shulman (1986) asked the question, "Is content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge related?" (p.9) I think that it would be a fruitful area of research, with implications for teacher education, to find out if there is a link between content (subject) knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and teachers' espoused theories of learning.

9.7. Personal Position in the Research

Elsewhere I have stated that I had a particular perspective in this research and that this could not be removed from the study. This perspective was particularly evident in my interchange with Lennie. This interchange was my own *phronesis* as I did not quite know what to do during the interview. I had to 'think on my feet' and decide what to do. I took the decision to step out of the phenomenological mores of the investigation and put forward my opinion on his interactions with learners. My values had been challenged and I rose to the bait. On reflection, my decision was not a wise one for a researcher to take. Faced with the same situation again, I would learn from this experience and keep my opinions to myself.

9.8. And Finally.......

I learned a great deal from this enterprise and everything I learned increased my awareness of just how much I did not know. Some of findings did not hold many surprises for me. I have been working in the sector a long time and the staff stories were somewhat familiar. However, I was surprised to learn that 47% of teachers in colleges are sessional workers and that 16 teachers in the study accrued 97 years teaching without formal teaching qualifications.

I think I will leave the last word with Dr. Janet Davidson, a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate and a friend. I asked her if she would review this paper for validation purposes. In her fulsome reply she wrote something which matches my own feelings. This was:

> "(you asked me) the question about whether the accounts ring true. I would say yes – very much so. I recognise the 'characters' and I recognise their stories. To me, they chime with the whole college culture, particularly the feelings that they had of being alone once the classroom door closes behind them, the sense that their judgement is critical. They are so acutely aware of the responsibilities they have for learners and also that their influence is mitigated by all sorts of other factors beyond their control."

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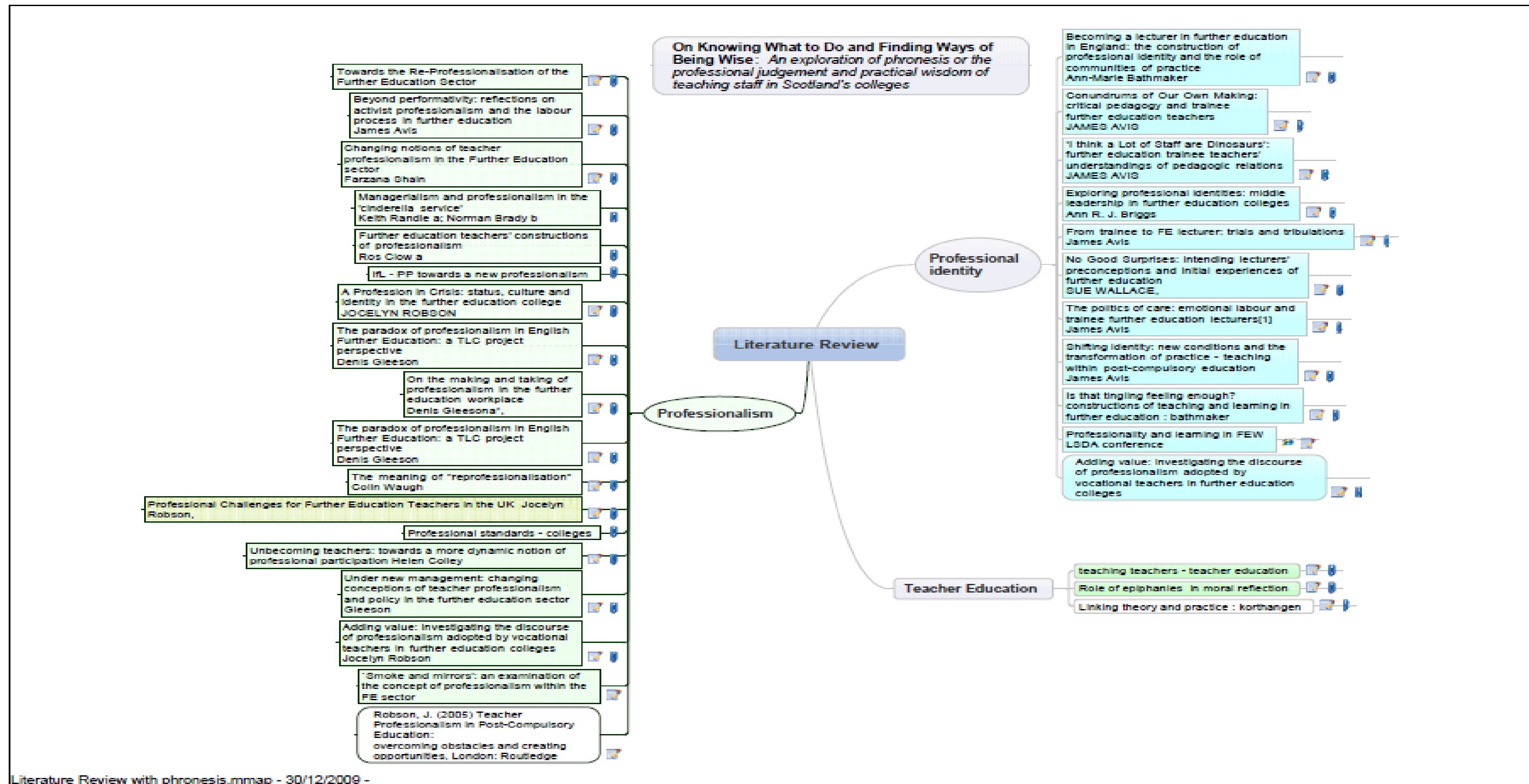
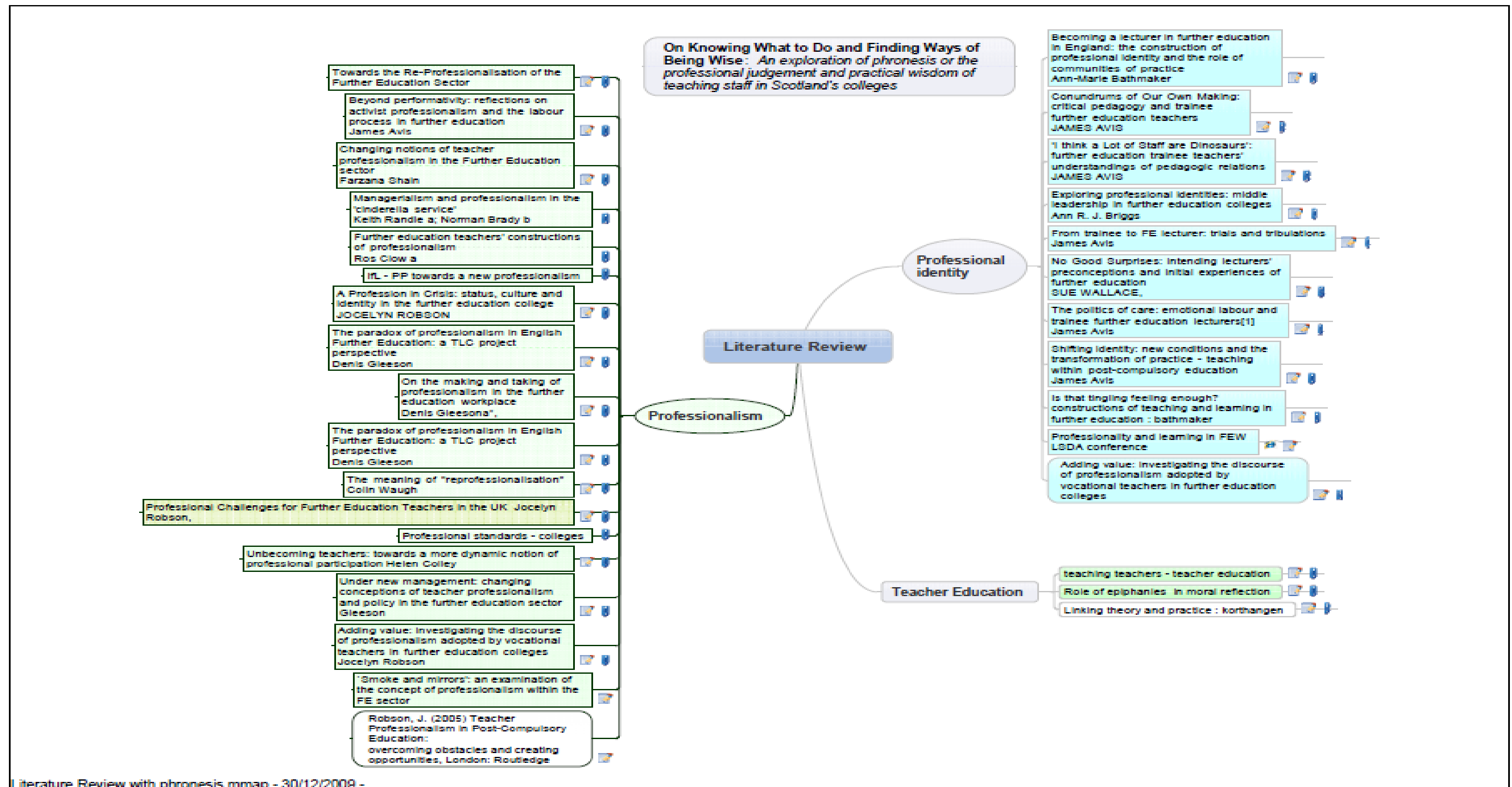
APPENDICES

ANNEX I



ANNEX II



ANNEX III

23 February 2009

Letters sent to: Principal and Chief Executive of three colleges

Ref: JMcC/MM
Direct: 01786 892004

Dear

Moira Shemilt, Doctorate in Education Research

One of our members of staff has embarked upon the final stage of her doctorate study. This involves undertaking, writing up and submitting a research project. The broad area of the research is in the professional identity and values of teaching staff in Scotland's colleges. The choice of research topic and methodology has been made following discussions at the University and with colleagues at Scotland's Colleges. The attached information sheet provides more details.

The core part of the research comprises field work in colleges. This will involve interviews with eight volunteer teaching staff from three colleges reflecting a broad range of subject disciplines. Each interview should last no more than an hour and all interviews will be confidential. A consent form (copy attached) will be required to be completed by all participants.

We have selected three colleges as institutions which might be interested in supporting this work and I am writing for your permission to involve your college. The anonymity of these colleges and staff will be preserved throughout and Moira will share the findings of her research with an appropriate group of staff from each institution in due course.

I hope you feel able to support Moira in her work and, if you agree, it would be good if you could send me the name of a key contact to take forward detailed arrangements.

Yours sincerely

John McCann
Depute Chief Executive
Scottish Further Education Unit

Encs

Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) is part of the Scotland's Colleges brand SFEU, Argyll Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TY.
Tel: 01786 892000 E-mail: info@scotlandscolleges.ac.uk Web: www.scotlandscolleges.ac.uk
Company Limited by Guarantee | Registered in Scotland No: 143514 | Scottish Charity No: SC021876 | VAT No: 617148346

ANNEX IV

INFORMATION FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY

***On Knowing What To Do Next**, **Finding Ways of Being Wise:** A phenomenological exploration into phronesis or the professional judgements and practical wisdom of teaching practitioners in Scotland's colleges.*

Invitation
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The Purpose of the Study
This study is being undertaken for the completion of a Doctorate in Education. The purpose of the research is to determine the nature of the professional judgements made by teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges when seeking to resolve pedagogical issues and challenges within the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and matured from the course of action taken.

Phronesis is an Aristotelian concept which can briefly be described as the ability to find practical, creative, contextually appropriate and emotionally satisfying solutions to complicated human problems.

The assumption that underpins this study is that, if we knew more about how teacher-practitioners in colleges were managing the learning process we might be better able to help them do that better. The findings of this study will inform the continuing professional learning and development initiatives provided by the central support agency Scotland's Colleges.

Why have I been invited to participate?
Up to twenty-four members of teaching staff are being interviewed in three colleges. The participants will be chosen to represent different curricular areas including vocational subjects such as construction, catering or health and beauty; academic subjects such as social science and courses for learners with additional support requirements for learning. You have been asked to participate because you are directly involved in the delivery of learning and teaching and you represent one of these areas.

Do I have to take part?
Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to

withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be interviewed for approximately one hour on one occasion. You will be asked to think about an occasion, during the learning and teaching process, when you were faced with a particular educational issue or interruption to that process. This issue or interruption could have arisen out of fortunate or unfortunate circumstances. Your challenge might have been to maximise a lucky intervention or to manage a problematic situation.

You will be asked to talk about your experience of this occasion; the factors that contributed to the incident and how you felt about the experience. In addition, you will be asked to reflect on the factors which led to the course of action taken; what had changed as a result of the incident and what you had learned from the experience.

The interview will be tape recorded, some of which will be transcribed. If you want a copy of this transcription, I will provide it for you. If at any time, you wish to terminate the interview you can do so *without giving a reason*. If you later decided that you did not want your recording to be used in the study, you can contact me and your wishes will be abided by.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There is a disadvantage in giving up an hour out of a busy schedule to speak to an inquisitive researcher when I am sure you have much better things to do! There might be a personal risk if you talk about a decision you made that you are less than happy with and that makes you uncomfortable. However, there is learning in reflecting upon actions taken – as, to quote a couple of 'Anons', "*Trouble brings experience and experience brings wisdom."* And "*Practical Wisdom is only to be learned in the school of experience*."

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There could be a personal benefit, as time spent in reflective activity is a good learning experience. In contributing to the study you are helping the sector gain a small understanding of what it is to be a teaching practitioner in Scotland's colleges and what might be done by those delivering Continuing Professional Learning to help teachers such as yourself develop and maintain excellence in teaching practices.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?
All information will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Names will not be used during data collection nor in the transcript. The data generated in the course of the study will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of time before being destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of the study will be used in my doctoral thesis. A copy will be available in the library of Strathclyde University. Journal articles might also ensue from the research.

Who is organising the research?

I am conducting this research as a student of Strathclyde University and as a member of staff of Scotland's Colleges, the central support agency for the colleges in Scotland.

Who has reviewed the study?
The research has been approved by the University Ethics Committee, Strathclyde University.

Contact for Further Information
If you have any questions that you would like answered before accepting this interview request, or prior to the interview, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below:-

Moira Shemilt,
Lead Specialist: Knowledge Management and Development
Castleview Business Park
Argyle Court
Stirling
FK9 4TY
Telephone: 01789 892028
Email: moira.shemilt@scotlandscolleges.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about this research, please contact my supervisor:

Dr June Mitchell,
Department of Educational and Professional Studies,
Strathclyde University.
Telephone: 0141 950 3467
Email: june.mitchell@strath.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

February 2009

ANNEX V

From: Moira Shemilt/Staff/SCOTCOL

To:

Date: 13/03/2009 14:38

Subject: Research

Hi XXXXX,

Thanks for speaking to me this afternoon. I am going to send you some information about my research. I would like to interview eight members of staff over, preferably, two days. I am hoping to carry out interviews in three colleges and would, ideally, like to interview members of staff who can represent the curricular spread in colleges. For example, participants from vocational/ active areas such as construction; motor vehicle; hairdressing; beauty therapy; music; sports and leisure etc; participants who work in more 'formal' classroom situations such as social sciences; health/social/childcare; 'Access' courses etc and participants who work with learners with additional support needs.

xxxxxx is the first college that I will be working in. I would like a random sample, so the members of staff that I interview at xxxxx will be up to the college. After that, I might ask the subsequent two colleges to choose members of staff who do not represent the areas of those whom I interviewed in xxxxxx. (I hope you can follow this!) I have chosen x College because I am interested in its links with the UHI, so it might be good to interview some members of staff following more 'formal' curricular areas.

Anyway......I will send you some information and hope to be in touch at the beginning of next week. One of the papers is a small questionnaire that I have put together. I intend to ask participants to complete the questionnaire before I interview them. This is still a draft and subject to change.

Thanks again.

Moira
Scotland's Colleges
Direct line: 01786 892028

www.sfeu.ac.uk

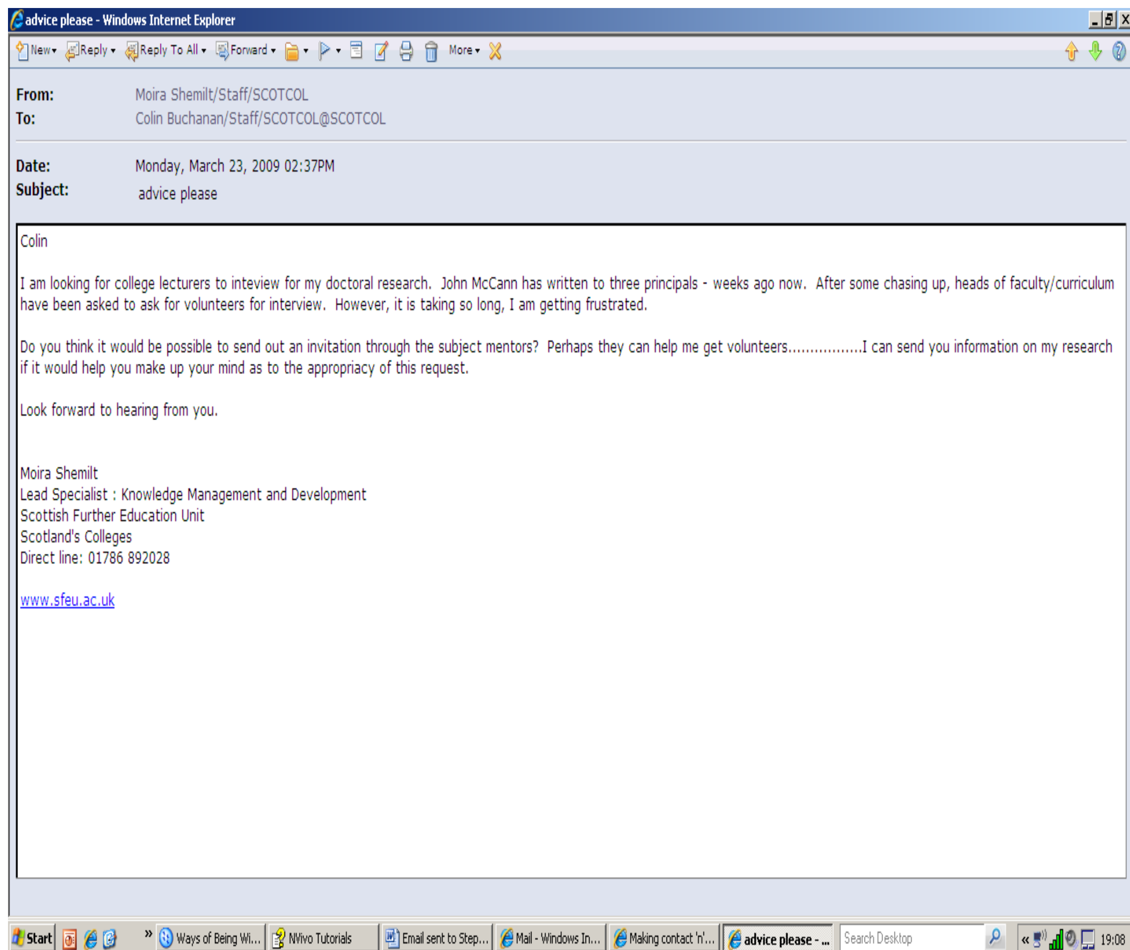
ANNEX VI

SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES SUBJECT NETWORKS
SUBJECT AREAS

1.	Access and Inclusion
2.	Business and Administration
3.	Care
4.	Computing
5.	Construction
6.	Creative and Performing Arts
7.	Curriculum for Excellence
8.	Engineering
9.	English, Communication and Media
10.	Hairdressing and Beauty
11.	Hospitality
12.	Land and Environment
13.	Mathematics and Numeracy
14.	Modern Languages and ESOL
15.	Science
16.	Social Sciences
17.	Sport and Recreation
18.	Travel and Tourism

ANNEX VII

Email sent to Colin Buchanan, requesting help from the Subject Mentors



advice please - Windows Internet Explorer

From: Moira Shemilt/Staff/SCOTCOL
To: Colin Buchanan/Staff/SCOTCOL@SCOTCOL

Date: Monday, March 23, 2009 02:37PM
Subject: advice please

Colin

I am looking for college lecturers to inteview for my doctoral research. John McCann has written to three principals - weeks ago now. After some chasing up, heads of faculty/curriculum have been asked to ask for volunteers for interview. However, it is taking so long, I am getting frustrated.

Do you think it would be possible to send out an invitation through the subject mentors? Perhaps they can help me get volunteers................I can send you information on my research if it would help you make up your mind as to the appropriacy of this request.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Moira Shemilt
Lead Specialist : Knowledge Management and Development
Scottish Further Education Unit
Scotland's Colleges
Direct line: 01786 892028

www.sfeu.ac.uk

Colin,
I am looking for college lecturers to interview for my doctoral research. John McCann has written to three principals – weeks ago now. After some chasing up, I have been asked to ask for volunteers to interview. However, it is taking so long, I am getting frustrated.

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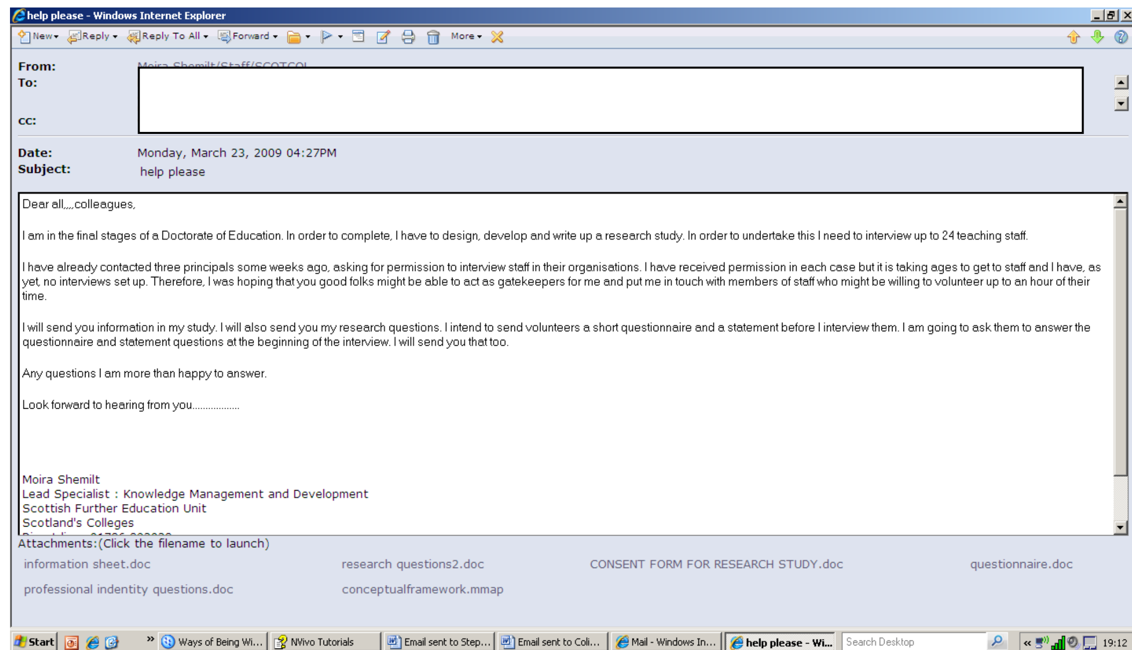
Look forward to hearing from you.

Moira Shemilt

ANNEX VIII

Email sent to Subject Mentors


help please - Windows Internet Explorer

New Reply Reply To All Forward More

From:
To:
cc:

Date: Monday, March 23, 2009 04:27PM
Subject: help please

Dear all,,,,colleagues,

I am in the final stages of a Doctorate of Education. In order to complete, I have to design, develop and write up a research study. In order to undertake this I need to interview up to 24 teaching staff.

I have already contacted three principals some weeks ago, asking for permission to interview staff in their organisations. I have received permission in each case but it is taking ages to get to staff and I have, as yet, no interviews set up. Therefore, I was hoping that you good folks might be able to act as gatekeepers for me and put me in touch with members of staff who might be willing to volunteer up to an hour of their time.

I will send you information in my study. I will also send you my research questions. I intend to send volunteers a short questionnaire and a statement before I interview them. I am going to ask them to answer the questionnaire and statement questions at the beginning of the interview. I will send you that too.

Any questions I am more than happy to answer.

Look forward to hearing from you................

Moira Shemilt
Lead Specialist : Knowledge Management and Development
Scottish Further Education Unit
Scotland's Colleges

Attachments:(Click the filename to launch)
information sheet.doc research questions2.doc CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY.doc questionnaire.doc
professional indentity questions.doc conceptualframework.mmap

Start Ways of Being Wi... NVivo Tutorials Email sent to Step... Email sent to Coli... Mail - Windows In... help please - Wi... Search Desktop 19:12

Dear all,,,,colleagues,

I am in the final stages of a Doctorate of Education. In order to complete, I have to design, develop and write up a research study. In order to undertake this I need to interview up to 24 teaching staff.

I have already contacted three principals some weeks ago, asking for permission to interview staff in their organisations. I have received permission in each case but it is taking ages to get to staff and I have, as yet, no interviews set up. Therefore, I was hoping that you good folks might be able to act as gatekeepers for me and put me in touch with members of staff who might be willing to volunteer up to an hour of their time.

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Any questions I am more than happy to answer.
Look forward to hearing from you..................

Moira Shemilt
Lead Specialist : Knowledge Management and Development
Scottish Further Education Unit
Scotland's Colleges
Direct line: 01786 892028

www.sfeu.ac.uk

ANNEX IX

Transcript of Email sent to Participant A before interview on 25th March, 2009

Hi

Your name was forwarded by the great and good Colin Buchanan - and you come with a more than glowing reference, by the way.

As you will know, I am conducting a research project for an EdD. My main aim is to find out more about how teacher-practitioners (I am calling lecturers this because I want to emphasis the TEACHING part of their work) in colleges are managing the learning process. The reason that I want to find out more about this is so that the work can inform the continuing Professional Learning and Development that Scotland's Colleges provides - and also, who knows - TQFE.

My project assumes that if we knew more about how teacher-practitioners are **actually** managing the learning process, here and now, then the services that are being designed and developed to help them might be ensured and enhanced for fitness of purpose.

It took me some time to get a framework for doing this. I didn't want any suspicion or accusation of evaluating or judging staff in colleges. Therefore, I have adopted a phenomenological approach - which is more philosophical than methodological (sorry for the big words) and means that I ask about staff's EXPERIENCE of the learning process and means that I listen. Someone's experience is their experience and never to be judged.

I decided to ask staff to think about something that happened which interrupted the learning process - it could be a fortunate or unfortunate incident. The incident could be something that happened during one lesson or during one course. I want to ask staff how they felt about that incident, what they learned, what they could have done differently and who/what if anything could have helped in the process. This process - making professional judgements when something unexpected happens is what Aristotle called '*phronesis*' or practical wisdom. (Google it!)

I am looking for incidents where staff in colleges have increased their practical/professional wisdom. I love the idea that I am pursuing something positive - in what ways are staff in colleges becoming wise?

Anyway, I won't rabbit on anymore - I am being shouted that my tea is ready!

I am sending you information on the research and a consent form. I am sending you a short questionnaire and a statement. The questionnaire and statement is to give me some information on each of the interviewees. This information should help me with data analysis. I will ask you the answers to both at the beginning of

the interview. I just want you to know what I will be asking. I also need you to think of a critical incident where you had to think on your feet and make an autonomous decision.

As you are my very first interview and as the good Colin said that you were a good bloke, I would be overwhelming grateful if you could also crit me on my interview. Before, during and after - so that I can get better with the next person that I interview.

So, what time and place on Wednesday? Is it the Stirling Management Centre? Will we be able to get a quiet space for an hour?

Any questions - any at all, please get back to me......So looking forward to meeting you. Take care

Moira Shemilt
Lead Specialist : Knowledge Management and Development
Scottish Further Education Unit

ANNEX X

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Project: **On Knowing What To Do Next**, **Finding Ways of Being Wise:** A phenomenological exploration into *phronesis* or the professional judgements and practical wisdom of teaching practitioners in Scotland's colleges.

Researcher: Moira Shemilt
Position: Lead Specialist: Knowledge Management and Development
Address: Castleview Business Park
Argyle Court
Stirling
FK9 4TY
Telephone: 01789 892028
Email: moira.shemilt@scotlandscolleges.ac.uk

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. Please check the following statements; tick those that apply and complete the form by signing and dating it. This form will be stored securely in the HR office at Scotland's colleges in Stirling.

	Tick Box
• I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.	
• I have been given the opportunity to ask and receive answers to any questions I have about the study.	
• I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
• I understand that the researcher will hold all information and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data.	
I agree to take part in the above study	

Name of Participant……………………………………………………………

Date……………………………………………………………………………..

ANNEX XI

On Knowing What to Do and Finding Ways of Being Wise: *An exploration of phronesis or the professional judgement and practical wisdom of teacher- practitioners in Scotland's colleges.*

Research Study for a Doctorate in Education

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to inform the continuing professional learning and development (CPLD) initiatives provided to teacher-practitioners by the central development agency *Scotland's Colleges by:-*

- determining the nature of the professional judgements made by teaching staff when seeking to resolve a pedagogical issue or interruption in the learning process and the extent to which practical wisdom (*phronesis*) both contributed to and matured from the course of action taken.

The assumption that underpins this study is that an increase in knowledge and understanding of how teacher-practitioners are managing the learning process will ensure the quality and fitness for purpose of the CPLD opportunities for teaching staff.

Methodology

A Heideggerian phenomenological approach has been adopted. A purposive sample of twenty-four members of teaching staff in three colleges will be interviewed. Teaching staff will represent a variety of subject areas including vocational/situated/workshop learning; formal classroom learning and courses for learners with additional support requirements for learning.

Research Questions

1. *What is each individual participant's:*
    a. Educational biography (excluding teacher education);
    b. Experience of teacher education and level (s) of qualifications;
    c. Professional biography;
    d. Subject specialism
    e. Professional identity?

2. *What was the experience of teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges when encountering a particular pedagogical issue or interruption, either fortunate or*

unfortunate, in the learning process?

3. *On reflection, what did they think of the deliberations, decisions and actions taken by them during incident?*

4. *What, if anything, would have been helpful to them during the incident?*

ANNEX XII

On Knowing What to Do and Finding Ways of Being Wise
Research Study for a Doctorate in Education
Moira Shemilt

1. ***Age: please circle the most appropriate to you:-***

20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 – 59	60 +

2. ***Very briefly, what was your experience of school? For example, happy, satisfactory, no bad, unsatisfactory or unhappy and why?***

3. ***What has been your experience of learning since leaving school? Please circle….and comment.***

Excellent :	**Satisfactory**	**Fair : No Bad**	**Unsatisfactory**	**Unhappy : Mince**

4. ***How old were you when you left school?***	

5. **Subject Specialism: what area(s) do you teach?**	

6. ***What qualifications do you hold which relate to your subject specialism?***	

7. ***What teaching qualifications do you hold?***	

8. ***How long have you been teaching?***	…………….. Years

9. ***What did you do before you became a college lecturer?***

10. On which basis are you contracted to teach?:- please circle

Full-time Permanent	Part-time Permanent	Full-time Temporary	Part-time Temporary

ANNEX XIII

On Knowing What to Do and Finding Ways of Being Wise

Research Study for a Doctorate in Education

Please read the following statement and consider the subsequent questions….

In order to be effective and professional within the learning and teaching environment, teacher-practitioners in Scotland's colleges require a combination of **each** of the following categories of knowledge:-

i. a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in the **subject** that they teach;

ii. a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in the **planning**, **execution, management** and **evaluation** of learning and teaching processes;

iii. a high level of knowledge and understanding of learning and teaching **theories** and the practice and methods deriving from educational theories

iv. a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills to support learners' **personal**, **social** and **emotional** development and well being.

- Do you agree or disagree with the above statement?
- What are your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing?
- Would you please allocate each of the categories a number of points – the full amount of points to total 100? The largest number of points to be given to the category/categories that you consider to be the most important for staff to be

effective during the learning and teaching process.

- What are your reasons for your points allocation?

Thank You!

ANNEX XIV

On Knowing What to Do and Finding Ways of Being Wise: *An exploration of phronesis or the professional judgement and practical wisdom of teacher- practitioners in Scotland's colleges.*

Research Study for a Doctorate in Education

Preparation for Interview

First of all, thank you for volunteering to be interviewed, I really appreciate it.

Before the interview, I would like you to think of a '*critical incident'*, something that happened to you **recently** while carrying out your job as a teacher-practitioner.

I do not want to give any particular examples in case those examples restrict you from thinking widely. I would like you to think about and then describe a situation or encounter, in relation to the learning process, when you have had to think on your feet and make a decision. It could be an everyday situation or it could be something that was uncommon or unexpected. It could relate to a particular learner; a particular group of learners; a particular programme or course; the introduction of a new teaching method; the impact of new college policies or procedures or change of location on your delivery of the learning process or on your learners; an external influence on a learner; group of learners or a programme. The choice is yours – I am really interested in hearing what you think is a critical incident. It is **your** story I want to hear.

I would like you to think about what led up to the situation……here are some questions to think about……

- What were the concrete events? Who was involved?
- How did you feel about the situation?
- What did you want to achieve/happen?
- What action did you take?
- What factors do you think influenced your decision to take this course of action?

- What was the outcome or result of this action?
- Was this action effective or what more effective action might have been expected?
- What do you think any others involved in the incident wanted, did, thought, felt?
- To what extent do you think that you have changed as a result of the incident?
- What, if anything, would you do differently if you were confronted with a similar situation?
- What, if anything, could have helped you in the course of resolving the issue?

I look forward to listening…..Thank You…..Moira

ANNEX XV

Coding transcripts to Identify Themes

december 2009.nvp - NVivo

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Interview Transcripts

04th Interview

PARTICIPANT D

Absolutely. It isn't just about academic…you know…..distance travelled , I love that expression. The first time, someone asked me, what is distance travelled – is that about 2.5 cm. I said no, perhaps when they first started in August they were late all the time and now they are early – lots of little things, distance travelled and I think that distance travelled is really important.

Especially for a lot of disengaged youngsters and they are not getting what I had at home or probably what you had at home. There is a generation that is coming up that doesn't have any support mechanisms. They don't get lifts anywhere. They're not members of any clubs – they don't seem to get on with their parents – well they are, as long as they are not annoying them. Whether it is parents, carers, fosters – they don't seem to have any kind of, LOVE NET, beneath them, you know. It doesn't matter what I do, even to this day, it doesn't matter what I do or where I go or what happens to me, there is a net beneath me. It is my mum, you know, and she is there and I provide the same thing for my daughter. You don't need the net, as you get older, you don't need it quite so much and then you start to provide it for someone else. These kids don't have that net. They don't have anyone to say, come and sit down and have a coffee with me and how is life with you and what did you do at college….there is none of that happening and I think that somewhere along the line someone has to say, WE CARE. And I think that that is all it is, it is just a "we care" - that someone in your life cares about where you are…..

You know, I phone them up if they miss their classes. I am on Bebo a lot with them, I mean that is only students, it is not family or friends so much I have got Facebook for that. You know, I check it every night and there are usually wee messages ….I cant get this to work, can you tell me about this or I am no feeling well, I'll no be in tomorrow…it is just someone cares and someone goes on there every night. And I will be on at midnight and I will send you a wee message back to say………

That works for me because I am a really Internet freak anyway. I was one of the first people to do Computing in Scotland in the HND in Kirkcaldy and that is the way that I work but there's lots of different ways that you can make your students feel like that

Coding Density
changes after critical incident
critical incident learning
critical incident resolutions
critical incidents
difference between college and universities and schools
distruptive spaces
good quotes
importance of high level of subject knowledge
importance of knowledge and skills to manage effective learning relationships
importance of knowledge of learning theories
importance of practical skills and expertise
passing not being the be alland end all
learning relationships with learners
relationships with learners
students
TQFE
Values, attitudes, beliefs
ways of teaching

Annotations

Item	Content
1	is this an example of phronesis - professional wisdom from experience?

MA 1 Item Linked Nodes: 18 References: 32 Read-Only Line: 838 Column: 0

14:28 23/01/2010

ANNEX XVI

Coding transcripts to Identify Themes

december 2009.nvp - NVivo

File Edit View Go Project Links Code Format Tools Window Help

Interview Transcripts

04th Interview

PARTICIPANT D

I definitely agree with A absolutely, if you don't have a good knowledge of your subject, it will show. They will pick holes in you eventually and they will, they wont get answers to the questions that they are asking. Em.

You absolutely, definitely have to be good at organizing. We have all done the running into the class, unprepared and it is absolutely horrific when that happens, when something goes wrong and your plan has gone. You have to have another plan, so….you have to have lots of different plans and different material ready. Again, your class would just fall apart if you don't have that.

High level of knowledge and understanding of learning and teaching theories. I am not sure, I don't think I have that. I think, I still think I am good at what I do. I think I have a knowledge and understanding of how people work. You know how some people like to see pictures, some people like to hear words, some people like to read things, some people like studying, writing things over and over again. I think I understand how people learn but I don't think that this can actually tie up with a theory….is that self direct, is that experiential…..

I think if you have been doing well and you have had all these experiences, I think you do things kind of naturally and you wont necessarily need to know why. A lot of people have been teaching a long time and they go on to their TQFE and they sort of go….."that is why I am doing it."

MOIRA
So they then fit the practice to the theory…..Did that happen to you when you did TQFE? What was your experience of TQFE like?

PARTICIPANT D

Em. ………I thought it was just useless. It didn't teach me anything, tangible. Expecially if you have been doing it for a long time. I mean I was only five or six years in at that point and I went…I cant wait. Em And they didn't really, they….I thought it was going to be try this, do this and there was nothing like that. No practical, you know,

g Density
es after critical incident
l incident learning
l incident resolutions
l incidents
nce between college and universities and schools
ptive spaces
quotes
importance of high level of subject knowledge
tance of knowledge and skills to manage effective learning relationships
importance of knowledge of learning theories
importance of practical skills and expertise
ng relationships with learners
ng not being the be alland end all
nships with learners
nts
s, attitudes, beliefs
of teaching
TQFE

Annotations

Item	Content
1	is this an example of phronesis - professional wisdom from experience?

MA | 1 Item | Linked | Nodes: 18 References: 32 | Read-Only | Line: 343 Column: 57

Google

14:32
23/01/2010

ANNEX XVII

Coding transcripts to Identify Themes

december 2009.nvp - NVivo

File Edit View Go Project Links Code Format Tools Window Help

Interview Transcripts

16th Interview

same year I was doing my TQFE and it really, really helped me. I did my case study on that group and it really, really helped me.

MOIRA
What did? How did it?

PARTICIPANT P
Dealing with them, you know. Firstly, accepting that I couldn't change their lives and try and make it all nice and it will all get through. You know, students, there was one wee girl who was really, really capable…she dropped out! I just thought….her mum had got pregnant and, och, just…and that would really, really have got to me…like how can I get her to stay but I feel like outwith here….it was never about….I was never ever going to hold her…but it was just how do you deal with those types of situations and just not feel so responsible.

MOIRA
So your incident is really quite long. You are looking at what you were like then and what you are like now and what has happened to make the difference. Did you change at the time or did it take a wee while?

PARTICIPANT P
TQFE did it. I think the other thing that was an enlightening moment was, you know distance travelled. It is not necessary for some of these students that we have, that they are going to walk out with an HND, it is the fact that, given their particular circumstances, that they have made it to college on a regular basis. And that they have achieved it, that they have actually been able to deal with clients….it is a HUGE achievement, that's maturity….because before, with me, it was more academic. But I am no like that any more, ken.

MOIRA
Is it not also about raising aspirations?

PARTICIPANT P
Well, but also, like for example, I used to be – somebody is not in at nine o'clock…I would think that was totally disrespectful. Okay…it still can be in certain circumstances…it depends on the learner…you don't know what they have had to cope with before they came in. Before you weigh in, you think, you know what…don't worry about it…come in….get on with it….whereas before……it depends on the learner.

MOIRA

Coding Density | activities before becoming a college lecturer | emotional labour | tance of knowledge of learning theories | tance of high level of subject knowledge | ng biography school | onships with learners | s about FE teaching | er knowledge | er knowledge personal experience | Values, attitudes, beliefs | TQFE | students | passing not being the be alland end all | phronesis | learning relationships with learners

MA 23 Items | Linked | Nodes: 21 References: 43 | Read-Only | Line: 633 Column: 41

16:23 23/01/2010

ANNEX XVIII

Coding transcripts to Identify Themes

december 2009.nvp - NVivo

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17th Interview

PARTICIPANT Q
Well, yes and no. Within the practical classes, the performance was SLIGHTLY better but not that much and it turns out that two/thirds of the way in, apparently some folk were caught smoking wacky-backy and stuff like that….(sardonic laugh) The amazing this was, the ones that were the most disruptive were the most mature members of the group. The mature members of the group were the ones that were disrupting the young. (chuckle)

MOIRA
What do you mean by mature, what age were they?

PARTICIPANT Q
Well, mature, lets say about thirty-four. Lets put them into a category of returning learners. That is where they were,….night-mare…absolute nightmare (chuckle). People who have got children..who have children should have known better. They should have been addressing these issues among their own children. It was quite scary.

MOIRA
How did you handle it all?

PARTICIPANT Q
To be quite honest it became a question of discipline to start with and then…..getting them to assume responsibility. Do you know what I mean? The one thing that people don't want is things to be seen as their fault. It is like you have got to teach me and if I am no getting it is your fault. Well, I think, if you don't get it you cant do a manicure…if you don't get it…you cant do a pedicure….lets face it …if you don't get it….you shouldn't really be working with members of the public, you know. Go and do work …so and get a job in Summerfield….oh and by the way (raised voice) that involves working with members of the public! You know, Fucks sake…you have got to start seeing yourself as a social being, you know, what you do impacts on EVERYBODY else…it is not somebody else's fault **you** have a part to blame.

You have to set the line and that is the scary thing. You just walk in and say, right I have had enough and you suddenly think, you know, with all this TALK, with the concept of adult education…you think…aye great….if they really want that….if they embrace it…but what do you do if they don't really know what it is that they want…they know that they have arrived here…whether the school sent them…..whether it is getting oot the road of the buses….it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter, something has got them here. But at some point they have got to choose…if they don't engage …THEY are going to be thoroughly miserable and everybody will be wasting their lives. At the end of the day, I am going to be thoroughly miserable because there is no sense

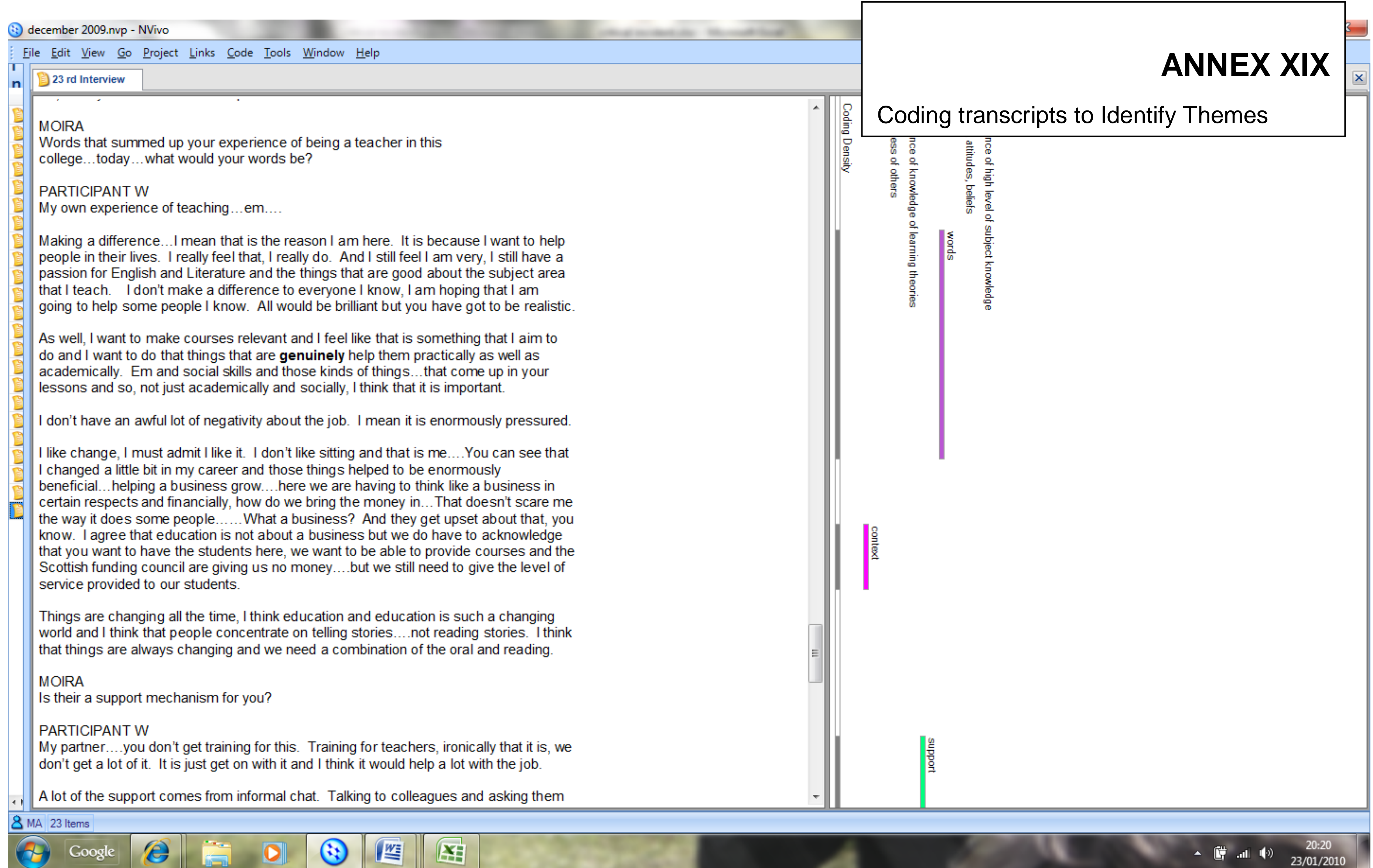
Coding Density | context | contracts | critical incident teaching resources | critical incident relationship with learner | critical incidents | spaces | abour | ences of teaching | s | of knowledge and skills to manage effective learning relationships | of practical skills and expertise | graphy school | Moral and Ethical | s with learners | ut FE teaching | passing not | ucation | owledge | tudes, beliefs

MA 52 Items Nodes: 25 References: 35 Read-Only Line: 500 Column: 87

18:04 23/01/2010

ANNEX XIX

Coding transcripts to Identify Themes



ANNEX XX

Coding transcripts to Identify Themes

december 2009.nvp - NVivo

File Edit View Go Project Links Code Format Tools Window Help

22nd Interview

PARTICIPANT W
Something that I have frequently done with special needs is to take them out and do something, so the learning experience that you have devised in the classroom aint working. You know that they have got this pent up energy or whatever so, for instance, in maths, I have taken them all out and said right, okay, lets see who can run the fastest, get a time and get the learners to time one another…what distance do you think it is from here to here…lets walk it…lets estimate it…..now lets measure it to see if you are right…make it more of a game and stuff like that. Rather than trying to do some sitting down and learning.

MOIRA
Do all your learners have additional support needs?

PARTICIPANT W
Yes and with disabilities and I take ones with challenging behaviour…..oh yes I will tell you another incident. East Renfrewshire, New Directions that I teach on a Friday morning. Em, and they were, they were really challenging behaviour, you know. I had one boy who was just off the wall, he was really…I had stuff that I had meant to do with him on a one to one basis and I thought he isnt going to listen to me at all, you know.

It was effing this and effing that and this is effing….and I said, *"Do you know what…..do you know what you are saying that is really interesting to me? I would like to , I am doing a sort of survey here…(laugh)…do you mind if I write this down you know?"* And he was saying effing this and effing that…and I said, *"Right you are saying this, that and the other."* And he said, *"Aye that is right and I am getting pure mad with it tonight…and I am going to be off my effing….."*

And I said, *"Right, so you are going to get really mad. So do you mind if I write this down?"* And he looked me and he said, *"Are you writing all that stuff down?"* I said, *"Yes….it is just between me and you."* Then he said, *"I look mad there don't I?"* Laugh……but there was no use me saying to him, don't do that, don't say that….it is like he had to sort of see himself the way that other people would see him, do you know what I mean. And I could have given him a lecture and it wouldn't have made a blind bit of difference…so I just…wrote it all down and he said to me. *"Are you gonnae tear that up?"* and I said all right and he just sort of calmed down.

MOIRA
I suppose what you did was unexpected…

PARTICIPANT W
Aye that is right, the surprise thing….it has a name…what is that thing you do…I will email it to you…I was reading up about it. Instead of trying to do, em, it is this whole

Coding Density
ways of teaching
critical incidents
phronesis
context
using theory in practice
importance of knowledge and skills to manage effective learning relationships
importance of knowledge of learning theories

MA 23 Items Nodes: 17 References: 21 Read-Only Line: 396 Column: 67

Google
19:54
23/01/2010

ANNEX XXI

First List of Themes

Name	Sources	References
ways of teaching	14	37
emotional labour	13	36
TQFE	15	35
critical incidents	20	34
phronesis	16	29
importance of high level of subject knowledge	19	28
relationships with learners	11	26
values, attitudes, beliefs	13	26
stories about FE teaching	14	25
good quotes	14	25
importance of practical skills and expertise	18	25
importance of knowledge of learning theories	18	24
context	11	23
importance of knowledge and skills to manage effective learning relationships	16	22
students	12	20
words	17	19
difference between college and universities and schools	8	16
support	13	15
contracts	9	14
Moral and Ethical	6	13
activities before becoming a college lecturer	8	11
learning relationships with learners	5	10
feelings about critical incident	6	9
first experiences of teaching	7	8
using theory in practice	4	8
teacher knowledge	7	7
passing not being the be all and end all	5	7
critical incident resolutions	6	7
teacher education	6	6
teacher as model	6	6
awareness of others	4	6
teacher knowledge personal experience	5	5
learning biography school	3	5
reasons for teaching	4	5
changes after critical incident	3	5
critical incident relationship with learner	4	4
work life before teaching	2	3
critical incident repercussions	2	3
critical incident teaching resources	3	3
stress	2	3
feelings about teaching	3	3
putting learning first	3	3
professional identity	2	2
critical incident learning	2	2
disrupted spaces	2	2
keeping face	1	1
early learning bio affecting attitude to teaching	1	1
work experience affecting teaching	1	1
help required	1	1
learning biography after school	1	1
early learning relationships	1	1

ANNEX XXII

INFORMATION ON THE INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Age	Age leaving school	Gender	Subject Specialism Qualifications	Subject specialism	Teaching Contract	Teaching Qualifications	Years Teaching	Years before getting a full time permanent job	Years teaching before TQFE	Years teaching in current situation
Alan	40-49	15	M	Honours Degree	Computing and ICT;	F/T perm	Combined degree and teaching qualification	14	Permanent right away	N/A	14
Ben	30-39	18	M	Honours Degree and Post Graduate Certificate	Economics, Social Science	F/T perm	None	4	3	4	4
Colin	30-39	18	M	2 Degrees and Masters Degree	Law	P/T perm	None	12	3	12	12
Davina	40-49	18	F	Honours Degree	Computing and ICT	F/T perm	TQFE	12	Permanent right away	6	10
Eleanor	50-59	17	F	Professional Qualifications	Beauty Therapy	F/T perm	TQFE & BEd	29	3	4	28
Fiona	30-39	18	F	Honours Degree and Post Graduate Diploma	Biology, Anatomy	P/T perm	PGCert in Education	8	4	N/A	8
George	40-49	17	M	Honours Degree and Post Graduate Diploma	Sport and Fitness	F/T perm	PGCert FE	18	6	7	16
Helen	50-59	18	F	Honours Degree	Computing and ICT	F/T perm	TQFE	26	Permanent right away	2	26
Ian	50-59	17	M	Diploma in Art & Design	Creative Arts	P/T perm	Currently undertaking TQFE	4	Permanent right away	4	4

Janice	40-49	17	F	Diploma and Masters Degree	Creative Arts	F/T perm	TQFE	22	Permanent right away	2	22
Kieran	40-49	16	M	Professional Qualifications	Electrical Engineering	F/T perm	Currently undertaking TQFE	7	4	9	9
Lennie	40-49	15	M	Professional Qualifications	Construction	F/T perm	TQFE	13	3	5	13
Melanie	30-39	17	F	Honours Degree	Business Management	P/T temp	PGCert in Education	2	N/A	N/A	1
Neil	50-59	18	M	Degree and Professional Qualifications	Tourism & Business Management	P/T temp	TQFE	23	2	4	2
Orla	40-49	17	F	HND	Beauty Therapy	P/T perm	TQFE	22	10	18	20
Pamela	40-49	18	F	Degree and Professional Qualifications	Beauty Therapy	F/T perm	TQFE	13	6	8	8
Quentin	40-49	17	M	Diploma in Nursing; Professional Qualifications	Healthcare	F/T perm	TQFE	8	3	6	8
Roger	50-59	18	M	Doctorate	History; Access and Continuing Education	F/T perm	PGCert in Education	28	2	N/A	28
Susan	40-49	16	F	Masters Degree	Early Education (childcare)	P/T temp	PGCert in Education	6	N/A	N/A	6
Tracey	40-49	17	F	Diploma in Nursing; Professional Qualifications	Healthcare	F/T perm	TQFE	7	2	4	5
Ursula	40-49	17	F	3 Degrees	Social Sciences	F/T perm	TQFE	18	Permanent right away	2	16
Vickie	50-59	18	F	Honours Degree	Maths: Supported Learning	F/T perm	MEd	30	Permanent right away	N/A	20
Winnie	30-39	18	F	Honours Degree	English and Communication	F/T perm	PGCert in Education	10	2	N/A	10
										97	

ANNEX XXIII

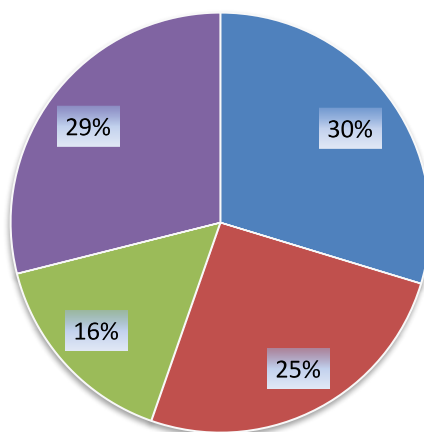
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE

	a) high level of subject knowledge	b) high level of technical knowledge & skills	c) high level of theoretical knowledge	d) high level of knowledge of learners
Alan	40	30	10	20
Ben	50	15	5	30
Colin	50	30	5	15
Davina	25	25	20	30
Eleanor	20	25	15	40
Fiona	15	40	5	40
George	20	30	20	30
Helen	20	25	15	40
Ian	30	30	10	30
Janice	20	10	20	50
Kieran	30	40	5	25
Lennie	40	20	10	30
Melanie	20	35	25	20
Neil	40	15	15	30
Orla	25	35	10	30
Pamela	50	20	10	20
Quentin	20	20	20	40
Roger	40	30	15	15
Susan	23	25	22	30
Tracy	25	25	25	25
Ursula	40	20	10	30

Vickie	15	20	50	15
Winnie	25	25	20	30
	683	**590**	**362**	**665**

Responses to Knowledge Questionnaire

Subject Knowledge
Technical Knowledge
Theoretical Knowledge
Knowledge of Learners



ANNEX XXIV

Disrupted Spaces								
Participant	Teaching Resources	Concerning Staff	Learning Relationships with Students	Inter-Student Relationships	Thinking on Feet	Conflict of Interests	Curriculum Issue	Disrupted Career Path
Alan			1					
Ben				1				
Colin	1							
Davina					1			
Eleanor			1					
Fiona						1		
George			1					
Helen		2	1					
Ian					1			
Janice	1							
Kieran			1					
Lennie			1					
Melanie					1			
Neil								1
Orla			1					
Pamela			1					
Quentin			1					
Roger			1					
Susan			1					
Tracey				1				
Ursula			1					
Vickie			2					
Winnie							1	
	2	**2**	**14**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**