How do creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning?

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Dedication

For Bridget Charlotte Martyn, my mother – and her love of learning (and of us!)

Acknowledgements

Though I have at times questioned the logic of embarking on an MPhil whilst working full time and being in the midst of family life I am aware that none of this would have been possible or the experience it has been without my utterly brilliant supervisors Professor Pat Thomson and Professor Christine Hall. They have been my compass throughout and I consider myself incredibly fortunate in having their attention, conversation and support. Their way of listening with an objective clarity; of questioning in ways to help me see above the immediate happenings; their conversation which didn't diminish yet stopped me from coming to easy or complacent conclusions; and their vast and fascinating knowledge of creativity, education, dialogue, the arts, humanity and society have always been invaluable. Thank you both for everything – as well as being brilliant I feel you have been very patient!

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Abstract

Schools in Wales are increasingly engaging creative practitioners to work alongside teachers. This in situ professional development aims to develop creative learning approaches across subject disciplines and phases. There is a substantive amount of research focusing on the practice of creative practitioners working in schools, some of which mentions the differences between teacher and artist interactions. There is also a separate well-evidenced body of research both nationally and internationally highlighting the importance and impact of effective teacher-pupil dialogue within the classroom and its accompanying impact on learning. The body of research concerning dialogue within the classroom has been directly focused on teachers and their interactions with their students and on student-to-student interaction. There is little in-depth or specific focus on creative practitioners' use of talk or dialogic approach when working with children. My research aimed to study and analyse the dialogic approaches of creative practitioners and to consider how this contributes to creating a productive environment for learning.

My research investigated the practice of five artists working in three primary schools in Wales focusing specifically and in detail on their use of talk. My aim was to draw out the elements of the dialogic approach of a visual artist, two sculptors, a ceramicist and a filmmaker when working in three schools, documented through observation, film and interview. I considered how the creative practitioners used talk to generate an environment for learning by showing that these creative practitioners initiated and engaged in ongoing conversations with the children from the lesson outset. I noted their ways of questioning, stemming from a genuine interest and purpose in hearing the children's ideas and thoughts. Listening was illuminated as an important element – attentive and acute and without judgement. The creative practitioners adopted multiple means of enabling the children to engage with their ideas and thoughts through play, experimentation and the abstraction of ideas - encouraging inter-pupil dialogue. Finally, my analysis showed that the creative practitioners

developed a sense of collective endeavour where every child was valued and integral to the purpose and direction of the learning.

I conclude that these findings offer new knowledge into how creative practitioners skilfully use talk to engage and involve children in their learning. This research thus provides insights for teachers and creative practitioners interested in developing a dialogic pedagogy and has the potential to remind educational decision makers and policy makers of the educational value that creative practitioners bring when working in schools.

Keywords: Dialogue, Dialogic Teaching, Talk, Listening, Interthinking, Creative Learning, Creativity, Inclusion, Artists, Creative Practitioners

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Chapter One: Introduction

There has been a growing interest for several decades in developing the creative and critical thinking skills of children and young people within our education systems in order to better prepare them for the increasingly complex, changing and interconnected world around them. Organisations such as the World Economic Forum and the OECD, as well as education ministries across the world, have been keen to align their focus on this imperative, as education systems, to a greater or lesser extent introduce new pedagogies and curricular in place of their existing or default traditions of teaching. As society, technology and the world of work rapidly evolves, there is a growing awareness that education systems need to adapt at a greater pace, not only to recognise the need to keep their learners engaged and progressing, but also to foster their desire and ability to learn as a capable and digitally literate generation. One OECD report published in 2019 noted that 'creativity and critical thinking skills are increasingly visible in curricular frameworks around the globe, yet in most educational systems, teachers lack clear guidance for embedding these skills in their everyday practice alongside content and curricular knowledge' (Vincent-Lancrin, S. *et al.* 2019 p211).These competencies are thought to be necessary for life in an increasingly fraught, rapidly changing future.

Indicative of the interest in creativity and the desire to increase the experience of teachers in creative ways of working has been a global trend to develop programmes which bring creative professionals and cultural organisations to work with schools. It can be argued that creative practitioners can offer teachers and students very particular ways of working within the school environment – that together with teachers, they can use pedagogies that are, at their best, open-ended, exploratory, de- and reconstructive, collaborative, inclusive and disruptive (Hall & Thomson, 2017). Hall & Thomson argue that the underpinning rationale for introducing creative practitioners connects to their tendency to draw on their own experiences to teach in different ways, their ability to see the pupils' own ideas and experiences as a powerful and useful resource and often

enable a greater sense of reflection, problem-solving and counter-thinking to offer different approaches to a learning opportunity.

Selkrig and Keamy suggest that 'these enabling skills need to be fused with the distinct ways of knowing subject areas if education is to be relevant and effective in the exciting and uncertain twenty first century' (Selkrig & Keamy, 2017 p1).

This thesis reports results of research which investigates an element of the work that creative practitioners do with children, namely the nature of the conversations they generate and the effect this has on the learning environment. There are many other aspects of the ways in which creative practitioners work in school settings worthy of a research focus, however this area was of particular fascination to me as explained further in due course. The wider context for this research is the Lead Creative Schools programme in Wales, set against a backdrop of educational reform within the Welsh education system.

Curriculum reform in Wales

In step with the growing awareness internationally of the benefit of whole-scale system change within the education system, the Welsh Government launched a review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements in schools in Wales in 2014. The conclusions were published by Professor Graham Donaldson in the Successful Futures report (2015). The recommendations within the report consisted of a broad re-imagining of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, leadership, Initial Teacher Training and professional learning. There then followed a period of collective design of the new Curriculum for Wales through a method of subsidiarity of trial and feedback via a network of Pioneer Schools established to encourage co-ownership and school based response from the teaching profession. From 2017, new professional teaching standards were introduced to align with curriculum reform, including five areas of focus – pedagogy, collaboration, innovation, professional learning and leadership. To support the reform process, the inspectorate highlighted emerging practice. 'Curriculum innovation in primary schools' (Estyn, 2018), identified school

leaders who encourage teachers to explore new approaches and learning experiences 'without fear of failure', and who create a culture for teachers to develop confidence and resilience – thus creating a climate of greater autonomy along with a sense of permission to adopt different approaches.

The 'Creative learning through the arts' programme in Wales

In tandem with the development and introduction of these educational reforms taking place in Wales came the commissioning of an independent report for the Welsh Government into 'Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales' (Smith, 2013). This report reviewed the quality, status and availability of arts, cultural and creative education in schools across Wales, consulting teachers, senior leaders, pupils, artists, arts organisations and those working within the wider education and cultural sectors. The review was the first of its kind to look in-depth in Wales at the inter-relationship between the arts and the education sectors. Recommendations were presented and accepted by the Welsh Government (Smith, 2013). Following these recommendations, in 2015, a partnership between Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales was established which aimed to support the more effective integration of the arts and creativity into educational practice and, in the longer term, improve educational standards and outcomes. 'Creative learning through the arts – an action plan for Wales' was initially a five year, jointly funded multi-strand programme, but now extended into a Phase 2 and a Phase 3 programme due to run until at least 2025.

A central element of the action plan is the Lead Creative School scheme (LCS) - an initiative which utilises the expertise of creative practitioners from a broad range of creative practices and backgrounds to work alongside teachers in the classroom to co-construct new approaches to teaching and learning. The aim of the programme is to nurture and develop creative learning across disciplines and subject areas adopting an action enquiry and reflective approach. The creative practitioner and teacher work in partnership – teaching, reflecting together, adapting and observing the impact on pupils. As such the programme supports

ongoing 'in-situ' professional dialogue, reflection and learning. The programme, inspired by international creative learning programmes and the Creative Partnerships programme in England (2002-2011) recognises the potential of artists and teachers working together, where default pedagogies of teachers are often changed (Thomson, 2010). The creative learning framework used by the LCS scheme is informed by the Creative Habits of Mind (Lucas *et al*, 2013), insights gained from the Signature Pedagogies project (Thomson *et al*, 2012), a literature review of whole school change (Thomson, 2010) and evaluations following the creative partnerships programme in England (2002-2011). The initial LCS programme was co-created with the assistance and guidance of Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE), though future strands and iterations have since evolved as the programme has moved into the second and third phase.

Though the LCS scheme was not initially introduced to help schools prepare for the roll-out of the new curriculum in Wales, its introduction has been timely, since it has encouraged teachers to take greater professional risks, allow themselves permission to explore and experiment, and to work with the increased flexibility and innovation that the design and implementation of the curriculum for Wales requires (Richards & Hadaway, 2020). In the fourth (and final) interim evaluation report of the scheme, the Curriculum for Wales is noted as a key contextual factor in relation to the Creative Learning Through the Arts (CLTA) programme with the Lead Creative School scheme having a particular relevance to informing pedagogy within the emerging Curriculum for Wales. The report surmises that the emergence of the Curriculum for Wales during the lifetime of CLTA has 'magnified the relevance of, interest in, and potential impact and legacy of the programme' (Griffiths & Powell, 2020).

My position and background

As the Project Lead (and prior to this role, the Regional Lead) for the Lead Creative Schools scheme (Arts Council of Wales), I work closely with schoolteachers, senior school leaders, creative agents and creative

practitioners. My role involves the training of all parties involved in the programme, from creative agent to creative practitioner to senior leader/school co-ordinator and the teachers involved in co-delivery in the classroom. In addition to the training the role involves visiting schools engaged in projects and talking to all involved including the children, teachers, creative practitioners and school leaders – an activity which offers a wealth of observation and insight. Further elements of the role involve supporting and mentoring the creative agents, reviewing planning and evaluation documentation, and synthesising the wider learning, as well as designing new creative learning programmes as needs and new directions emerge. The Project Lead role involves a clear knowledge of each project, the challenges and the findings in relation to teacher and student engagement and impact as well as the personal and collective national reflections which arise from the programme as it unfolds. Communicating the nature and potential of the programme to those in local and regional government is an important element of the role, alongside sharing practice with national and international communities of similar practice.

Though a trained and experienced primary and middle school teacher my own professional path started with my degree at Art College. Here I studied Studio Ceramics, alongside fashion students, product design and print students and film and animation students. I went on to train as a primary school teacher whilst still having a shared artist's studio in London. This dual path provided a useful vantage point and understanding of both the world of education and that of a creative practitioner/artist. On completing my PGCE I taught in a large middle school in London before returning to Wales initially as a teacher and then taking on the role of Art and Design Advisor for a local education authority, again allowing for the combining of my understanding of both fields.

An insightful and valuable aspect of my work as a Project Lead involves the visiting of the wide range of Lead Creative Schools projects in the regions of Mid, South and West Wales. As I have travelled around Wales and visited these schools over the years, one particular observation struck me time and again when witnessing creative practitioners working with children. I became

increasingly aware of creative practitioners' tendency to engage in extended periods of dialogue with the children, seeking out ideas and thoughts as an essential part of the creative process. The language was rich (Hart & Risley, 1995) and the listening acute and reflective without a sense of steering the children resolutely towards predetermined answers. There also seemed to be a difference in the pupil-to-pupil dialogue, with often a strong sense of collective endeavour, a collaborative and purposeful approach to thinking aloud and problem solving together – again evidenced through their collective conversations. This environment of inclusion, where every child was willing and able to participate fully, to share their ideas and feel they were of value, and to collectively build on their own and each other's learning, was palpable. This observation intrigued me, reminding me of research I had initially become aware of when working as a classroom teacher and education advisor – research concerning the effective use of dialogue in classrooms to bring in children's ideas and develop and extend their learning (Alexander, 2004). It occurred to me that the creative practitioners, in their practice with children, could be unintentionally adopting, through their talk, the tools, approaches and practice of dialogic teaching and that this may, at least in part, be responsible for their effectiveness in including and engaging children and enabling them to be active participants in their own learning.

The desire to understand this phenomenon better provided the original motivation for my research. Initially I planned to compare the talk of the creative practitioners to the talk of the teacher. I soon rejected this idea for two reasons. Firstly, because I became aware of the sizable body of work focusing in great depth on teachers' talk and secondly because I felt uncomfortable with the idea that the findings of such research might be seen to make value judgements about the work of either of these professional groups. I decided instead to focus more fully on the talk of the creative practitioners as they worked with children since there is relatively little research work focusing in depth on creative practitioners' use of talk when approached through the lens of dialogic teaching.

My research offers a detailed analysis of one of the educational dimensions of creative practitioners working alongside teachers in schools - namely a focus and analysis on their use of talk when working with children and its inextricable connection to inclusion.

The key underlying question I consider in my research is why talk in learning is of such importance. Alexander suggests that for learners to fully engage in their learning they need to feel permitted to share and build on their own and each other's ideas and understandings in an environment of trust and safety (Alexander, 2008). There is a need for them to be recognised and welcomed as individuals with their own knowledges and experiences which can be seen, recognised and valued within the classroom (Thomson, 2002; Myhill, 2005; Mercer, 1995, 2000). Dialogue, suggests Roche, 'honours the other as an equal knower who can think and speak for herself' crucial for the development of critical awareness (Roche, 2011 p339). Segal, Pollak & Lefstein note that ideas must be heeded by others and suggest that if a voice is not heard and attended to it drops out of the conversation and exclusion occurs (Segal, Pollak & Lefstein, 2017).

As such, my work engages with the research question 'How do creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning?'

My research is not an analysis of the LCS programme as a whole and does not make a generalisation in relation to all creative practitioners within it. It is a focused study of the dialogic approach and use of talk of five creative practitioners as they worked in three schools in Mid and South Wales.

From a personal professional perspective I was aware at the outset of the programme that there was limited research focusing specifically on creative practitioners' pedagogical approach in terms of dialogue and its attendant educational impact – this research would have been of value to me in explaining the nature and value of the practice emerging when creative practitioners work alongside teachers in the classroom and of how dialogue plays a critical role in this.

From my professional experience working within the programme I consider this research to be of relevance to those entering the teaching profession and to practising teachers interested both in the role of talk in the classroom and in the potential of dialogue to include children in their own and each other's learning. It will be of interest to creative professionals interested in the analysis of their own unique pedagogy and the educational impact of their work in schools. This research will also be of value to school leaders, educational policy makers and teachers needing insights and affirmation of the educational contribution creative practitioners make when they work in schools – as such this research provides evidenced argument for the value of programmes which support this practice.

Though not the primary focus this research will further understanding about models of professional development and offers insights into a more inclusive approach to pedagogy. As described earlier in this chapter there is an awareness both in the UK and internationally of the need for children and young people to experience an education which equips them with the 21st century skills needed both in the here and now and as they move into their adult lives. However the disconnect between such policy ideals and the reality of the day-to-day school environment can be considerable. Programmes such as the Lead Creative Schools programme offer a model of 'in-situ' professional development as alluded to earlier. This in-situ professional development works on the implication that creative practitioners have approaches and skills in keeping with developing such 21st century skills (such as developing creative thinking, collaboration and problem solving approaches) which can be modelled and reflected upon as they co-construct learning opportunities with the teachers for and with the children. The subsequent in-situ dialogues between the creative practitioner and the teacher – only made possible by their situation of working together, alongside each other and reflecting in the moment on the impact of these other approaches – offers a very different and powerful mode of professional development. Selkrig and Keamy, in their research centred around artists working in schools, suggest that the term 'professional learning' rather

than the more linear 'professional development' is more useful, and refer to O'Brien and Jones' work which states that…

> 'There is significant difference between the systematic career progression associated with professional development and the broader, more critically reflective and less performative approach to professional learning. It is argued that developments in education are not linear, so a degree of flexibility is required if professionals are to look critically and constructively at change – and the term professional learning is a better way to epitomise the key characteristics of reflective practice, critical evaluation and continuing learning.' (O'Brien & Jones, 2014 p684)

In addition Selkrig and Keamy propose that teachers' creative learning is named and legitimised, suggesting that it is not possible for a teacher to teach for creativity or to teach creatively unless they have an understanding of their own creative learning – going on to note that only then possibilities can emerge which may further promote and encourage the creative learning of the children they teach (Selkrig & Keamy, 2017 p10).

My hope is that my research will offer a depth of insight into the Creative Learning Wales programme and creative learning programmes in general, informing conversations about their potential legacy and offering a valuable contribution to decision makers and policy planners moving forwards.

How the thesis is structured

In this chapter I have:

- given a broad overview of the global focus on creativity in education,
- explained in more detail the educational context in Wales and the nature and structure of the Lead Creative School programme,
- briefly described my own personal route into education and role within the programme, and

- set out the research question which drives this research and how I arrived at that point of enquiry.

The remaining chapters are as follows:

Chapter 2 contextualises my work in the relevant literatures on talk and learning, the use of talk in the classroom, creative pedagogies, and creative practitioners' practice in schools. It also further establishes the potential contribution and significance of the research.

Chapter 3 gives an account of my ontology and epistemology and explains my research methodology. It picks up the question of my own positioning in relation to the programme.

Chapter 4 presents the portraits of the five creative practitioners and their observed practice within the three schools.

Chapter 5 discusses and analyses the five portraits of the creative practitioners with a particular focus on their talk and ways of conversing and being when working within their school settings.

In Chapter 6 I discuss the implications and conclusions from the work and consider how the findings may be of use for professional development and to the wider educational and creative policy-making communities, and to those interested in the potential of talk to create an inclusive, cognitively challenging and engaging environment for learning.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter lays out and considers key literatures, theories and debates centred around what research tells us about talk and learning, teachers' use of talk within the classroom, creativity and creative learning, creative practitioners' work in schools and finally the Welsh Education policy context. These areas are considered in response to the research question 'How do creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning?' In doing so the research is positioned in an educational, social and theoretical context. Gaps in the field are identified and expanded upon in this chapter to situate the subsequent contributions made in the discussion and analysis section of the research. I establish that whilst there is considerable literature around talk in teaching and learning, and around creativity and what creative practitioners do in schools, there is little detailed literature focusing on creative practitioners' talk and its effect on learning within a school environment. Bringing the literature detailed on talk and applying it to creative practitioners practice in schools is the centre of my research.

Dialogic teaching and creating a climate for learning

The literatures suggests a strong connection between talk, teaching and the learning climate and context.

Dialogic teaching enables students to be active participants in their own learning, inviting them to engage, to share their ideas, explore their emerging understanding and build on their own and each other's learning. Mercer and Littleton (2007) describe the need to treat learning as a social, communicative process and stress the importance of children taking a more active, vocal role in classroom dialogue. They recommend that classroom interactions offer legitimate opportunities for children to express their uncertainties and reveal their confusions without fear or embarrassment. The importance of participants being willing to share their understandings and participate fully requires a sense of togetherness and shared endeavour, of trust and mutuality and is therefore dependent on the quality of relationships and children's sense of being genuinely

included in the learning space. This points to the importance of engendering a sense of trust and mutuality, recognising that effective classroom learning is a social activity (Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

In order for dialogic teaching to succeed, the learning environment needs to be open and safe for children to share their thoughts, negotiate and explore and this, in turn, relies on a supportive and respectful relationship between the teacher and student (Alexander, 2018). A consideration of the importance of dialogue based on egalitarian relationships is noted by Flecha and Soler when discussing children's willingness to join in and engage, reflecting that the classroom dialogue and interactions should be based on the validity of the arguments given as well as the intentions to reach agreement and understanding rather than, as Habermas states, power claims, or imposition (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Habermas, 1984).

Arguments for dialogic teaching are premised on research about talk and learning.

Talk and learning

> 'Talk and social interaction are not just the means by which people learn to think, but also how they engage in thinking... [D]iscourse is cognition is discourse.....One is unimaginable without the other.' (Resnick *et al*., 1997 p2)

Vygotsky proposed that a child's cognitive development requires the child to engage through the medium of spoken language with adults, other children and the wider culture – that there is an essential and dynamic link between social interaction (mainly through talk) and individual thinking, suggesting that dialogue is one of our most essential tools in learning (Vygotsky, 1962).

Vygotskian scholars have explored the role of talk further showing that 'the relationship between social activity and individual thinking is a vital distinctive characteristic of human cognition and one which underpins cognitive development' (Mercer & Howe, 2007 p12). By experiencing talk and 'more

guided' interactions with more experienced others children begin to internalise thought themselves. In effect the more experienced others are modelling thought verbally and the child then unconsciously internalises and practises this in relation to learning how to use this information themselves and to transform it 'to make it part of their own mental tool kit' (Scott, 2009). Wegerif describes dialogue as also having 'an inside', describing what differentiates dialogue from an interaction. When people enter into dialogue there is "a new space of meaning that opens up between them and includes them within it...The internal view that takes the other seriously is 'dialogic' because from this perspective meaning always assumes at least two perspectives at once so it is reason through and across difference ('dia' from the Greek is mostly translated as 'through or across' so 'dialogic' could be translated as something like 'logic across difference' or perhaps as meaning emerging from the interplay of different perspectives)" (Wegerif, 2011 p180).

Further understanding of the role of talk in learning comes from an increasing awareness of our ability to 'interthink' (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Interthinking refers to the theory that learning and problem-solving processes, rather than being individual, are, in reality, social and highly communicative processes and that this in itself is one of the defining characteristics of the human species. Littleton and Mercer's research focuses directly on the dynamic role of language, and in particular spoken language, to enable us to think collectively, creatively and productively together. Their analysis of talk centres around how it is used as a social mode of thinking – in effect, how language is a tool for constructing knowledge; creating ideas; sharing understanding and tackling problems creatively and collaboratively, referring to talk as a joint intellectual activity (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). The development of children's thinking as being shaped by the dynamic relationship between intermental activity (social interaction) and intramental activity (individual thinking) is described by Vygotsky, where language is the prime mediator between the two (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978).

This relationship between social activity and individual thinking can be described as a vital and distinctive characteristic of human cognition and one which underpins cognitive development (Mercer & Howe, 2012), and though there are many varied ways in which people can make sense of the world together, Mercer and Littleton suggest that 'language is without doubt the most ubiquitous, flexible and creative of the meaning making tools available and is the one most intimately connected with the creation and pursuit of reasoned argument' (Mercer & Littleton, 2007 p2).

Talk within the classroom

Consideration of the dynamic and vital role of language in the development of thinking and learning leads to my reflection on the use of talk within the classroom.

It is fair to say that classrooms are environments abundant with talk – this is especially so in the primary school sector but is also true of secondary education. Teaching is, by its very nature, an interactive process and talk is the main mode of this interaction. Talk in itself is an intrinsic element of learning (though not of recording that learning) and so plays a powerful role in our pupils' everyday school experience. However, though there has been extensive research highlighting the educational effectiveness of skilfully using a more dialogic approach to classroom talk, the awareness and adoption of such approaches in teaching and learning remains relatively underutilised in many schools (Alexander 2007, 2018; Myhill 2006; Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

Alexander draws our attention to international research showing the difference between the status, character and use of talk in UK and American classrooms, in contrast to many countries in continental Europe. He points out that in those European countries:

- Oracy is regarded as no less important than literacy.
- There is a strong tradition of oral pedagogy with sustained oral work in most lessons.

- Across the curriculum as a whole there is a higher ratio of oral to text-based learning tasks and activities, contrasting to UK classrooms where written work tends to be seen as the only 'real' work.
- Some formal assessments may also be oral, not just written.
- The purpose of classroom talk is seen as primarily cognitive, whereas in the UK talk is seen as primarily social and affective – about developing children's confidence rather than their thinking.
- Questions are designed to encourage reasoning and speculation, not just to elicit 'right' answers, and children are given time to think things out, and to think aloud.
- The culture of classroom talk is more public and confident. Children talk clearly and loudly. They listen and expect to be listened to and the making of mistakes in front of other children is considered intrinsic to learning rather than a matter for shame or embarrassment.
  (Alexander, 2007 p19-21)

Alexander suggests that the transitory nature of talk in contrast with the more permanent nature of writing may account for the higher status ascribed to writing in educational settings (Alexander, 2007). For example, it is not uncommon, within a learning environment, 'for pupils to discuss, reason, elaborate, learn and explore orally, only for this talk to be followed by the teacher's phrase of 'now write that down'. In the vast majority of cases pupils' work is only measured by what is written and for this reason writing is seen as the only 'real' schoolwork and as such the most reliable medium for measuring a pupil's learning' (Alexander, 2007 p9).

National strategies, such as the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) have encouraged a return to 'interactive whole class teaching' recognising the importance of encouraging pupil responses in classroom discourse. However, this term can be unhelpfully broad, in part because all teaching is, by its very nature, 'interactive' (Black & Williams, 1998) and secondly because the term is all-encompassing and

so ‘interaction’ can also include classroom talk which is predominantly dominated by the teacher (Myhill, 2006).

Alexander points to a teacher’s repertoire of 5 kinds of teacher talk, namely:

1. Rote
2. Recitation
3. Instruction
4. Discussion
5. Dialogue

The first three are far more likely to ensure that the overall control remains firmly in the hands of the teacher where they control the direction of dialogue, the events and even the ideas raised in class. The latter two offer a greater degree of cognitive challenge, potentially demand a greater subject knowledge and not only ‘allow for evidence, truth and opinion to emerge’ but also give pupils ‘a far greater freedom to explore ideas, the subject and their views and opinions’ (Alexander, 2007 p30). However, there is both national and international evidence (Alexander, 2007; Rymes, 2009; Myhill, 2006; Nystrand *et al,* 1997) to suggest that recitation is still the predominant or default mode of classroom interaction, even though discussion and dialogue (though the rarest form of classroom interaction), are the most educationally potent and powerful in relation to classroom talk. When considering effective dialogic teaching, Alexander refers to five principles or features – talk which is collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative, and purposeful (Alexander, 2018).

In the 1980’s Mercer *et al* carried out research looking at talk in group work – largely in relation to the introduction of ‘new technologies’ in the primary classroom. The methodology used by Mercer and Littleton to study the interconnected role of talk in children’s thinking is called *sociocultural discourse analysis (SCDA)* i.e. the analysis of talk in a social context and focuses more on the content of the talk rather than on the organisational structure of the

language used. Their interest lay with the use of language as a 'social mode of thinking' and looked at language as a tool for constructing knowledge, the creation of ideas, sharing understanding and in tackling problems collaboratively. It was during this research that three types of talking in groups were identified.

The three types of talk identified were:

- Disputational talk – this is characterised by high levels of disagreement, those involved only following and focusing on their own ideas and a competitive rather than collaborative stance within the group.
- Cumulative talk – this is characterised by a general acceptance of what each others say, with some embellishment.
- Exploratory talk – this is characterised by those involved engaging critically and constructively with each other's ideas, developing their ability to reason, and trying to reach an agreement whilst accepting different ideas and opinions.

Littleton and Mercer (2013) *pp15,16*

Littleton and Mercer's research centres on three levels of analysis to describe, analyse and evaluate talk from three different points of view – linguistic, psychological and cultural.

When looking from a linguistic perspective they considered what speech acts were occurring – whether those involved asserted, challenged, explained or requested further clarity and examined the types of exchanges which were taking place. Cumulative talk, by its nature involved repetition and elaboration whereas exploratory talk involved a combination of challenges and requests for clarification with responses providing explanations and justifications (Littleton & Mercer, 2013).

The psychological perspective reflected on the type of communicative relationship between those involved. Littleton and Mercer considered to what extent the reasoning was being pursued visibly and jointly. In disputational talk for example, ideas are asserted rather than shared and differences are

emphasised rather than resolved – the general nature of the interaction is a combination of competitive and defensive. Cumulative talk on the other hand is concerned with maintaining the status quo and reinforcing solidarity and stability. Exploratory talk involved the views of all participants being sought – it included active challenge and constructive conflict but with an aim of reaching a shared consensus (Littleton & Mercer, 2013).

Littleton and Mercer's cultural perspective took into account a consideration of the types of occurrences where talk is taking place and the 'ground rules' associated with these 'talking events'. For example, whether the expectation is for everyone to participate or whether some parties exert more control over the talk than others – and which types of reasoning are valued and encouraged within these contexts and social norms.

Littleton and Mercer (2013) concluded that the engagement of 'exploratory talk' led to learning which was most educationally effective, often characterised by children's emerging ability to reason individually and collectively. When considering these different perspectives, exploratory talk would logically seem to be the most encouraged and common talk in most educational settings – however this often does not prove to be the case. The open nature of discourse – the freedom to debate and constructively disagree alongside the democratic appreciation of the views of all involved – is all too often not apparent within a learning context (Rymes, 2009). My research enquiry investigates which types of talk the creative practitioners engaged in their ongoing practice within schools, considering linguistic, psychological and cultural frames when describing and analysing the talk events occurring.

Further research focused on the use of talk in the learning environment identified common discourse patterns such as teachers allocating turns at will, determining topics and re-allocating turns if the contributions are deemed irrelevant (Edwards & Westgate, 1994; Haworth, 2001; Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Haworth (2001) describes the teachers essentially positioning themselves as the

'controller of the spoken word', whilst the learners remain 'in the shadows' (Haworth, 2001).

Myhill's (2006) research, spanning two and a half years beginning in 1999, investigated teacher discourse in whole class teaching and considered how the talk supported children's learning. The research concluded that teachers' talk dominates whole-class teaching with the teacher-pupil interactions following highly conventional talk patterns – that of teacher-child-teacher-child. The study revealed that children's spoken contributions usually served to end a sequence but rarely to begin one, and seldom were they afforded the opportunity to ask questions to initiate a sequence themselves. Her research indicated the predominance of teacher initiation and single word pupil response.

In the classroom interactions the teachers' use of questioning could be grouped into four types or forms of questions, namely:

(factual) Questions which invite a predetermined answer.

(speculative) Questions which invite a response with no predetermined answer, often opinions, hypotheses, imaginings, ideas.

(procedural) Questions which relate to the organisation and management of the lesson.

(process) Questions which invite children to articulate their understanding of learning, processes or to explain their thinking.

(Myhill, 2006 p 26)

These findings revealed that the form of teachers questioning leaned significantly towards factual questioning, requiring closed responses – in fact over 60% were factual (Myhill, 2006). From this perspective we can see that a relatively low number of questions asked higher order thinking skills of the children, i.e. speculative questions asking for hypothesis, imaginings or opinions,

or process questions establishing understanding (less than 1/3 of the questions asked).

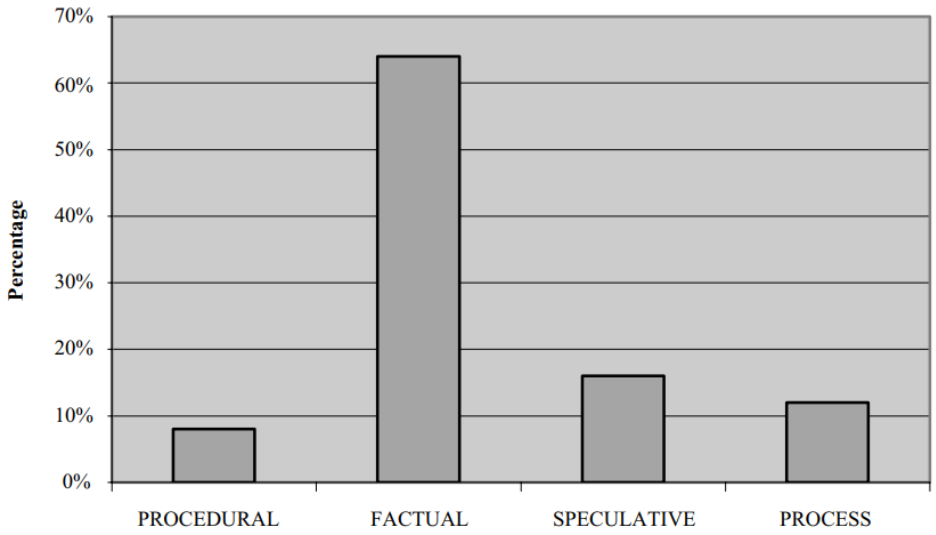

Figure 1: The categorisation of questions by form. p27 Myhill, D. (2006) *Talk, talk, talk: teaching and learning in whole class discourse*, Research Papers in Education, 21:1, 19-41

The discrepancy between the value teachers ascribed *process* and *speculative* questions, and their distinct lack of prominence in the classroom discourse was identified in the research (Myhill, 2006). This was potentially due to prioritizing teaching (delivery and content) over the learning (understanding) with the teachers in the study expressing their sense of pressure to get through curricular content and to achieve pre-determined goals (Myhill, 2006).

Myhill's findings drew attention to the dominance of teachers' talk in the classroom, revealing a predominantly transmissive manner, and a seemed reluctance to relinquish control of the discourse for fear of not covering what was needed to be covered in the lesson. Other factors came to light during the research such as the discrepancy between lower-achieving boys' and higher-achieving girls' response to such teacher-orchestrated discourse. She found that boys were far more likely to call out spontaneously and to initiate talk indicating possibly a greater desire to take more ownership of the discourse.

Another gender-related factor revolved around establishing connection to prior knowledge or outside-of-school experience or contexts. Mercer (1995; 2000) notes that the role of the teacher is to establish connections or relationships between ideas and to create learning contexts in which earlier experiences provide the foundations of making sense of later ones i.e. children need the opportunity to enable connections between the 'already known' and the 'new'. However, Myhill's research analysis showed that the teachers' actual use of prior knowledge was minimal, being more concerned with coverage and elicitation of facts rather than the construction of interconnected learning or greater understanding. Her research recorded that low-achieving boys were three times more likely to refer to prior knowledge from personal experience than school experience – indicating that a possible greater acknowledgement and use of prior knowledge derived from out-of-school contexts may well scaffold and support under-achieving boys' learning more effectively (Myhill, 2006).

This consideration of children's engagement in their learning raises the question of the authenticity and relevance of the knowledge being shared and explored within the classroom. 'Whose knowledge counts in classrooms?' – a recent analysis of literacy teaching in four schools in Australia considering 'what good teachers do' – suggests that the 'good teachers' observed had an awareness that a pupil's cultural and linguistic backgrounds were an important resource in their learning. The good teachers in the Australian study tended to engage pupils in more extended in-depth discourse. 'In such cases, teachers position children as people who already have knowledge that they can articulate and, moreover, they highlight the potential of what can be learned in the classroom collective' (Hayes, Hattam, Comber, Kerkham, Lupton & Thomson, 2017 p 92). Researchers such as Thomson (2002) have long pointed out the educational value of pedagogies which seek out, value and use knowledge from beyond the classroom describing this knowledge as a child's 'virtual school bag' (Thomson, 2002).

In similar vein Thomson and Hall (2014) argue that schools and teachers need to develop, extend and challenge all learners, seeing all children as capable of the highest levels of learning – but that this means reconsidering their pedagogical

approach to inclusion. They suggest approaches which move the homogenous view of knowledge from the centre and allow for pedagogic strategies which enable a student's understanding to become more visible, yet still connected to knowledge which needs to be covered in exams and tests. They argue for 'the rich combination of inclusive axiological principles, and decentred epistemology, enacted through a repertoire of democratic creative practices' (Thomson & Hall, 2014).

Furthermore, a large-scale study in America by Nystrand *et al* (1997) showed that the 'recitation script' in teaching still remains dominant. The study found that when teachers weren't lecturing, pupils were engaged in 'seatwork' or answering questions; the researchers observed that teachers asked almost all of the questions, few of those questions were authentic and few teachers followed up on the pupils' answers. 'Authentic' questions were identified and defined as those 'for which the teacher has not prespecified or implied a particular answer'. The majority of questions observed were 'test' questions where the teacher remained in control of the correct answers and the exact direction of the teaching and interactions. Nystrand *et al* define 'authentic' questions as 'dialogic' because 'they signal to students the teacher's interest in what they think and know and not just whether they can report what someone else thinks or has said' (Nystrand *et al*. 1997).

The high occurrence of 'test' questions requiring a prespecified answer and ineffective uses of scaffolding concerns the notion of 'uptake' – 'conversants listening and responding to each other and especially teachers following up on students' answers' (Nystrand *et al*. 1997) Not only does the failure to respond properly to a pupil's answers greatly limit the potential to use the answers as a learning 'tool' and vehicle to explore the learning in greater depth and more effectively but it also gives an impression that the teacher is less interested in a pupil's own ideas and understanding than in the achievement of the focussed, prespecified answer. Whether this is due to a perceived need to stick closely to the curriculum objectives, or to maintain the 'pace', it indicates that the learning is still 'principally project/knowledge orientated rather than

process/understanding orientated' (Myhill & Warren, 2007). The Kings group, in their work centred on Assessment for Learning (AfL) suggest that teachers often do not 'plan and conduct classroom dialogue in ways that might help pupils to learn or encourage a climate of talk where pupils participate actively in lessons or encourage and respect one another's ideas'. Black *et al* suggest that teachers need to understand 'that learning may depend less on their (the pupils) capacity to spot the right answer and more on their readiness to discuss and express their own understanding' (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2002).

The importance of the practice of supporting and encouraging children to articulate and expand on their thoughts and ideas in order to develop and deepen their understanding has been explained through the theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), first described by Vygotsky (1978). The ZPD is defined as the difference between a child's 'actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving' and the child's 'potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978 p.86). The child is supported by teacher scaffolding, the term used to describe various forms of guidance e.g. that support learners through the ZPD (Wood et al, 1976). Mercer and Littleton describe scaffolding as 'a special, sensitive kind of help that is intended to bring the learner closer to a state of competence that will enable them to complete a task on their own' (Mercer & Littleton, 2007 pp.15,16) . The scaffolding process enables children to be both active constructors of their own understanding and also dependent on dialogues with others to scaffold their development (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). 'Scaffolding' in a classroom context has been demonstrated to be a powerful and effective tool for learning when done skilfully and in a responsive and pupil-attuned manner – however it can be far from effective if carried out purely for the purposes of controlling the dialogue in a didactic and prescriptive manner and is a term often used loosely and inaccurately in schools. Myhill and Warren (2007) and Mercer (1995) expound that many teachers use scaffolding as a means of giving such strong 'clues' in order for pupils to arrive at the 'right' answer and complete a task instead of

using it as a tool to encourage independence and extend learning. This has the inadvertent effect of rushing pupils through a dialogue intended to illustrate their understanding and neglecting pupils' 'grasp of the learning at the heart of the task.' This misplaced use of scaffolding in turn can lead to a lower level of cognitive challenge and engagement in reasoning and can reduce independent thinking if the questioning is always steering single-mindedly towards a 'prespecified answer'. Some research definitions of scaffolding (especially when the context has been expert-apprentice or informal parent-child tutoring) expressly include the criterion that the expert or the tutor is not self-consciously trying to teach or is not primarily concerned with teaching (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Whilst this definition does not characterise the role of the teacher it can potentially be applied in relation to the role of creative practitioner.

The Intermental Development Zone (IDZ) is a state coined and described by Mercer and Littleton as a state where teacher and learner can stay attuned to each other's changing state of knowledge and understanding over the course of an educational activity (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The IDZ state emphasises collectivity and dialogue and the significance of social interaction in learning. Collaboration involves a co-ordinated joint commitment to a shared goal, reciprocity, mutuality and the continued negotiation of meaning (Nystrand, 1986) – the need for intersubjectivity, establishing a shared conception of the task or problem and maintaining intersubjectivity as they progress though the activity. Intersubjectivity has also been called interthinking – a form of collective and collaborative thinking discussed earlier in this chapter (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). This collective process of interthinking, of which spoken language is an essential ingredient – being able to engage in reasoned discussions, collectively problem solve, and offer, listen to and build on each other's ideas has had relatively little focus in educational policy over the years, with attention instead tending to focus on an individual's capacity to develop their assessed spoken interactions, writing and reading skills.

However, it may be difficult for teachers to work with children's knowledges and provide time for open dialogue – the constant pressure to ensure curriculum

content delivery and coverage, as well as to attain high scores in standardised tests can lead to a reluctance to allow the time and space for children's prior knowledge, experience and interests, regardless of the relevance or unplanned learning potential of these dialogic opportunities. This is not to say that teachers always dominate classroom talk or that it is always focused on the teachers' choice of topic. Myhill's (2006) research highlighted rare but effective moments when teachers handed over control briefly to the children in terms of the discourse, enabling them to explore and articulate their emergent thinking. She concludes that generating and extending pupils' thinking requires sensitive shaping of discourse and sensitive listening to pupils' responses which is still an underutilised element of classroom discourse (Myhill, 2006).

When considering how schools can support productive interaction and optimize collaboration two factors for particular consideration were recommended:

1) Task design – learners need to work together on tasks which were neither too simple nor too complex and required resources that no single individual possesses. i.e. open-ended, challenging tasks. Cohen points to research which suggests that open-ended, challenging tasks are more effective in producing interaction than more closed tasks focused on finding one right answer (Cohen, 1994).

and

2) The quality of relationships – participants willing to share their understandings and keep going despite disagreements and conflicts – requiring a sense of togetherness and shared endeavour, of trust and mutuality. This points to the importance of a relational approach to the sharing of ideas, exchanging points of view and a collective approach to challenging tasks, engendering a sense of trust and mutuality in group working, recognising that effective classroom learning is a social activity (Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

The research perspectives of Mercer and Littleton, Nystrand *et al* and Myhill informed my research design. I focused on the classroom dialogue in which children took an active and sustained part in discussing ideas, where their thoughts and contributions were sought, and where they were actively encouraged to build on their own and each other's ideas – these times are described by Nystrand *et al* (2003) as 'dialogic spells' and in order to encourage this he recommends classroom talk which:

- Actively welcomes and solicits children's ideas
- Involves dialogue which follows up student responses in their next remarks
- Includes asking questions that do not have predetermined answers
- Deliberately refrains from making the kind of evaluative feedback comments which teachers often give

Mercer and Littleton describe the need to treat learning as a social, communicative process and stress the importance of children taking a more active, vocal role in classroom dialogue. They go on to state that classroom interactions need to offer legitimate opportunities for children to express their uncertainties and reveal their confusions and that in order for children to become able to use language as a tool for individual and collective thinking they need involvement in thoughtful and reasoned dialogue (Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

Bringing these literatures to my research.

The context for my research enquiry is the Lead Creative School scheme in Wales – a programme centred around bringing creative practitioners into formal school environments where, alongside teachers they co-design creative teaching and learning opportunities across the curriculum, aimed at increasing the creativity and engagement of children and young people, and develop the creative pedagogy of teachers. In my enquiry I consider the nature of creative practitioners' work in schools focusing specifically on their use of talk in creating an environment for learning. Though the literatures and research relating to

teachers' use of talk and creative practitioners' work in schools is plentiful there is less focused specifically on creative practitioners' often skilful and effective use of talk within educational settings to include children in their learning as active participants, deepening and extending their learning and understanding through dialogue.

As such I have brought my awareness and understanding of the research centred around talk and the analysis of the effective or ineffective use of talk within the classroom and have used that as the lens through which to consider the work and, more specifically, the use of talk by creative practitioners within schools – focusing on creative practitioner talk rather than teacher talk.

My analysis and discussion have a particular focus on extended dialogic spells and opportunities for dialogue. I consider the types of questions asked and observe the nature of the listening. I consider the opportunities creative practitioners provide for interthinking and purposeful group work and where the classroom talk extends students' sense of inclusion, understanding and connection to their learning.

The key points I used in my analysis included noting the creative practitioners' way of establishing their identity and of creating a (safe) shared space and a sense of equality. I registered factors such as the manner in which the creative practitioners used talk to build confidence and show empathy, reading others' needs within the space and encouraging a collective remembering in connection to what they were all focusing on. Also noteworthy in my analysis was the creative practitioners' tendency to develop a sense of shared collective endeavour often through generating a sense of personal and collective 'journey'. I noted factors relating to time – the creative practitioners' way of not rushing students, instead encouraging them to stick with the difficult rather than rushing on and their acknowledgment of the value of the 'struggle'. Other key points of note included the creative practitioners' way of acknowledging the importance of making, explaining the physical process and of the importance of play in the ideation process as well as their explanation of the opportunities posed by

making ‘mistakes’. I noted factors relating to their use of abstraction and of encouraging empathy and the sense of ‘putting yourself in the shoes of others’ and learning through feeling. I also noted some of the creative practitioners’ use of starting and concluding rituals and their awareness of the physical space and different ways of operating within it. A further key point in my analysis included observing and recording the creative practitioners’ openness to different ideas, opinions and views and their way of questioning in an encouraging and interested manner.

Since my research focuses on how creative practitioners shape classroom discourse within the context of the Lead Creative School scheme, the next section looks at the literatures on creativity, creative pedagogies and research focusing on the work of creative practitioners in schools.

Creativity – some definitions

There are many definitions, theories and explanations of creativity and creative learning with strongly overlapping threads and interconnections and subtle differences. As such, attempting to characterise what is meant by creativity is no easy task. A contested and complex space is described, in which the notion of ‘creativity’ remains unstable and where no widely accepted definition exists (Selkrig & Keamy, 2017). Some suggest that ‘it would save a good deal of confusion if you consider that there is no universal fixed or shared meaning of creativity’, and it means different things in different contexts (Elkington, 2012 p3).

In the domains of science, technology and engineering the ability to engage in divergent thinking is considered of great importance – such abilities include fluency, flexibility, originality, and the ability to generate rare and uncommon solutions and ideas (Guildford, 1967). In this context, though experimental methods and critical thinking are valued, they are accompanied by a requirement for such methods and innovations to be subject to critical testing (Osborne *et al,* 2003).

Kind & Kind (2008) listed the following observations when considering creativity within science:

• Scientific theories are creative products (ideas) made by scientists.

• Many scientists work on the same problems and new ideas (theories, laws) emerge by common effort.

• Most science theories develop over a long period in small steps.

• Some scientists are highly creative and make substantial contributions in their fields, but they always build on other people's ideas.

• All scientists must use their imagination when contributing to the development of science.

• Scientific theories are created in many different ways. The processes are sometimes highly creative and/or highly logical, rational and/or accidental.

• In science creativity and rationality always work together. Scientific creativity never works without rationality and strict empirical testing.

(Kind & Kind, 2008 p14)

The visual, performance and literary domains are commonly associated with creativity, where imagination, intuition, personal expression and emotional as well as intellectual connection are considered essential elements. In acknowledging the inter-connection between personal creative thought and the inevitable context and influence of our cultural spheres, Abbs describes two axes of creativity – the first, the 'vertical axis', is defined as the movement between conscious and unconscious. Abbs states that for creative thinking to happen 'one must step sideways out of the track set by logic and downwards into the unconscious' (Abbs, 1986 p101). The 'horizontal axis' refers to the symbolic field in which such creativity takes place – the inherited culture and symbolic transformation, tradition and innovation – stating that in all culture 'there is a constant re-working of notations, images, established conventions, images and narratives – in part derivative, in part new' (Abbs, 1986 p104).

Key factors associated with creativity are surfaced by Sefton-Green, Thomson, Jones & Bresler (2011), where relations between individuals and their social worlds, disciplinary knowledge and individual identity are considered and explored. Their analysis of research in the field of creativity and creative learning suggests that a key point made by many contributors is that, because the idea of creativity is more democratic and accessible than the 'creativity' often ascribed to great artists (and inventors), we need to think of creativity as common to all of us rather than the gift of a privileged few (Sefton-Green, Thomson, Jones & Bresler, 2011). They describe studies of the social construction of creativity and how these highlight creativity in terms of 'behaviours', contrasting this to more traditional studies emphasising purely cognition or solely thought-based sets of processes. This brings an understanding of creativity as being on a continuum where questions about behaviours cannot be divorced from their relation to thinking and being. Treffinger *et a*l (2002) collated 120 definitions of creativity and grouped them into four general categories: generating ideas, digging deeper into ideas, openness and courage to explore ideas, and listening to one's inner voice (Treffinger *et al*. 2002).

The notion of big C and little c creativity is described by Craft (2001) in her writings about creativity – where she describes 'big C', or 'high creativity' as being defined as the works, activity or creative contributions of a 'creative genius'. These are contributions or works which have been extraordinary, unique, and outstanding and have often withstood the test of time. This big C creativity is ascribed certain key, distinguishing features – 'that of innovation/novelty, excellence, recognition by the field in which it takes place and is a break with past understanding or perspectives'. It is a creativity that can emerge in many domains whether science, mathematics, music, the arts, literature or many others – and is often described as paradigm shifting (Craft, 2001). Big C creativity is also reliant on two other critical factors – the recognition and acknowledgement and acceptance by the 'experts' within that field and the creative activity/works of the individuals themselves. This big C view of creativity is also described by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) where he states that 'creativity

occurs when a person, using the symbols of a given domain such as music, engineering, business or mathematics has a new idea or sees a new pattern and when this novelty is selected by the appropriate field for inclusion into the relevant domain' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997 p. 28). The big C definition of creativity contrasts with the definition of little c creativity which is the resourcefulness and agency of ordinary people (Craft, 2001) and the ability to problem identify and problem solve – it can be suggested that little c creativity is, by its very nature, an inherent part of being human.

A body of research into creativity concerns the idea of 'possibility thinking' first conceptualised as a theory by Craft – she argues that it is at the very heart of creativity and is the transformation from 'what is' to 'what might be'. Suggesting that in our current and rapidly changing complex world individuals need to be able to identify and solve problems, be adaptable and flexible and become increasingly 'self-directed' in order to enable themselves to find 'routes' and paths through their increasingly complex lives (Craft, 2001, 2006, 2015). She lists the following as core features of possibility thinking:

- Self Determination and Direction – *to enable route finding.*
- Innovation – *'doing it differently' even an idea – it can be novel to that person.*
- Action – *even of an idea yet to be conceptualised.*
- Development – *innovation and action inevitably lead to development.*
- Depth – *one recognises in terms of ideas or action rather than serendipitous chance.*
- Risk – *not knowing how one's idea may land or turn out.*
- Being imaginative – *seeing more than is evident initially, possibly novel and unexpected.*

- Posing questions – *at the root about openness to possibility.*
- Play – *open to playing with new ideas, new possibilities and combinations.*

(Craft, 2001 p51)

Creativity, as described above and as expanded upon in the next section, is multi-domain and, as such, is applicable in educational contexts across the curriculum in its entirety within all subject areas and in all phases of education. This understanding of the multi-domain nature of creativity is the approach adopted by the Welsh Government, though the task of bringing this awareness of the role and importance of creativity into specific curricular areas is both ambitious and challenging.

Creative pedagogies

There is extensive research which brings understandings of creativity to education. The first looks at defining creativity within schools and at creative pedagogies.

The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCE) definition of creativity highlights imagination, purpose, originality and value:

> Our starting point is to recognise four characteristics of creative process. First, they always involve thinking or behaving *imaginatively*. Second, overall this imaginative activity is *purposeful*: that is directed to achieving an objective. Third these processes must generate something *original*. Fourth, the outcome must be of *value* in relation to the objective. We therefore define creativity as: Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.

(National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999:30, *original emphasis*)

Following and adapting this definition, The Centre for Real World Learning, University of Winchester has developed a body of research analysing

characteristics of creativity and creative thinking. Claxton, Lucas and Spencer (2012) arrived at an understanding of creativity and creative thinking as five 'habits of mind' sometimes referred to as 'dispositions' – a theory initially adopted from the field of cognitive science.

A body of collaborative research has been generated exploring and developing a means of assessing the development and progression of creative learning in schools. This was due, in part, to an awareness that multiple definitions of creativity could lead to potential confusion and a lack of focused attention in educational contexts. In order for educators to be able to define and develop creativity, it was acknowledged that there was a need for an accessible means to identify and assess progression (Claxton, Lucas and Spencer, 2012).

The five habits of mind identified are listed as follows: Imaginative, Inquisitive, Collaborative, Persistent and Disciplined with each habit of mind containing sub-habits within them (described in action phrases), to further describe and clarify the creative disposition or behaviour. Lucas and Spencer further define these five habits of mind as five dimensions of creative thinking and see them as 'applicable to a wide range of real-world types of creative activity, from science to the performing arts (Lucas and Spencer, 2017 p23).

The creative habits of mind theory underpins and informs the creative learning programme within Wales. Though these habits of mind don't make a direct reference to the use of talk, either between teacher and pupil or between pupils, sub-habits such as questioning, making connections, reflecting critically, co-operating appropriately all imply speech.

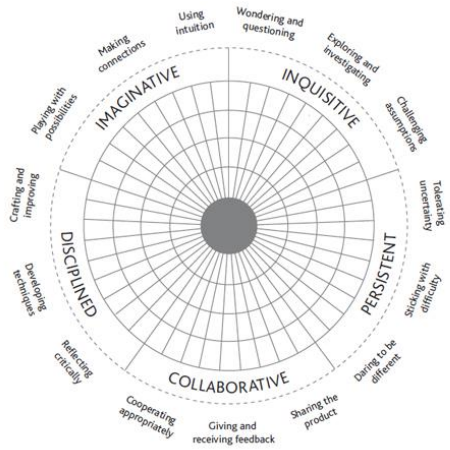

Figure 2: The Centre for Real World Learning's five-dimensional model of creative thinking p37 Spencer, E., Lucas, B. and Claxton, G. (2012) *Progression in Creativity: Developing New Forms of Assessment* Final Research Report; Centre for Real World Learning and CCE

Further to the research directly focusing on creativity, there is work which focuses on teaching as well as learning. Three interconnected elements – creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning – complement and often co-exist within one another, reflecting more convincingly the teaching and learning process, rather than viewing teaching and learning as two parallel lines which rarely meet (Lin, 2014). The triangular model of creative pedagogy seeks to connect various insights in relation to fostering creativity, as well as to challenge practices which predominantly aim to focus on knowledge transmission whilst overlooking learner agency (Lin, 2014). The first element – *creative teaching* – concerns a teacher's creative endeavours and efforts in designing and teaching lessons by 'using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective' (NACCCE, 1999, p. 102). *Teaching for creativity*, relates to the strategies and teaching approaches adopted to develop learners' creative capacities. These strategies can include pedagogical principles such as standing back, profiling learner agency, creating time and space and adopting a less didactic approach to teaching and learning (Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006). Though different to one another, these two elements of creative pedagogy are considered interconnected – both practices

create an environment which supports developing a creative ethos – in one a supportive ethos is created by a teacher's enthusiasm and creativity whereas in the other, a supportive ethos is established by creating a learning context for problem solving and appreciating learners' creative contributions. Lin describes *creative learning*, the third element, as one which underlines learners' spontaneous learning with active and creative engagement instead of learning passively by authority (Lin, 2014).

In other words, Lin suggests that, both teachers' and learners' creative efforts are indispensable in creative pedagogy (Lin, 2014).

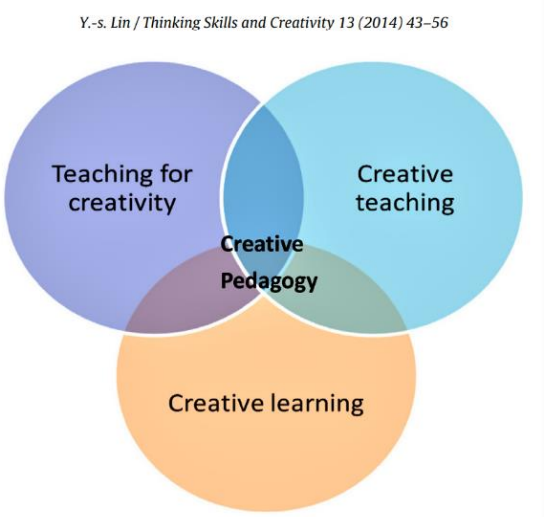

Figure 3: The three elements of creative pedagogy p44. (Lin, 2014) *A third space for dialogues on creative pedagogy: Where hybridity becomes possible* Thinking Skills and Creativity: 13 (2014) 43–56

The work of Jeffrey and Woods (2009) concurs with this perspective. Their research focuses on the four components of innovation, ownership, control and relevance both in terms of creative teaching and creative learning. Relevance refers to the teaching and content being meaningful and of interest to the pupils – a teaching and learning matter that pupils can become engaged with and connect to, both intellectually and emotionally. Relevance can be contrasted with, for example, set national curriculums often overloaded and with little or no obvious connection with pupils' own lives or interests. Another aspect of

relevance is the acknowledgment that pupils come to school with their own opinions, reflections and beliefs and that the opportunity to express these views and ask their own questions enhances relevance in their learning – that 'pupils can become active, knowledgeable contributors' (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). The component of control refers to pupils' agency within their own learning with regards to the pupil being able to make choices in terms of how they learn, the direction of their learning and having learning choices available to them in contrast to a curriculum and method of learning 'forced' upon them – for example more didactic approaches to learning (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). Ownership in terms of a pupils' learning is strongly interconnected with both relevance and control – and refers to when pupils learn for themselves as opposed to simply learning content for the teacher, a test or for an exam board. By becoming interested, motivated and engaged to learn for themselves the knowledge acquired gains greater meaning, relevance and permanence (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). Innovation is described and defined as something new being created. 'A change has taken place: a new skill mastered, new insight gained, new understanding realised, new meaningful knowledge acquired.' (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009, p13).

Classrooms in which creative learning and possibility thinking are strongly evidenced show teachers and/or creative practitioners adept at question posing and responding – this awareness of dialogue and questioning links to Craft's description of provoking possibilities, making interventions yet also standing back (Craft, 2007). She describes the importance of learning environments being inclusive in which learners' ideas and experiences are highly valued and a learning environment where an ethos of respect is nurtured and children as well as teachers experience meaningful control, ownership, relevance and innovation (Craft, 2007; Craft & Chappell, 2009; Craft & Jeffrey, 2004; Jeffrey & Craft, 2006).

The focus on the interrelationship between teacher and pupil highlights the importance of allowing pupils time and space to let ideas develop and of the often-unrealised importance of teachers knowing when to stand back as well as when to intervene (Craft, 2007).

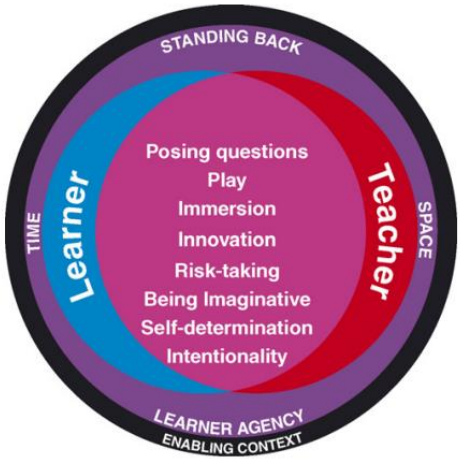

Figure 4: A model of pedagogy and possibility thinking. p.116

Possibility Thinking: Culminative Studies of an Evidence-Based Concept Driving Creativity. Craft, Cremin, Burnard, Dragovic, and Chappell (2012) Education 3-13

Though none of these models refer explicitly to knowledge or to skill building the connection is implicit. Knowledge and skill building are the tangible context in which the exploration, thinking and creative learning takes place.

Creative practitioners' work in schools

Another body of work on creativity and education examines the practice of creative practitioners in schools and what happens when they do such work. Over the decades there has been a long history of artists coming into schools to work with children, and though the nature and purpose of such encounters have varied over time and in different settings, the practice is, in itself, by no means new. Hall and Thomson (2016), when considering the nature of artists working in schools reflect on the particular status and contribution of an artist as an outsider, who brings with them their own professional knowledge, networks and creative practices (Hall & Thomson, 2016). Though the tradition of artists working in schools stretches back over many decades, Galton suggests that the reasons have changed over time, citing early examples of such practice occurring following the end of the 11+ examination and after the publication of the

Plowden report, where writers, visual artists, poets and musicians were invited into schools to widen the curriculum experiences beyond the 3-R's (Galton, 2010). The experience of an outside artist/creative practitioner coming into school, by its very nature, is different to the norm for children and teachers. Various researchers, when analysing this practice, have described these encounters as 'stirring things up' (Pringle, 2002), creating 'magic moments' (Harding, 2005) and adding a 'wow factor' (Bamford, 2009) – as noted by Hall and Thomson (Hall & Thomson, 2016). The dazzle of initial impacts leading to potential easy assumptions about educational impact are rightly questioned and considered, especially in relation to sustained benefits which may or may not arise for children and for teachers after the artists have left the school (Galton 2010; Hall, Thomson & Russell, 2007).

Some of the research on creative practitioners' work in schools moves closer to an analysis of the dialogic practices and pedagogies of creative practitioners. Two major projects were carried out during the Creative Partnerships programme in England. The first was the Signature Pedagogies Project, the second was the final report of the Creative Practitioners in Schools:

1) The Signature Pedagogies Project (Thomson, Hall, Jones & Sefton-Green, 2012) analyses the distinctive and distinguishing practices of artists working alongside teachers within schools and seeks to identify the 'signature pedagogies' in evidence in these learning environments. The research looks at the pedagogy which emerges between artists and teachers in their co-construction of learning which can be described as a 'hybrid alternative' to the 'default' pedagogy of a 3-part lesson (Hall & Thomson, 2016). Rather than identify a single definition of creative pedagogy they state that 'creative pedagogies can be seen as a meeting place where hybrid pedagogies are developed and default pedagogies are challenged' (Hall & Thomson, 2016). Specific characteristics were identified in the creative practitioners' pedagogy which differed from the mainstream classroom teachers' pedagogy and had significant value in relation to pupils' learning, engagement and development.

A common analytic framework was devised:

Introductory activities (entrance, session opener, planning)	*Self presentation of artist*
Resources (provided and created)	*Artefacts* *Cultural, intellectual resources* *Use of student work* *Use of artist's own work*
Classroom discourse (questions, responses, feedback, professional discourse, personal anecdote)	*Professional and technical language* *Prompts, suggestions* *Unanswered questions* *Change to IRF patterns* *Self conscious use of affect*
Flow (rhythm, transitions, timing, lesson sequences over time)	*Lesson shape* *Thinking time* *Taking a break* *Ongoing projects over days/weeks* *Pace* *Time for review*
Use of space (by students, by teachers)	*Organisation of space* *Movement within the space* *Personal space* *Symbolic spaces*
Behaviour management (communication of rules, teacher stance, where the authority lies)	*Authority of the discipline/endeavour* *Internalised codes of behaviour* *Explicit teaching of conduct* *Humour* *Public/private explanation of anti-social behaviours*
Teaching methods (direct instruction, coaching, modelling, experimentation)	*Individualised/group/whole class teaching* *Skill development* *Use of environment, artefacts, music, movement* *Provocations*
Framing (disciplinary [Art, etc], self expression, vocational/technical)	*Focus on the individual within a community, or part of a collective endeavour?* *Reference to the discipline specificity, traditions* *School subjects v professional practice* *Themes (eg making something from nothing, therapy)*

Figure 5: Analytic framework, The Signature Pedagogies Project: Final Report p 7; Thomson, P., Hall, C., Jones, K. and Sefton-Green, J. (2012) *Creativity, Culture and Education, Newcastle*

The research approaches the study of 'schooling' as opposed to the study of schools or of one particular learning approach or environment. As such it articulates the development of a 'hybrid pedagogy' – of the use of space, of the identity, development and personalisation of pupils within the learning space of a school community (Thomson, Hall, Jones & Sefton-Green, 2012). The research also in part describes the idea of 'non-place' – of a place where the sociality of a place is eroded through institutional processes which make the people in them less important than the data about them' (Auge, 1995).Thomson, Hall, Jones and Sefton-Green describe a 'default pedagogy' where lessons begin with a

curriculum objective and teachers plan exercises and tests in order to determine what curriculum level has been achieved. '*The 'default pedagogy' promotes the non-place tendency – children and young people come to be seen primarily as outcomes and levels, a curriculum is something to be delivered in order to produce this data.'* (The Signature Pedagogies Project: Final Report, *pp 11-12).* The artists/creative practitioners characteristically challenged this 'default pedagogy' creating a different and temporary space in the timetable where hybrid pedagogies were developed. New and different ways of talking, teaching, learning and assessing could be explored and experimented relatively freely and in these instances creative practice took on a hybrid nature (Thomson, Hall, Jones & Sefton-Green, 2012). The report bought to the forefront several clear characteristics or components – the approach to inclusion where it was assumed that everyone could join in and contribute rather than categorising children in relation to ability; a greater sense of empowerment where students recognised their own capability and agency; ambition of project and sociality; and play as a means of engaging children both intellectually and emotionally were all considered necessary in the exploration of ideas and realisation of the creative process (Thomson, Hall, Jones & Sefton-Green 2012).

2) Galton's (2008) research focused on the pedagogy used by external creative practitioners in bringing about transformations in pupils' attitudes to learning (particularly those disaffected pupils of an anti-school disposition). Galton described creative practitioners' approach to working creatively as a collaborative process, where both teachers and pupils were considered as co-learners in much the same way that fellow artists would be considered when working on collective projects. He noted that creative practitioners' main method of engagement was by stimulating interest – noting that this was often done by asking children to explore their own ideas, contrasting this to teachers avoiding wide ranging discussions which may not stick to topic due, in large part, to feeling more constrained by the curriculum. His research highlighted different approaches to problem solving and enquiry where some

> creative practitioners rarely answered children's questions, instead simply asking more questions to encourage thinking – preferring to allow children to explore and work things out for themselves and as such stimulating thinking and problem solving – a notion of promoting 'flexibility of mind'. He refers to creative practitioners setting up situations designed to engineer 'cognitive conflict' and considered children needing time and space in order for them to take risks in their learning. His research reflected on classroom environments where children are intrinsically motivated in an environment which isn't controlling where children's initiatives are supported and they can exercise choice (Galton, 2008).

The reflections on the differing pedagogies connect to Bernstein's (1996) notions of *competence* and *performance* pedagogies also described by Thomson *et al* (2006) and Hall *et al* (2007) and Thomson and Hall, (2014) – where *competence* pedagogy focuses on the learner and what they have achieved; and tends to be 'active, creative and self-regulating' where control is usually implicit and learners have a greater degree of control over what they are learning. By contrast, *performance* models of pedagogy tend to place a higher emphasis on clearly defined outputs; criteria for success are made explicit; sequence and pace is controlled by the teacher and there is a clear hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the learner (Bernstein 1996; Thomson *et al* 2006; Hall *et al* 2007; Thompson & Hall, 2014).

Welsh Education policy context

As alluded to in Chapter 1, my research is set within the wider realm of Welsh education policy context at a time of significant educational reform and the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales framework. Within the national approach every school in Wales has the opportunity to design their own curriculum whilst still holding to broad levels of consistency and guidance. The aim is not the delivery of pre-formed programmes nor heavily content-focused curricula, but rather an environment of meaningful learning and the opportunity

for education practitioners to bring to bear their own innovation and creativity in terms of curriculum design, content and curricular experiences (Welsh Government, 2020). The starting point for the Curriculum for Wales and a constant throughout are the four purposes aimed to enable learners to develop as: ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy, confident individuals. The curriculum is organised around six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE), replacing the previous national curriculum organised around traditional disciplinary subjects. The six AoLEs are: Expressive Arts; Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; and Science and Technology. A further element of the reform is a focus on a continuum of learning with key reference points. Finally, these reforms propose a radical 're-professionalisation' of the teaching workforce by encouraging greater flexibility and autonomy in the design and enactment of the curriculum, both in terms of content and pedagogy (Taylor & Power, 2020). The four purposes are underpinned by 'integral skills', namely creativity and innovation, where learners are given space to be curious and inquisitive; critical thinking and problem-solving, where learners should be supported to ask meaningful questions; personal effectiveness, whereby learners should develop emotional intelligence and awareness and planning and organising (Welsh Government, 2020). Learner involvement is a prominent aim, stating that the process needs to support dialogue between learners and professionals. In order to realise this the framework advocates a 'safe, enabling and inclusive environment, stating that this dialogue is of itself a valuable learning experience, supporting both inquiry and critical thinking' Welsh Government (2020). The prominence of the four purposes aspiring to engaged confident learners and the intentions of the integral skills aiming for curious, inquisitive, problem solving individuals able to ask meaningful questions imply a dialogic approach to teaching and learning within classrooms in Wales. Curriculum frameworks centred on the development of broad competencies rather than primarily content dominant curricular are growing in prominence in other countries around the world such as Scotland, Australia, Finland and British Columbia. The OECD Designing the

Curriculum for Wales 2020 report suggests that a content-centred curriculum focused on transmitting discipline knowledge as a goal in itself fails to engage with the question of relevance to students learning. Their definition of competencies as integrative with a broad performance orientation, encourages education discourse to shift away from the traditional 'knowledge v. skills' focus, by acknowledging the importance of both in learning (Designing the Curriculum for Wales; OECD, 2020 p35). In conjunction with the ongoing cycle of review and refinement there is a growing body of national and international research providing insight into the shaping of the current and future education policy and practice in Wales. Crick *et al.* advocate an emphasis on educational research *in* Wales, *from* Wales and *for* Wales (Crick, Thomas & Beauchamp, 2023).

Thomas *et al,* in their research on the early implementation of the curriculum (Wave 1 report) note a generally positive response from senior leaders in relation to the progress made by individual schools' curriculum design and implementation. The interviewees reported that practitioners are increasingly taking responsibility and ownership for curriculum implementation and noted an increased focus on pedagogy and collaboration. The research highlighted a greater sense of practitioner autonomy emerging within the profession with senior leaders referring to examples where this has led to a richer, learner-centred curriculum with a greater focus on well-being. Challenges also surfaced, for example the challenge of managing staff capacity and the time required to develop and implement the new curriculum. There was a wider acknowledgement that curriculum reform is an ongoing process which will take years to embed (Thomas *et al.* 2023). My research has particular relevance to learner involvement, engagement and inclusion within learning and the role teacher-student and student-student dialogue plays within this . As referenced earlier in this chapter, the Curriculum for Wales framework advocates a safe, enabling and inclusive environment and acknowledges that dialogue is of itself a valuable learning experience, supporting both inquiry and critical thinking (Welsh Government, 2020). In terms of the timeline, all primary schools adopted the curriculum framework in September 2022 with secondary schools

implementing the framework in Years 7 and 8 from September 2023 – followed by a planned phased introduction for subsequent years leading up to Year 11.

Taking this literature into my research

The corpus of this literature primarily informed the analysis of the data gathered. The literatures focused on creative pedagogies and creativity – that of the signature pedagogies of artists working in schools as described by Thomson, Hall, Jones & Sefton-Green (2012); the research focused on the collaborative pedagogy used by creative practitioners and its effect on pupils' attitudes to learning Galton, (2008) and research by Craft (2000) alluding to possibility thinking and the importance of time and space, as well as Jeffreys and Woods' (2009) research highlighting the role of relevance, ownership and control, and Thomson and Hall's research (2014) on artists' pedagogical approach to inclusion, seeing all children as capable – all provided a useful and guiding backdrop for my research.

In addition, the corpus of literature on dialogic teaching and the use of talk within classrooms – the research of Alexander (2004, 2018) illuminating the educational importance of dialogic teaching; Mercer and Littleton's (2007) research on the value of collective thought and the social nature of learning and interthinking; Nystrand *et al's* research (1997, 2003) on the importance of extended dialogic spells and allowing the time and space for children's ideas to build and Myhill's (2006) research reflecting on the control of the dialogue and questioning in the dialogic space of a classroom – greatly informed my analysis of the talk data gathered, as expanded upon in chapters four and five.

The contribution of my research

Although the research detailed above on talk and learning, teachers' use of talk within the classroom, creativity and creative learning and creative practitioners' work in schools is extensive, and the creative pedagogies evidenced are rich in creative practitioner, teacher and student talk, none of the research focuses specifically on creative practitioner talk in and of itself. My readings suggest that

though there is a body of research and literature focusing on talk and classroom discourse this is predominantly related to teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil talk; and a body of creativity research which, whilst recognising that talk is often different, doesn't look in detail at creative practitioners' dialogue – this is the underpinning warrant for my research.

Chapter Three: Research Design Chapter

This chapter relates my ontological and epistemological stance and explains my awareness of my own positionality. In this chapter I expand on why I chose to align with the interpretivist tradition and justify my choice of taking a case study approach. I explain my choice of sample sites, sample participants and timeline. I then go on to note my ethics procedures before describing my data collection methods, my processes of thematic analysis and why I chose portraiture as the most suitable method of encapsulating my case studies.

Ontology and epistemology

My methodology was underpinned by an interpretivist epistemology and a constructivist ontology which shaped the aims, methods and methodology of my research. These assumptions were that meaning is embedded in the participants' experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researchers' own perceptions (Merriman, 1998; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). My constructivist ontology involves a perception of how knowledge is produced and is shaped by subjective and continuously transforming understandings of reality (Cohen et al., 2011). My interpretivist epistemology is based on an understanding of knowledge as dynamic, contextualised and constructed by each of us. My findings are specific to the individual participants and contexts – they aim to provide considered insights rather than generalisations applicable to other participants and contexts. Each situation is individual, dynamic and continuously changing rather than static and predictable. As described by Cohen et al, I see knowledge as personal, subjective and unique, (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Positionality

In my research I am both an insider and an outsider. I am an insider in that, as a Project Lead, I am deeply familiar with the Creative Learning programme, its design and delivery, and the inner workings of creative practitioners working in schools as a core element of the scheme. I have also been a teacher, an education advisor, and a mentor to early career teachers and so in this sense I have a considerable degree of knowledge about schools, the education system

and how children and teachers often co-exist within the system. However, I also consider myself an outsider in terms of the research. Firstly, in this context I am a researcher from the University of Nottingham and presented myself as such from the outset. Secondly, I am not a member of staff from within each school with an in-depth knowledge of each setting. In conducting the fieldwork element of the research, I was aware of the potential distortion my presence may have imposed being an employee/Project Lead of the funding body awarding the grant as I conducted my research in each setting. To attempt to avoid this potential pressure or distortion I was aware of the need from the outset to discuss and explain the fact that I was looking solely at talk and the interactions between the creative practitioners and children, rather than the perceived 'success' of each project.

Thomson and Gunter describe the sense of being both an insider and an outsider as complex and refer to a dialogic and fluid identity (Thomson & Gunter, 2011). There were times, when filming, when either the teacher or sometimes the children would talk to me, and on a few occasions, I was asked for my opinion about a certain matter, or to help very occasionally when a technique needed to be re-demonstrated to a few individual children. I also helped clear up the classrooms at the end of each day finding it not only a minor act of thanks and reciprocal contribution, but also a valuable opportunity to join the informal conversations about the events and interactions of the day. Thomson and Hall reflect on the relationship of a researcher in a school noting that unless they are determined to be completely antisocial, they will inevitably end up chatting to the people in the setting they are observing, and note that this is an integral part of fieldwork and spending time together, and as such, these informal conversations, if recorded soon after they happened can become part of the data (Thomson & Hall, 2017). In this sense, though I was always the researcher, I felt at times like a teacher colleague, sometimes an artist and sometimes a willing extra pair of hands.

My own professional knowledge was useful, both as a former art student, teacher, education advisor and project lead – I felt I could see signs of

engagement and understanding as they emerged and where real learning was taking place. However my awareness of the need to guard against only seeking or seeing that which confirmed my initial theory was often present. To counter this, on the days following filming I would walk in the fields and consciously reflect and critically consider what I had filmed and witnessed in the classrooms. I would also read over my field notes to remind myself of incidental points I may have missed in the filming, and other details I had considered noteworthy. I would talk with my supervisor at regular intervals about the filming process and the need not to 'only see what I wanted to see'. To this end I believe I was relatively successful as unexpected realisations and observations emerged.

Interpretative tradition

The research tradition within which I am working is the interpretive tradition, based on the research paradigm that considers social reality as not singular or objective, but rather shaped by human experiences, interactions and social contexts (Bhattacherjee, 2012). As an interpretive researcher I see social reality as embedded within, and impossible to separate from, its social context. It is therefore a sense-making process through interpretation which is inextricably situated within the specific context and between the individuals involved. I am interested in talk, conversations, dialogue, non-verbal interactions, and the dialogic environment created by the creative practitioners I am researching. As such I was not considering variables or gathering numeric data but rather the gathering of data through interview and observation. This produced qualitative data, of which the film sequences and interviews were transcribed and then coded. This coded qualitative data was tabulated, allowing emerging characteristics and dialogic themes to emerge. This was only one form of analysis but a useful tool in the overall deliberation and consideration of the data. My data collection methods involved embedding myself within the social context I was studying, and as a data collecting instrument, I needed to use my observational skills, to establish trust with the teachers, creative practitioners and children in each setting and extract authentic and reliable information and insights. I also needed to keep in my awareness, my personal biases and

preconceptions, and not let such biases interfere with my ability to present a fair and accurate portrayal of the interactions and analysis at hand (Bhattacherjee, 2012). My interpretation occurred at two levels. The first involved viewing or experiencing the interactions between the creative practitioners and children from the subjective perspectives of the social participants. The second level was to provide a "thick description" of my time in the schools which would provide a greater level of observation and analysis in an attempt to understand the meanings and effect of the participants' dialogic experiences and interactions.

Critical reflection was an integral part of sensemaking – see earlier section.

Research method – case studies

My chosen research method involved using case studies. These offered the opportunity for a holistic and in-depth longitudinal study of the social contexts and the key individuals involved. This approach allowed me the opportunity to derive detailed observations, contextualised inferences, and an understanding of the fluid and dynamic nature of the interactions within each setting. As Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011) describe, case studies provide a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. Cohen, Manion and Morrison state that a case study can enable readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together and can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) consider a case study to have several hallmarks:

- It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.

- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case.
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.
- An attempt is made to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report.

They describe case studies as set in temporal, geographical, organizational, institutional and other contexts which enable boundaries to be drawn around the case; they can be defined with reference to characteristics defined by individuals and groups involved; and they can be defined by participants' roles and functions in the case (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

For my research I am interested in the way in which creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning. As such I am interested in dialogue but also in non-verbal means of communication and ways of being. I am also interested in the effects of the conversation (both verbal and non-verbal) on the climate within a classroom, of how it affects children's sense of inclusion, well-being and collective endeavour. In order to encompass these multiple factors of interest my case study methodology uses multiple sources of evidence.

In my research I use the terms 'talk', 'dialogue' and 'conversation' and though these terms are in part synonymous they have distinct characteristics and subtle differences of meaning.

The term **talk** is used as an overarching term to encompass all verbal interactions, i.e. the act of speaking and listening (and with this I discuss accompanying behaviours – the way the talk is situated, the tone, the state of attentiveness, the positioning of the speaker when talking to the class as a whole, to groups or to an individual child, the power dynamic, the relationship with time, the focus on collective endeavour). Talk, by its very nature, is not necessarily reciprocal and can take the form of instruction or monologue as well as the sharing of ideas, discussion and dialogue.

Dialogue is taken as the 'oral exchange and deliberative handling of information, ideas and opinions' (Alexander, p 2020, 128). It is a type of talk characterised by the reciprocal sharing of ideas, thoughts and knowledge…and by so doing, creating a 'new space of meaning that opens up between them and includes them within it' (Wegerif, 2011, p180). Bohm notes that 'A dialogue can be among any number of people , not just two. Even one person can have a sense of dialogue within himself, if the spirit of the dialogue is present. The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group out of which may emerge some new understanding. It's something new which may not have been in the starting point at all. It's something creative….. dialogue is something more of a common participation, in which we are not playing a game against each other, but with each other (Bohm, 2004, p 7).

I use the term conversation to mean the spontaneous, unplanned flow of informal talk – again reciprocal, but not as deliberative a form of interaction as dialogue. Conversation can be formal and even staged but in this research I take it to be of the flowing kind which occurs when people talk together in an unselfconscious everyday sense.

My aim in using a case study approach was that my observations and insights would be rich, authentic, detailed and contextualised by capturing a rich variety of data. I realised that for the purposes of my research I would need to collect film-recording of the creative practitioners working with children in order to gain an in-depth view of their interactions and dialogue and how the children responded in these contexts. The film footage allowed me not only to transcribe the words spoken but also to revisit the footage multiple times to observe other non-verbal factors such as tone, pausing, positioning, movement around the room and silences whilst listening and to observe how the children responded. I also undertook interviews with each creative practitioner using loosely structured open questions and wrote field notes during each visit to the individual settings.

Sample sites

I chose to concentrate my research on creative practitioners working in primary schools. I did not include teachers because, as alluded to in my introduction, there is already extensive research on teachers' talk within the classroom. I was particularly interested in analysing and furthering my understanding on the nature and impact of creative practitioner's talk and any accompanying effect this has on the learning environment. I felt there was a need within the Lead Creative Schools programme to better understand what was actually happening in participating schools in educational terms and that this would help ground the practice in evidenced research.

I chose one phase (primary) because based on my prior knowledge of creative practitioners working in both primary and secondary school phases – those working in primary schools tend to spend all day working with one cohort of pupils enabling longer and more continuous periods of observation.

I was keen to concentrate on one phase rather than both to make for a clearer impression of working within one age range. I have also worked within the primary sector and felt that this experience could add additional insight into my research and analysis.

The three schools comprise two urban settings, one in a city, one in a large town and the third a rural primary school. (Appendix 1).

School A is a faith-based primary school closely linked to a small unimposing cathedral in the same street. The cathedral was initially established to serve and draw together the expanding but very poor community of Irish settlers who had arrived in the area between the 1840's-1900's. The school now draws children from a far wider area across the city and from more diverse ethnic backgrounds than the typical demographic of the immediate area – the class teacher explained that whereas initially it would have been a school to serve the immediate community it now serves a 'catholic faith community' from across the relatively city. The pupils involved in the creative learning project were a class of

33 Year 5 pupils. At the time of research there were 518 children on roll of which 13.3% were eligible for FSM, well below national average.

School B is a faith-based primary school on the outskirts of a rural town. The community and surrounding area is rural and the school's front yard directly faces the main road leading out of the town. There is another playground and field to the side and rear. The school is a stone building with several corridors and small to medium sized classrooms with a staff room under the eaves on the upper floor. The children involved in the creative learning project were a class of 25 mixed Year 3 and 4 pupils. At the time of research there were 96 children on roll of which 6.6% were eligible for FSM, again well below the national average.

School C is a newly established school in a large town (children and staff had only moved into the school two weeks prior to the research commencing). The new school consists of the amalgamation of the former School 'y' and School 'z' and draws on a catchment area immediate to the school. The area is not an affluent area, unemployment amongst parents is high and the free school meal and additional learning needs percentiles are considerably higher than the national average. The children involved in the project were a class of 30 Year 5 pupils. At the time of research there were 412 children on roll of which 39% were eligible for FSM.

Sample of creative practitioner participants

Five creative practitioners are centered in the case studies; creative practitioners whose practice and ways of talking and being are situated and examined in the fluidity and complexity of the social settings in which they were carrying out their work. Though there are many hundreds of creative practitioners working in settings across Wales as part of the Creative learning programme, the small sample size enabled the opportunity to derive rich and in-depth data and come to carefully considered insights and interpretations. It was also necessary to take into consideration how large a sample size I could meaningfully work with as a lone researcher within a given timeframe whilst also carrying out my other roles.

I chose to adopt a multi case study design rather than a single case study, with each practitioner constituting a case. The multiple case studies allowed me to observe and compare dialogue and accompanying behavior in multiple settings and from various creative practitioners in order to build up a wider picture rather than look at solely one setting and one practitioner. I was looking for differences and patterns and emerging themes in dialogue and as such more than one sample and setting was an advantage and provided a greater source of relevant data.

The sample of participants was dictated by the sample sites chosen for the research. The first sample site was chosen mainly based on a positive and interested conversation with the class teacher at a training event. She showed an interest in the research and a willingness and interest in being involved in it. I then considered the other schools I knew within that cohort of the scheme and selected ones which presented a contrast both in terms of location and demography. The final school I selected was chosen due to two factors, one being that I knew the headteacher from my previous role as an education advisor and knew that he was interested in research and exploring the impact of arts initiatives within the school, but also because I was curious about the formulation of a brand new school (this curiosity had no relevance or bearing on the subsequent research). The sample participant creative practitioners were the creative practitioners already assigned to the Creative learning projects within the schools. One of the head teachers and one of the creative practitioners was known to me prior to the research. Such a sample is inevitably prone to being inherently biased. Over the course of the fieldwork period of the research my relationship and knowledge of the creative practitioners and teachers developed due to shared conversations and simply day to day presence. This may well have changed and contributed to the way I interpreted my observations and the nature of the research. However, as alluded to earlier by Patrick and Thomson & Hall, in order to establish trust and ensure an amenable constructive working relationship over a longitudinal period of time, it is important to be able to

balance the means of maintaining healthy contact whilst being aware of the risks of over involvement (Patrick, 2012; Thomson & Hall, 2017).

The creative practitioners represent work in different settings, in different disciplines and were of different ages, backgrounds and stages in their careers. Four of the participants were female and one male. I contacted all five creative practitioners as well as the school head teachers and class teachers of the settings they were working within. I provided them all with details of the study and arranged meetings either over the phone or in person to explain the nature of the research. All five creative practitioners, the three head teachers and the three class teachers expressed an interest and willingness to take part in the research and further emails were sent and meetings held to answer additional questions and discuss logistics. All participants were fully informed of the option of withdrawing from the research whenever they wished without having to offer any explanation or reason.

The creative practitioners' pseudonyms are Toby, Claire, Sarah, Lucy and Trudi.

Toby is a creative practitioner who specialises in film making, animation, visual mixed media, creative text, songwriting, storytelling, sculpture, music and portraiture. He has been a professional artist since 1986. As well as exhibiting successfully as a fine artist and touring far and wide as a composer and performing singer-songwriter he has also founded a community arts charity. He describes himself as being involved in socially engaged artwork where most of the work is not about '...me on my own. It's about a group of people working together to generate art and so hopefully I bring in some skill sets there. A key process of the design and the concept is about the other people coming into that process to create art together'.

Claire is a multimedia sculptor working figuratively. She completed her degree in sculpture in 2013 and went on to study for an MA a year later. Her artistic practice is rooted in her identity and personal history as a woman living and working in urban Wales. She explores subjects such as the complex inter-relationships between the female gender and the world. In her words...'My work

has allowed me to access and communicate with a range of social groups through projects that engage artists as active participants. I am particularly interested in the historical and contemporary voices of working-class mothers and children in Wales.'

Sarah left behind a career as a management consultant to begin a fine art degree. She refers to the catalysts for that change as being the absence of colour – except for brown carpets and black suits, the absence of nature – except for 'motivational' images of mountains (to be climbed) encouraging you to 'Achieve', and the absence of time to look through windows – except 'Windows 95'. She describes her approach as '... fishing in the world and seeing what she finds in her net – fragments, detritus, traces of early 21st century culture.' These she investigates, analyses, transforms and reconfigures, allowing ambiguities to evolve and new meanings to emerge. Time and transition, wind and change, disruptions and transformations are at the heart of her work. She gathers fragments and passing moments, giving them time and value – taking the simple and exploring its complexity.

Lucy graduated with a degree in sculpture in 2002 and then went on to complete a PGCE in Secondary Art and Design education before becoming briefly Course Director of a foundation Art and Design Diploma. As a sculptor working in three dimensions Lucy works with whatever material is suitable for the commission or residency – she works in wood, stone, recycled material, clay, construction materials, wire, wicker and paper. She describes herself as a social practice artist and explains that her sculpture is very much embodied in responding to the natural environment, exploring the relationships between community and the landscape and giving voice to the people who call it home.

Trudi is a ceramicist whose introduction to working with clay began at evening class as a mature student. She was so taken to working with clay that she left her teaching position in Higher Education to study a degree in ceramics. Her work is always hand built and she lets the clay have a say in its form and texture. She plays with scale and form and her work has both a functional and sculptural

quality. Her work reflects the natural raw materials in the rugged landscape and she often uses natural muds in her clays. She has exhibited across Wales and worked with different schools, community and higher education groups.

Data collection – timeline and methods

Timeline

I spent three separate whole days in each of the three schools filming the creative practitioners. On the third day in each school I interviewed each creative practitioner making audio recordings of the five interviews.

I spent my first day in School A on the 1/12/17 – this was the third day of the seven days the creative practitioners worked with this class in the school. I then came in to film all day on the 8/12/17 and the 15/12/17. During initial discussion with the class teacher, I had decided that it would be best not to be present for the first day the creative practitioners were in the school in order for all involved to get to know each other and establish an initial rapport without the additional presence of someone filming them. On the second day the class went to the beach, and I decided not to film on this day either since it would have been difficult to film and record audible and transcribable material due to the nature of the location and activity that day. I repeated this pattern of not going in to film on the creative practitioners' first day in the other two schools. Though I feel this did provide a more natural initial meeting of the individuals involved I felt increasingly aware as I transcribed and analysed the data collected that I had missed a valuable piece of the overall interactions. Were I to carry out similar research of this nature in the future I would endeavour to capture observational data from the very start since I feel important ways of introducing the creative practitioners' ways of being and interacting were either implicitly or explicitly illustrated on those initial days.

The timeline for filming in School B was as follows – 7/03/18 first day, 14/03/18 second day and 21/03/18 the third day. I arrived late to film on the third day due to heavy snow on the mountain pass making travel difficult and delayed. The

creative practitioner in this school was there for 12 days in total starting in early January and finishing towards the end of March.

In School C the timeline for filming was as follows – 2/05/18 first day, 9/05/18 second day and 15/05/18 the third day. The planned schedule for the creative practitioners to work in the school was January to March 2018 but a delay in moving from the old school sites into the new school building caused a delay in starting until the beginning of May and ran until the first week of June.

Ethics

University ethical procedures were followed, starting with submitting my application for ethical approval from the university and once approved, obtaining informed consent from each creative practitioner (Appendix 2), each class teacher (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4), and the head teacher from each school (Appendix 5). The parents of all the pupils in each class received a letter from the school explaining the nature and details of the research asking for signed consent which was then collated and stored by the school (Appendix 6). Accompanying each letter was an information sheet about the nature of the research (Appendix 7). The film footage was kept on an encrypted laptop and held for no longer than the duration of the research. All participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of data. All participants were also informed verbally and in writing of their right to withdraw at any time.

Other ethical considerations relate to my position vis a vis the schools – this was discussed earlier.

Data collection methods

Yin recommends using multiple sources of evidence in case studies and highlights the importance of ensuring a coherent connection between the research question, the data collected and the evidence sources (Yin, 2009). I used a number of data collection methods – these were designed to complement each other and build a picture of each creative practitioner as they

worked within their settings. I analysed the sources of evidence together at the end of the final period of fieldwork and all data contributed to the formation of the detailed portraits of each creative practitioner.

Generating data

The means by which I generated data was by taking film footage of the creative practitioner working with children, writing accompanying field notes and interviewing the creative practitioners towards the end of each project. The field notes were a place where I could describe the characteristics and layout of the classroom, the ways the children arrived in the school, the encounter between the creative practitioner and the teacher and other details I felt could be relevant but not captured in the filming. I watched the film footage multiple times identifying and honing in on key sequences of extended dialogue which stood out to me. The film footage meant that I could identify the affordance of different kinds of talk and the accompanying behaviours as they occurred. I transcribed the key sequences and also wrote reflections and notes as I watched them, especially in relation to accompanying behaviours which weren't relayed merely through the transcribed words. I listened to the audio interviews over and over again, transcribed them and started to notice elements which were of particular relevance. Having listened to and transcribed the interviews, I then carefully read all five creative practitioners interviews, before then focussing one by one on the film sequences and transcriptions and the field notes. This process enabled me to notice details of the pedagogies from the interviews in the film footage and fieldnotes.

Interviews/questions

The interview, as described by Kvale, is an inter-view, an interexchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, and notes the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, emphasizing the social situatedness of research data (Kvale, 1996). Laing refers to interviews as being neither exclusively subjective nor objective but rather intersubjective (Laing, 1967). Cohen, Manion, & Morrison state that interviews enable

participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. They go on to describe an interview as not simply concerned with collecting data about life: but as part of life itself, that its human embeddedness is inescapable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Drawing on these perspectives, I found the interview a flexible and personally interactive tool for data collection, enabling a singularly focused and undistracted particular type of conversation to take place. The order and nature of the interview questions were repeated for each creative practitioner while still allowing space for spontaneity. I was able to repeat a question when needed and to ask for more of an in-depth response on occasion. My questions were open and designed to gather a fuller picture of the creative practitioner's background experience and views about engaging the children they were working with which wouldn't have been possible to glean solely from the observational material (Appendix 8).

I carried out the interviews on the third day of each filming visit at a mutually convenient time in an undisturbed location within the school settings and audio recorded each interview. I was aware that one of the creative practitioners had just come from a very busy session and as such apologised that her responses were too flustered and un-thought through – however on listening back to the audio recording and studying the transcription the interview surfaced valuable reflections and insights.

I am aware that interviews are invariably particular and specific to time, place and persons – had I asked different questions I would have gained different data and insights. That said, the questions I did ask provided me with a deeper understanding of the creative practitioners' approaches and backgrounds into their professional roles and their own viewpoints of their ways of being and interacting. Each interview was transcribed verbatim after completion into a word document for analysis.

Observation (filming and fieldnotes)

My decision to use observation as a research method came from a wish to gather 'live' data from the naturally occurring social situations. This offered the opportunity to look directly at what was taking place in situ rather than limiting me to relying on second-hand accounts. As Cohen, Manion, & Morrison note, the use of immediate awareness, or direct cognition, as a principal mode of research has the potential to yield more valid or authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Robson also notes that what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check (Robson, 2002). Observation enabled me to notice the subtleties and sometimes taken-for-granted or unnoticed behaviours of people when talking to each other. I was also aware that the film recordings taken provided an invaluable data resource in terms of being able to revisit footage time and again, allowing me to notice different, often non-verbal ways of interacting and being. I noticed that as the creative practitioners, children and teachers got used to me being there, they just got on with whatever they were doing, and in this sense, filming somehow felt less staged and intrusive in terms of time than the interviews.

My focus was predominantly on the social interaction and behaviours of the creative practitioners and children in the context of what was happening within the learning settings.

As Morrison notes, observations enable the researcher to gather data on:

- The physical setting (e.g. the physical environment and its organization).
- The human setting (e.g. the organization of people, the characteristics and make-up of the groups or individuals being observed, for instance, gender, class).
- The interactional setting (e.g. the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, non-verbal etc.).

- The programme setting (e.g. the resources and their organization, pedagogic styles, curricula and their organization).

(Morrison, 1993 p.80)

Furthermore, my aim of understanding how identities and learning develop through classroom talk, requires an observation of three interrelated dimensions of interaction noted by Rymes – these can be described as social context, interactional context and individual agency. These interconnected dimensions are essential in linking the repertoire of perspectives on communication to methods of classroom discourse analysis (Rymes, 2016).

Thomson & Hall, and Rymes offer practical and valuable advice on capturing data regarding the social context of a setting – noticing how children are arriving in the mornings, how the classroom is arranged (to gather the classroom context), how the room is decorated, what you see and hear as you enter the school and start walking down the corridors, how children are seated in relation to each other (Thomson & Hall, 2017; Rymes, 2016). These impressions and details all form a part of the whole picture of a school setting – they were gathered in part as fieldnotes and when in the classroom, as film recording and brief notes. When gathering data on interactional context Rymes talks of capturing entire speech events – she recommends, once a good vantage point is established, using a tripod and not moving the video camera once in position (Rymes, 2016). This enables the opportunity to gather as much of the interactional engagement as possible, not only in terms of the creative practitioners' interactions with the children but also their responses, expressions and indications of individual agency.

Though I am by no means a master in terms of making film recordings, I became better over the course of the fieldwork period with regards to capturing the social and interactional contexts and behaviours of those involved – and though I never felt entirely comfortable as an extra presence in the room with my digital video recorder – I gathered a valuable amount of rich data which I subsequently transcribed and analysed.

Transcription

Having collected a substantial amount of film footage from each school of the five creative practitioners working with the children in the classrooms and other areas of the schools, I identified key segments of film, collated them, and then transcribed the creative practitioners' dialogue verbatim. I also transcribed the audio recordings of the creative practitioner interviews. Though transcribing both the film segments and interviews myself was a lengthy and slightly painstaking process it did afford me a closeness to the data by requiring me to listen to it sentence by sentence and then dictate or type it word for word. This in itself contributed to the interpretive act and my overall analysis. Slow transcription allowed me the opportunity to notice and reflect on aspects of the verbal and non-verbal interactions which I may well have missed had they been externally transcribed. When non-verbal behaviours or interactions were of note, I incorporated these into the transcripts too if I had not already noted them in my fieldnotes. Examples of transcribed interviews and filmed dialogue can be found in Appendix 9 and Appendix 10.

Thematic analysis and portraiture

Tesch describes the process of working with data material in a phenomenological way as a non-linear movement, a progression and eventually an arrival, which does not necessarily follow in a straight sequential process but can be considered more in terms of a flow. She goes on to describe it as a cycling or spiralling motion without clearly distinguishable steps or phases and talks of an immersion in the data as a whole, in entire transcripts (Tesch, 1987). Many researchers talk of extensive readings and re-readings and of dwelling in the data before their attention becomes focused on details/small gatherings of words which have significance which in turn can be 'articulated', 'named' or 'made explicit'.

Van Manen describes two approaches to working with text – the 'highlighting approach' and the 'line-by-line' approach. The highlighting approach involves

looking for statements in the text which are particularly revealing about the experience being described. The line-by-line approach involves considering each sentence, trying to discern meaning in relation to the phenomenon being explored (van Manen, 1984). Tesch uses an exploring or mining analogy thinking of one as panning and the other as surveying. She describes the researcher, when panning, as looking for precious elements which are at the centre of the experience and directly pertain to the nature of the phenomenon – all other elements she relates, are 'sifted' out and not included in the analysis. On the other hand, she describes the line-by-line approach as surveying, of capturing all that is there in order to make sure that nothing is overlooked (Tesch, 1987). My analytic approach used both, though leaning towards more of a 'panning' approach where descriptive elements within the material became apparent and were coded as I went through transcript by transcript. This became an iterative, cyclical process starting with the original collection of data followed by the reading through of transcripts of interviews and film footage multiple times. I noted the emergent elements which felt important and noteworthy, some more prevalent than others. I coded the relevant film transcripts and interview transcripts and continued to identify existing and new codes as they arose. These coded sections I copied from my typed transcripts and pasted into a spreadsheet, each creative practitioner forming a section horizontally and the coded 'mini' themes continuing vertically across the page. The columns grew in number, as did the downward number of rows to the point where only a relatively small section could be viewed on screen. In order for me to gain a more complete 'view' I had the entire spreadsheet printed out by a professional printers on rolls of paper – the total size was approximately 3m wide by 4m high. Having coded all the data gathered I came to the point of needing to code my coding – to engage in further analysis, to ask myself 'what does my coded data say?' The result of this process was a list or collection of themes, some more tentative than others, which I then went on to refine and group or cluster together. As I went through this process with each creative practitioner common themes began to emerge (Appendix 11 and Appendix 12). This process, which involved much analysis and considered reflection on patterns which connected themes in

common and themes or dimensions more unique to one individual or another, eventually led to the refinement of characteristics or matches which could be grouped further into metathemes. I explored various approaches to my overall thematic analysis, in the first instance attempting a cross case analysis metatheme by metatheme. Though the printed out giant spreadsheet did enable me to see the entire coded data set in one view and helped in the surfacing of meta themes I still had a sense of frustration and disjointedness – I was aware of my artificial act of separating elements which were intrinsically interwoven (Appendix 13). As Tesch and van Manen note, 'things don't fit into boxes so neatly', some themes overlap and can be sorted into more than one category, for others borders are fuzzy or less clearly distinguishable (Tesch, 1987 & van Manen, 1984). Van Manen describes these interrelations as patterns that connect or as knots in a web rather than categories which can be neatly and separately filed (van Manen, 1984).

In order to overcome this barrier of frustration I sellotaped six sheets of A1 flipchart paper together (3 x 2) to form a very large rectangular piece of paper, stuck my six meta themes and overarching question in the middle and then let them reconnect in a frenzied flow of re-connection and new connection (Appendix 13). This unexpected, instinctively sought process was hugely beneficial in moving forwards and paved the way to express my meta themes and their interconnections within the wholeness of the portraiture approach. I already had detailed activity accounts of each creative practitioner working in the schools and these I now developed into individual portraits interweaving the meta themes by focussing on certain instances of talk in greater depth and underpinning these key moments of talk with relevant research literature. This form of ethnographic description enabled me to introduce each creative practitioner, what they did and said, detailing key or relevant practice which added example and context to the meta themes yet also presenting the themes in their interwoven completeness. In each portrait of the creative practitioners I presented background plus analysis plus key accompanying literature. This form of methodology enabled me to be both witness, storyteller and scientist, not

reducing and compartmentalising but presenting a complete and interwoven picture.

Lawrence-Lightfoot developed portraiture as a method of qualitative research enquiry and documentation to enable her to capture the 'essence' and move beyond narrow impressions to seeing the whole. She describes portraiture as a research genre whose methods are shaped by empirical and aesthetic dimensions and talks of penetrating and personal descriptions, both generous and tough in their scrutiny (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).

Lawrence Lightfoot explains that the initial inspiration for developing this genre of qualitative research enquiry stemmed from the experience of seeing her own image within two painted portraits, the first created when she was young and the latter painted later in her life and describes how the artist, in moving beyond the surface image in search of her 'essence', was both generous and tough, sceptical yet receptive. She notes that she was never treated or seen as an object but always as a person of strength and vulnerability, beauty and imperfection, mystery and openness. She also talks of the paradox of a moment in time and yet of timelessness in relation to her own portraits, but also that of a moment in time when conducting research studying schools at a particular moment in time acknowledging that it is true reflection only of that moment (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, & Davies, 1987). Portraiture requires a deep engagement with the school or subject and is centred around capturing a likeness, key events and big themes, as well as detail – at its core, the goal is to capture the complexity and aesthetics of human experience. In creating my portraits of each of the five creative practitioners, my aim was for the subjects to be 'seen', and recognised, and to feel both the discovery and generosity of the process as well as the careful investigation (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). My portraits were generated from spending time with each creative practitioner in their respective school settings, filming their interactions, interviewing them and having less formal incidental conversations during those time frames, making field notes and immersing myself in the data and impressions gathered.

They are designed to show the essence of each creative practitioner at work in their settings whilst also bringing together the themes identified during the data analysis process. The portraits are built up from the interconnected and overlaying themes surfaced during the surveying and panning process – each portrait using and bringing together these discreet yet also interwoven themes to create a rounded yet analytical portrait of each creative practitioner. Lawrence-Lightfoot expands that 'Interpretation as a cognitive activity involves recognising, sorting, and organising perceptions toward a cohesive construction of understanding. This activity of discerning the qualities of a subject that are necessary for understanding is a kind of active search for connections and coherence.' (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davies, 1997 p30).

Chapter Four: Portraits:

Toby: Artist 1 – School A

School A is a faith-based primary school connected to a small unimposing cathedral. Between the 1840's and 1900's Irish settlers, escaping famine and destitution, arrived in the city and the cathedral and school were established to serve this very poor but expanding community. As a faith school children now come from beyond the immediate school area; as the teacher explained, the school now serves the Catholic faith community across the city rather than the original immediate community of Irish settlers.

The area is not affluent; the school is a little run down but clean, tidy, and ordered with classrooms on four floors. It is situated on a very steep terraced street with the cathedral almost next door at the top of the hill. The school looks unassuming from the outside – it would be easy not to realise that it is a school, there is no formal entrance way, no front yard nor standalone notice board – the door to the school steps immediately onto the street. Children arrive with their parents and get dropped off in the small reception area; there is an air of loving drop offs and calm between the children and their parents and then the children go through the second secure door and find their way to their own classrooms.

The children involved in the creative learning project were a class of 33 Year 5 pupils. The classroom was relatively small with little space to move about the room, again it was tidy, light and well-ordered with as little extra furniture in it as possible to maximise space. The class also had access to an 'art room' in a different part of the school which had to be pre-booked. This was a yet smaller room, quite dim and very overcrowded with resources, side working areas and stools for sitting on.

Nia, the class teacher was very keen and happy to be involved with the programme. There had been several planning meetings prior to the start with the two creative practitioners and she kept in frequent communication with them by text, email and phone throughout the course of the project. As soon as

the creative practitioners arrived in the school each day, they and Nia would collectively have an intense and focused conversation discussing practicalities, individual pupil's needs or concerns and other events happening in the day. At the end of the day, as soon as the pupils had gone, there would be a winding down time, a clearing up, a debrief as to what had happened during the day and a conversation about where the next steps would take them and what needed to be done in preparation. The 'enquiry question' the artists and the teacher had agreed at the outset of the project was 'What effect can working with creative practitioners have on our students' literacy, creativity and digital competence, and our teachers' approach to teaching and learning?' reflecting the national priority focus of raising standards in literacy. The theme of the project was 'What was it like to live in *this city* in the past?' In particular, they wanted to consider the lives of the early Irish settlers who came to the area and established the school and cathedral. A particular aim of the programme was to increase child-led and collaborative learning.

There were two artists working together on the project, Toby and Claire. The artists worked together for a total of 7 days over a period of two months, on consecutive Fridays. They often worked side by side: one would support the other and when they weren't the one directly 'leading' the session they would film or photograph the pupils and the other working.

Toby's creative practice involved storytelling, song writing/recording, sculpture, film and music with a particular focus on personal narrative. He described himself as being involved in 'socially engaged artwork, which means most of the work I create is not about me on my own. It's about a group of people working together to generate art and so hopefully I bring in some skill sets there. A key process of the design and the concept is about the other people coming into that process. So, it's a gathering of people coming together, to create art together.' He felt that there was a degree of vulnerability related to the need for openness in the creative process. In his experience, this could be daunting for many, especially the young offender groups he also worked with. He thought it was important to establish a relationship with the group, to 'make friends' and share

of himself. He wanted to come into a space as 'me just being me', to be honest and equal and 'not telling them this is how you do something'. This, he thought, enabled common experiences to surface and participants to be freed up to explore personal stories which could build and evolve into the collective work. When talking about his way of working Toby spoke of the importance of creating a safe space and of how, in order to engender this sense of safety, he used gentle humour, and also allocated roles so that people could listen and still be involved and connected but also be occupied. This he thought gave them a sense of safety, of something to 'stand behind' until they were ready to cross the barrier. He frequently referred to a sense of togetherness and a shared journey.

When Toby and Claire had first introduced themselves to the pupils and told them about the project and that they were about to go on a creative journey together, a few children said they felt nervous, 'because we don't know what we'll be doing'. Others said they felt excited, 'because we'll be doing something different', and 'because I love being creative, I love doing art' and 'I have never worked with an artist before'; others were impatient 'I can't wait to do the new project'. After this introduction in the classroom they all went into the echoey, cold, carpeted school hall. The children lay down on the floor in their own space, closed their eyes and were invited to go on a meditative journey with Toby as he sang them David Bowie's *Space Oddity*. He asked them to think about going to new places, and let their minds think in different ways about what was important to them. They all then rolled out long rolls of paper and drew around each other's outline before filling their own outlines with ideas, colours, words and reflections about themselves. They used charcoal, pens and chalk pastels to create life-sized individual abstract representations of themselves on the paper. While the children worked Toby continued to sing and play his guitar, Claire and Nia moved around the hall, quietly encouraging and listening to the children's thoughts and reflections.

At the end of the school day Nia gave them all blank post-it notes and Toby explained that he would like them to put their names at the top of the post-it, and then first put a few words about what the best thing about the day was and

why, underneath what was the hardest, what they had struggled with, what was difficult to get into their heads and why, and lastly what was different, what was interesting, how they had felt different. He explained that those were the things he was looking for and that by the time he had finished singing the song he wanted them to have written their reflections and come up and stuck them to his guitar. By the end of the song his guitar was covered in post-its. The children carried out the task, including going up to stick the post-its on his guitar and then walking back to their places, in contemplative silence as they listened to him singing 'A stone's throw from nowhere' and thought about their own individual responses. As Toby then started to peel off the post-its and read some, he praised them for the day, the journey they had come on and for staying the course of the journey, for exploring different things as they travelled together. He said that he looked forward to reading the post-its of their thoughts.

After school Toby said he felt he was in a very receptive environment. He could already see that the pupils were starting to stray away from the normal conventions of image-making and to enjoy the mark-making process. He reflected that, as in all creative endeavours, it was a balance between allowing full freedom to explore and of keeping track on those who were not quite connecting. He felt that in this environment this could be quickly understood, and pupils could be guided back into the activity.

On the second day the pupils engaged in the project and the other Year 5 class had visited a sandy beach nearby to explore the space of the shoreline and to start to get a sense of the smells, sounds and sights the first migrants would have experienced on arriving in the city by sea. They made footsteps in the sand, playing with the idea of the temporary and the permanent, and wrote words in coloured chalk on stones while being encouraged to think about the emotions of the people who had just arrived and their own emotions and values. Toby talked with them about connecting something physical with something they were thinking or feeling inside. Together, in unison, they threw their stones into the sea. They sang the song '*A stone's throw from nowhere*' on the beach. By now the notion of 'home' being a 'stone's throw away' had taken on a greater

meaning and significance. The day was cold and crisp, and the sun shone low in the sky which made the light strong and clear as the stones splashed into the water all together. Before they returned to school, the pupils walked barefoot across the pebbles, made casts in the sand, made cairns with their stones and collected interesting artefacts from the beach.

The day concluded again with Toby playing his song on the guitar as the children quietly wrote their thoughts on their post-its and then sat back down. Later many pupils said that this was one of their favourite days because they went out to the sea, they did something very different and also they realised that 'art wasn't just painting and drawing at their desks'.

After the pupils had gone home at the end of the day Toby reflected that he had enjoyed seeing pupils be so involved in a process. He enjoyed having 60+ pupils singing a song he wrote. He spoke of the children's 'innate joy' and 'profound engagement with nature'. They were, he thought, 'enchanted by the beach...'

Toby started the third day by showing the children the film he had created since the last session. The film wove together the children walking to the beach, working together on the sand, writing on the pebbles and throwing the stones in unison into the sea. The soundtrack to the whole film was the children singing the song 'A stone's throw from nowhere' with the instrumental accompaniment and sounds from the shore. After they had watched it, Toby explained how he had made the film and how they were a part of it- explaining how he had also taken audio recordings of sea sounds while they were there and how he had incorporated their singing into the film. He listened intently to their reflections and thoughts about the film without hurry and with real interest. He talked about the words 'a stone's throw from nowhere' and asked what those words made them think and feel. One child replied, 'you don't come from anywhere' and another replied 'it made us feel like we were all the Irish migrants.' Toby then explained that after assembly they would be taking a journey back in their minds to the time of those settlers, that already they could imagine the smells, sounds,

feeling under their feet and the cold, but that they would also be thinking about what they felt inside, their emotions, 'what they were carrying inside them'.

After assembly the children went into the hall and Toby sat amongst them on the edge of the low stage to talk about what they were doing next, again explaining that they were going on a journey but that in order to do that they would need to use the muscle inside their brain known as their imagination. He carefully discussed with them what being literal meant and how when you describe something we often use mental imagery or words which aren't literal, words that are imaginative and convey a feeling. The conversation was two way. He listened carefully to their examples of imagination and incorporated them into his explanation of literal and imaginative. He explained that they were going to use imagination today to take their minds to different places, that they were going to write words on black blocks in chalk – words to describe what they as Irish migrants had left behind (physically and emotionally) as they left their homeland, and on the other side of the blocks what they had gained by making the journey. He asked them not to think of literal words but to think about the feelings they would have been experiencing.

The children thought for a while, formed small groups and wrote words in chalk on big black jenga blocks. Toby encouraged them to be experimental with the way they assembled them together in their small groups. The order of them didn't matter, he said, that they were trying out building structures. Afterwards they would be building a bigger structure on the stage, when they had explored playing with building their smaller structures in their small groups together.

Afterwards, Toby talked them through the process of building the larger structure with the blocks. This was going to be filmed in stop motion. He explained that the blocks would crumble and tumble but that that was part of the process, that it didn't matter: from those, new structures would emerge. In near silence, the pupils took their blocks onto the stage and assembled them gently but haphazardly together one at a time to form 'mountains' which would rise and crumble and then rise again. This was done as a reflective, almost

meditative activity – Toby, Claire and Nia quietly encouraged them and helped them find their place to sit back down. Toby especially told them to take their time, not to hurry – who knew what would happen? That that was part of the beauty of what they were doing.

This activity was carried out twice. The second time the children spoke one of the words from their blocks as they placed them in the jumbled tower. After the last arranging there followed a reflective discussion between Toby and the children. They talked about how, as they fell, they changed their shape; that there was never a right or wrong shape, but that every time it fell, they learnt something about how they would place the bricks next; that every time it fell it gave them a new opportunity to start again. The day concluded again with Toby playing his song on the guitar as they quietly came up with their reflections and thoughts on their post-its and then quietly sat back down. There was a sense of calm and happiness as the children listened to the song and talked quietly with each other. Toby thanked them for the day and congratulated them on staying with the journey. He said that he couldn't even remember the morning so much had happened and it felt like so long ago.

After the pupils had left to go home, in the clearing up and reflecting together time, Toby talked of the importance of allowing time to play – of realising that in order to allow the Jenga workshop to come to a full realisation he had needed to allow the pupils to play as well as to create and to see those two processes merge. He felt that some of the pupils struggled with the abstract nature of the Jenga exercise and wondered whether more playing at the beginning could have helped them 'open up the opportunity to push the envelope of structure awareness and random exploration'.

The fourth day started with a Penitential Service in the hall. The whole school watched the film of the pupils singing on the beach and then the priest went on to lead the service. This time there were stones which represented sin and bad

behaviour as well as good traits. These were placed in a bowl of water; this was to symbolise the washing away and purging of negative emotions.

When the pupils were back in class, Toby asked them first to find themselves 'a really nice pencil'. As they did so, Toby calmly waited; finding a pencil they were happy with was clearly important for the lesson ahead. When they had their pencil, Toby explained that they were going to use this time to reflect on where they had been so far on this journey together and where they were going to go to together. To help them do this they were going to work a little differently to how they normally worked in class. They were going to explore different parts of the brain, 'using parts we have never even used or thought about before'. In order to do that they were going to be finding a way of 'breaking up' how they normally do things. He explained how, as a painter, you normally start with a blank piece of paper, and that that, for some people was a very terrifying thing. But this morning they would be doing an exercise which would make them think differently about how they even go about thinking about art. He talked first about the normal process of drawing something from memory, an actual figurative object. Then he talked about artists who had chosen to take things a little bit further, to experiment and explore. He reminded them of their body sculpture drawings in the first week. He said that he wanted to encourage them to explore a different way of looking at line and shape and art in general. Whilst they were still listening attentively, he picked up a clean, plain piece of white A3 paper and scrunched it up into as tight a ball as he could. Then he invited them to do the same with their pieces of A3 paper. This was met with surprise and slight shock, even a few sounds of dismay. He encouraged them to make it as scrunched up, as tight, as small as possibly possible – 'to really squeeze it tight'. Once the excitement had subsided, he asked them to carefully unravel the scrunched-up ball of paper and open it back out to its original size. He told them that already they had produced a beautiful piece of artwork, unique to them. He spoke of how, now, when the light fell on these pieces of paper, the shadows and dips and curves and lines, the paper already had shapes happening on it. Now they were going to take a journey with their pencils; they were going to start by

choosing a point anywhere along one edge and journey across the piece of paper to get to the other side. It didn't matter how long it took to get to the other side; he wanted the shapes, the lines and the creases to guide them as they went, to find a way that pleased them.

One child said, unprompted, that it reminded her of the journey the Irish migrants would have taken, 'not knowing their way through'. Toby agreed that the Irish migrants wouldn't have known what was ahead of them, there could have been storms and other things in their way.

Toby said they should let the paper, 'which is now a land', guide them. Their line might end up looking like a map line, like a road going through. He told them again to take their time, to find creases and lines, to make their way through until they made it to the other side.

The children started to make their initial marks and carried on. All the while Toby encouraged them to take their time, to slow down. The pupils were completely absorbed in their own lines and finding their ways across their pieces of A3 paper. No-one spoke. There was an air of complete concentration. Toby encouraged them to be willing to 'go back around'; he said that they didn't 'always need to go forwards', to let the piece of paper guide them as to how they travelled across. Again, he repeated 'it's no race, it's about finding your way through this.' As they finished, he said 'who thought that a simple line could be so beautiful? There is a certain randomness about how it's worked that has allowed our minds to enjoy finding this path through'.

He asked the pupils how they found drawing that line and listened with quiet attention, asking further questions or encouraging children to expand their answers and listening to them with deep interest. One pupil had imagined travelling along mountain valleys, another talked of how it was a random line, and not 'usual'. Toby said that randomness is something which can 'help us look at things from a different point of view'. He, Claire and Nia would like them all to find a way of joining the lines together, to make a collective continuous line showing a journey. He asked them how it felt to scrunch up the piece of paper

and echoed their words ‘uncertain and strange and confused’. These feelings, he said, were important to bring to creating your work. You needed to find a way through, and that that would mean you could create unique art. One pupil, having recently arrived in Wales, said ‘You can transport life onto a piece of paper’.

As they talked, Toby explained that everything they had been creating and exploring together over the last few weeks was connected; it was all about journeys and journeying. All the different things they had been doing would come together at the end, but that they still needed to think about how they would all come together. He talked to them about the idea of an ‘installation’ and asked for the children’s ideas. A main feature of the final installation came from one of the pupils who said he would 'like to build a beach' and use the idea of 'hands on sand'.

In the afternoon the children formed groups in the hall and experimented with ways to arrange their hands collectively to symbolise all being together. This was in preparation for the final sculpture. They experimented and played, working hard to create the effects they wanted.

The day again ended with Toby singing ‘A stone’s throw from nowhere’ as they wrote their thoughts and reflections on post-its and stuck them to him or the guitar.

On their fifth day pupils studied real census records from the time of the settlers arriving. They used these to make their own imaginary records. They adopted names taken from the 1870 census of the streets around the cathedral and the school. They created personalities for their settlers and then wrote labels on old fashioned brown card luggage tags for these forgotten travellers.

Later they went into the cathedral to make an audio recording. Going to the cathedral involved climbing to the fourth floor of the school and then going through a maze of outside yards and inside corridors which led into the bishop’s house. From here they entered the cathedral, which was empty and bitterly cold. The pupils sat in the pews waiting their turn to come forward quietly and speak

the words from their luggage tag into the microphone that Toby held as he sat in silence on the altar steps. Each pupil stated a name, status, where they lived and something about themselves (in role) to the quiet background.

For some of the day Toby worked with a few pupils at a time on the creation of a mini website. One of the pupils had lost his father the day before. Toby commented later that he found it surprising and moving that this pupil had wanted to come to school, that he had been able to talk about his father. Nia felt the child's response would have been different if the class had been involved in a more traditional academic activity.

The final two sessions with Toby involved completing the different collective and individual pieces. Pupils sewed their long pieces of paper into concertina-styled large books, the plaster casts of hands holding onto each other were laid out on the tables. There were discussions about how best to display and explain the collective pieces of work as an installation about journeys in the many senses of the word.

A final celebration event was held later in the term. It involved a service in the cathedral for the parents and the rest of the school and exhibitions in the city Library, the Tate Modern in London and in the Senedd in Cardiff. The pupils and class teacher went together to each of these exhibitions.

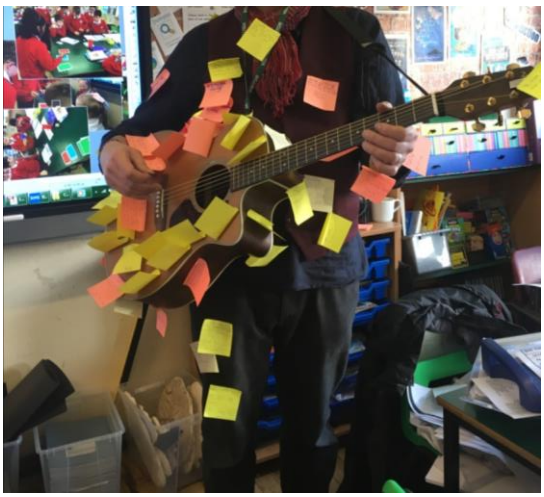

Image 1: Reflection

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 2: On the beach

Image credit: S. Hadaway

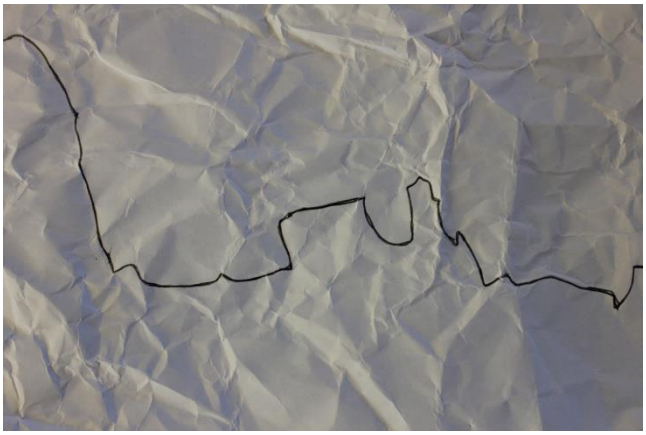

Image 3: Line across crumpled paper

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Claire: Artist 2 – School A

The second artist working on the project in School A was the sculptor Claire. Claire's creative practice involved working mainly with metal but during the course of this project she introduced the children to working with clay, plaster, metal and alginate. She described her approach to her work as process led and concerned with the connections between the concept, the theoretical side and the language of materials. 'I work multimedia and figuratively so it's a bit of a

mixture and I'm interested in history ... I've got quite a reasonably interesting history myself, so I perhaps get a set of stories, of individual stories. I kind of respond figuratively and through materials to stories.' She talked of art being a tool which could unlock all the other rooms in our minds and of our deeper human understanding. She felt art could blur the separation between disciplines and link them together. In her experience there was an intrinsic importance in allowing confidence to grow, being patient and allowing time. If children weren't ready to 'charge in' straight away, she would ask a few questions but never rush them. She talked about creative ability being innate in people but that it was a matter of confidence as to whether they would feel they could engage with it. She talked of using intuition to gauge when the people she's working with don't understand or when they need something from her to become more involved. She also described the urge to join in 'I think it's so contagious that very few people can actually stay out of it, either because all of the students or all of the children or whoever it might be, are so enthusiastically being part of it. So everybody becomes part of it, becomes part of a team working forwards really. So yes that's how I feel, everybody just piles in...'

On the first day of the project the initial activity involved pupils laying down on very long rolls of paper in the hall drawing around each other's outline whilst listening to Toby sing 'Space Oddity'. They filled the internal outlined spaces with colour, words, thoughts and reflections about themselves. Claire and Nia walked around the hall quietly encouraging the pupils, offering drawing materials and helping them reflect as Toby talked, sang and quietly explained what they were being asked to do. The activity was contemplative and calm yet busy with the artists and teacher very much there to assist rather than direct.

In the next session pupils worked directly with Claire in the cramped art room on the lower floor. She introduced them to the idea of casting, of making impressions and creating moulds. They went to the cathedral with balls of clay to gather impressions in the clay, made scratched indentations in sandcast moulds and finally laid their moulds out together in the playground in order to brush 'graphite paint' into them in preparation for the later iron forging process.

The iron casting was to be done off site in the Art college with college students' work and the pieces brought back in for the pupils to finish. At all times Claire used the technical language involved in metal sculpting and mould making, explaining what the terms meant as they went along.

On the second day the pupils and the other year 5 class visited a sandy beach in the city – here again Toby and Claire led different parts of the day but also interwove what they were doing with each other. The children were invited to think about the early Irish migrants, about what they might have felt as they set foot on the beach nearly 200 years ago and write those words with coloured pens and chalks on the stones. They arranged these stones in cairns and in patterns on the beach before ceremoniously throwing them in unison into the sea. Claire mixed up plaster and a few of the children made imprints of their feet in the sand which they then cast as well as casting some other imprints and patterns. Before returning to the classroom the children searched the beach for interesting artefacts which they carried with them back to the school in preparation for another casting session.

The third day started with the children watching the film of their time on the beach. They worked mainly with Toby in the morning (see his account) but throughout Claire unobtrusively supported, encouraged and reflected with the children and provided a helping hand in orchestrating the Jenga tower building and re-building on the stage. In the afternoon the pupils worked directly with Claire in the small art room where their found objects from the beach had been laid out ready on the tables in front of them. The pupils were noisier than in the morning but excited. Claire explained that they would be working with clay connecting this work to the words and ideas they were thinking about earlier. They would be thinking of what people had left behind and what they still had with them – she talked about visualising the thoughts in their heads; that they would be using a visual language and not words. The qualities of clay were discussed, Claire tapped fired clay on the table inviting their questions and they talked of its mouldable nature and the change it undergoes in the firing process. The children were fascinated and had plenty of questions and reflections. She

talked with them about making moulds, this time with clay, and reminded them of how they had made casts of their feet in the sand, and of the idea of making the temporary permanent. In order to come up with their mould designs Claire gave them each a plain piece of A4 paper and plastic cups and asked them to draw three circles 'in case you make a mistake, you can use another one' (circle). This very casual and accepting assumption and acknowledgment that in the designing process they may make a mistake or want several attempts was taken as a matter of course.

Claire talked about relief patterns, of negative and positive impressions before giving each child a small ball of clay, explaining that they would need to make a small low wall around their disks to contain the wet plaster. The small and tightly packed art room was noisy, but the atmosphere was productive and purposeful. The children carefully looked at and chose which of the beach objects or other objects they wanted to use to use to make their indentations. Some pupils made pictorial representations and others created abstract patterns. They all gathered round to watch as Claire made up the wet plaster and either helped or watched closely as the plaster was prepared and then poured into their individual moulds. This moving from their seats to crowd round to see something being done was a frequent occurrence when Claire worked with the children. She always saw it as an important time and would make sure that they all could see and have a proper vantage point. She waited with patience as they found space, rearranging themselves and shuffling into a good position – the importance of them being able to see was always paramount.

After break when the plaster had set hard, it was time to peel the clay away leaving the negative of their initial indentations/images. Claire spent some time explaining that it was absolutely fine to open someone else's mould and not their own if they couldn't recognise whose was who's before uncovering. She talked about sharing the discovery process, of the fact that they were individual pieces but also a collection of pieces and that they needed to let go of that sense of ownership because even though the pieces were theirs, they were also everyone's and would all become part of a collective piece of work. She

encouraged them not to worry, not to argue and not to be upset. The children all understood and one child likened it to opening a mystery gift and that if someone opened theirs, they got to open another's and see what they had created. Again, the atmosphere was one of concentration and excitement as they unpeeled their own or each other's moulds and saw what was there.

The fourth day started with the children going straight down to the art room after registration. They settled quickly and had a recapping conversation with Claire about making the moulds and what they represented. Each was given a piece of A4 paper which they ran under the tap and laid on the table in front of them. Claire asked why they needed wet paper – as one child started to answer they hesitated and she told them it was ok to be wrong, they should just say what was in their head. She explained that they would be smoothing the edges of the moulds but that this would create dust and how they could manage this as safely as possible, hence smoothing the moulds over the wet paper to catch the dust and wearing a dust mask if they needed to.

After break Claire had changed into a red boiler suit. She explained to them that they were about to see a film of the iron casting of their scratch moulds which they had made on their first day. The conversation preceding the film was full of technical language from both Claire and the children and she shared with them how she 'fell in love with iron'. They talked about the foundry, about the qualities of metal, of the heat needed for the process to work. As the film played, they saw molten iron being poured into their scratch moulds as well as degree students' moulds. She explained different parts of the process, the equipment being used and why protective clothing was being worn. The pupils were fascinated and asked many questions all of which were given due thought and a considered answer by Claire. She also brought in sample tools and materials involved in the forging process like tongs, eye goggles, coke and iron ore for firing and handed these around. Even though the children weren't at the pour the process was explained as clearly as possible and they were invited to ask any questions without any sense of hurry. Claire then talked about the cleaning process showing them an iron brush and a grinder, again explaining how they

worked, why they were needed and what effect they would have, again inviting questions. One pupil asked why iron was dark. Claire thought for a while and said that it was a 'really interesting question' and went on to talk about surfaces being rough or smooth and that light reflected most easily from smooth surfaces which could make them appear lighter. When talking about safety clothes another pupil asked if she wore gloves when she used the grinder and again she said 'I love that you asked that question' and explained that she didn't wear gloves when grinding though did use the hand guard, but that she needed to be 'dextrous' hence not using gloves, and explained that a grinder could cut through stone and metal so gloves wouldn't offer much protection. (Her conversation with them about safety was much more centred around safe practice than risk aversion).

They then went out into the cold and windy yard and watched Claire from a safe distance as she ground one of their iron casts to take away the rough edges – she worked with an angle grinder and the process sent out streams of sparks and the smell of burning metal/carbon. They were invited to have a go at brushing the iron cast with a wire brush which most of them chose to do before handling their own iron casts back inside.

Later that day the children went to the hall and Toby and Claire sat on the very low stage amongst them. Toby started by talking about their journey together, of how they were seeing each other's ideas grow and seeing what the others were creating. He talked about creating one whole collective piece and that this would involve working some ideas out together. Claire talked of how this sculpture would be 'them, a part of them'. She confessed that she was inspired by the way they always, unprompted, offered to help her and Toby, who had come into their space – that if she was ever carrying something heavy one of them would always open a door for her, or if she was giving anything out, they would instantly help. She had noticed and been moved by this and wondered if, thinking about the way they helped each other, they could make a sculpture which used (involved) each other in the final piece. She introduced them to the term 'life casting' and asked them what they thought this was. They gave their ideas, starting quite a way from what it was, and in an unhurried manner she listened to their

suggestions. Their answers got closer and finally she explained it accurately and talked about dentists taking models of teeth and people making casts of parts of their bodies.

The children then formed groups to think about and try out arranging their hands in different ways to make a hand sculpture. The class were excited, a bit noisy and to start with tentative until they grew more confident with playing and experimenting to try out multiple options. Claire, Toby and Nia encouraged but let the children carry on on their own. It was cold in the hall and the task was an unusual and open one. Once each group had decided on their formation, they showed it to the rest of the class. At the end of the session they experimented with creating a whole class hand sculpture, again coming up with their own trials of what could work before moving on to another formation.

Claire's fifth day involved working with small groups in the art room to live cast their hand formations. Six children at a time came into the room, put on plastic bags as aprons, sat down and vaselined their hands. They were excited and nervous as they formed their hands into the shapes/hand sculptures they had already decided upon. They knew what they were doing and worked in unison. All the while Claire chatted to them but used the language of the process such as 'release agent' and 'skin safe casting'. Claire then poured alginate over their hands and then laid Modroc strips over that. This process required the pupils to hold still with patience and concentration since they had to keep their hands in position until the Modroc had set, though they also chattered continuously together about what was going on. One child said excitedly just before the alginate was put on that he felt scared, and there followed a very honest and friendly conversation amongst themselves about what made them scared. After it had set, the very fragile mould was lifted gently off the children's hands. They helped in the cleaning up process of the moulds before cleaning themselves up. The next task involved working with Claire using scrap clay to make watertight the moulds and then watching the liquid plaster being poured into the mould. Once the plaster had set the children carefully peeled away the clay, Modroc and alginate to reveal their sculpture. This part took time and had to be done very

attentively, again in partnership with Claire working equally alongside each other. As they worked the conversation flowed, as they thought out loud one child said he was 'literally like an architect'. They all worked in unison, with unspoken cooperation and cheerful concentration. They exclaimed in amazement and delight as they saw their actual hands emerge in plaster in front of them – Claire stood back to let them do as much of the unveiling themselves, whilst intervening where needed to help or make sure they were being careful enough with anything delicate. The outcome was a surprise but more beautiful than they expected. The technical language of making fed naturally into the conversation, Claire talked about the fact that it was called a 'waste mould' and the chemical reaction which happens when plaster sets. She congratulated and praised them for their way of working together and for concentrating so hard and laughed with them that they didn't want to go out to play.

Image 4: Life casting *a*

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 5: Life casting *b*

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 6: Life casting *c*

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 7: Plaster hands

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Sarah: Artist 3 – School B

School B is a faith based primary school on the outskirts of a rural town. It had 96 pupils on roll at the time of the research. The school's front yard directly faces the main road leading out of the town and there is another playground and field to the side and rear. The school is a stone building with several corridors and small to medium sized classrooms with a staff room under the eaves on the upper floor. The many displays on the walls make it feel warm and friendly but also slightly overcrowded and cramped.

The children involved in the creative learning project were a class of 25 mixed Year 3 and 4 pupils. Their classroom doubled up as the room where all the children in the school ate their lunch, so morning activity had to be finished and completely cleared away by 11.55a.m. There was no longer a school kitchen or vegetable garden – all meals were prepared in the local secondary school, delivered and then served to one class at a time in the year 3/4 classroom.

The middling sized classroom was crowded with tables and chairs and other classroom furniture. It also had a whiteboard and carpet area, several displays

and various working areas. There was usually a busy and slightly chaotic air to the room during the project.

The 'enquiry question' agreed at the outset of the project was 'How can we use digital technology to develop creative habits and improve confidence and motivation in literacy and numeracy?' The teacher, creative agent, creative practitioners and children decided to create a digital encyclopaedia on the class theme for the Spring term which was 'Indian Village Settlements'. The aim was to explore digital technologies and creative learning and to allow the children to devise their own questions and areas of interest whilst studying this topic. Another factor within the project was to draw on the experiences and skills of people in the local community to help the children discover more about life in India, (for example to visit the local Indian restaurant to be introduced to the food and cooking, and also to talk to local 'experts' about fabric printing, pottery, dance, working lives, leisure time, martial arts etc).

The school had appointed two creative practitioners, Sarah and Paul. Paul taught four days of animation workshops – these were exclusively process-driven and a standalone in relation to the wider 'Indian settlement' theme of the project. This account refers to Sarah and her time in the school. Sarah worked in the school for a total of 12 days. Of these 12 days, one was a planning day with the class teacher/school coordinator and a selection of children, a second day was a whole staff CPD day at the start of the spring term and then 10 days were whole class project days. Sarah is a visual artist whose work is responsive to specific places and people. She creates mixed media installations made from discarded and found materials which explore ideas about fragility and disruption, containment, shelter and sanctuary. Sarah's personal route to becoming a fine artist had involved working in accountancy, becoming a chartered accountant and then a management consultant before deciding to turn from that to become a fine artist. However, this business background informs her approach. She explains that she takes on a consultancy framework and a transforming role with those she works with encouraging everybody, including herself, to take on the role of learner, facilitator and reflector. She refers to the importance of struggle both in

her own work and in her work with others of. She talks of the importance of not rushing on when things are difficult but to stick with things for longer than feels comfortable. She talks about the fog and the importance of feeling in the dark and that during these times the teacher shouldn't 'rescue the children'.

Sarah worked with the children and the class teacher Jane every Wednesday throughout the spring term, for a total of 10 weeks. Her initial project preparation involved researching different locations for the children to hold their final exhibition and visiting antique shops and scrap stores to source interesting and useful artefacts for the project. She found a large collection of old hardback reference books which she bought to provide a physical 'armature' for the digital encyclopaedias which had been decided upon in the initial planning meeting. Once the project began, she set up a 'mini studio' in the corner of the classroom. On the first day children were introduced to the idea of the five creative habits of mind and were asked to generate their own interpretations – in the early stages of the project there was a focus on developing inquisitiveness and imagination.

The children went on to look at maps of India, watch Youtube clips, read Wikipedia entries, study writing in Sanskrit and drawing mandalas – there was a focus on inundating the children with images, stories, facts and video clips about India. They were also each given an A3 sketchbook to gather their ideas and collect images and thoughts. A wall in the classroom was given over as an evolving display which was added to as each week progressed. Mandala patterns, the children's drawings, stories of their characters, Indian decorations, hand drawn A3 diagrams of apps all added into this evolving and 'non-precious' wall display. The display was more in keeping with pin-boards in a workshop/studio rather than a display on a classroom wall.

Sarah discussed with the children and Jane the potential use of different apps and programmes which could assist them in creating 'digital entries' for their encyclopaedias. She explained that the children, Jane and herself would need a few weeks to practise unfamiliar technologies and that this was part of the

creative process. This ongoing experimentation and exploration of different and unfamiliar technologies was an element of the project which yielded benefits and frustrations as the weeks progressed.

The children individually or collaboratively started making models of rural or urban Indian buildings to form a settlement of dwellings in the corner of the classroom. Sarah introduced them to many different forms of Indian architecture both old and contemporary. During this time, she also showed them architectural drawings, buildings created by 3D computer aided modelling techniques and examples of buildings made from recycled materials.

Throughout the January sessions the children were encouraged to look at imagery and information about India, and to decide what they would like to explore and research directly themselves – so for example, one pupil with a particular interest in Formula 1 racing researched racing tracks in India, another researched a famous gymnast, another a famous boxer.

She also introduced philosophy for children's ideas sourcing, for example, a book about Tibetan children living in India and explored the class theme of 'kindness' in this context. Towards the end of January, she introduced the idea of making a snakes and ladders game (the game originated from India) designed by the pupils – and also explored with the pupils the idea that games like 'Minecraft' could have originated from ancient ideas about playing games. The snakes and ladders game evolved and became a new game as the children began to make game cards, collect photos and stars as 'acts of kindness' to give away along the way as they adapted the rules of the game to include rewards and treats. Sarah encouraged the children to think about kindness, hardships, rewards and consequences as they were working. They were also divided into city or countryside groups and asked to consider how they would make work for a specific space. She described them as 'installation artists' and produced boards of the correct size to help them envisage the space they were creating the work for. The children practised writing in English, Welsh and Hindi as part of their work.

By late January, though the classroom was a hive of activity and the children were being busy and industrious, there is a clear tension arising between Sarah and Jane stemming from the sense that the agreed areas to focus on were not being kept to and that there was a continuous starting up of new directions. In one email exchange with Jane, Sarah tries to reassure her that she shouldn't worry if they are not covering all the aspects of the theme she wants, she replied 'Let them go where they need. We can weave in the gaps in other ways.'

At the start of February Sarah read and discussed a quote with the children by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe referring to committing to an idea and perseverance.

'Until one is committed there is hesitance, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issue from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.'

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832)

There was a sense at this stage, running up to half term, that Sarah could see the project beginning to take shape but that this was not felt by Jane. Over half term Sarah took a list of the children's names, which structures they had built and their stories/personal research foci home with her in order to consider how all would come together.

Straight after half term Sarah held a reflection discussion and a sketchbook day with the children. They grouped their homes, photographed them, mapped them out, and cross referenced their maps with the exhibition space. They then formed themselves into the city group, the country group and the planning

group and then were tasked with working out which jobs still needed doing. Sarah gave them the responsibility to self-organise, to take responsibility for the space and to resolve any differences of opinion themselves.

The next phase of the project involved shifting the focus to the 'digital encyclopaedias' and in any spare time, making mini characters from wire and scraps of cloth to inhabit their dwellings. Sarah encouraged the children to think of different ways of telling their 'stories' in the encyclopaedias – as digital links to their own voiceovers, raps, songs, mini films, photo collage, comics – the idea was that you could hover a phone/ipad over a code using the 'aurasma' app which would respond to an image or code which they had stuck onto certain pages then linking to one or a collection of these items. To aid this process Jane set up individual digital folders for each child for them to store their images, sounds, voiceovers etc in. The children were now individually very much in control of the direction of their research and encyclopaedias .

To help the children clarify their thoughts and find their focus Sarah introduced the daily practice of 'wandering and sharpening' whereby all the children were invited to walk in silence around the room (they could choose their route) thinking, wandering and wondering, letting their ideas focus and sharpen, only sitting down when they felt ready. They walked in silence, some for quite a while before sitting down and it wasn't until the last child had sat down that the lesson could begin. Sarah was very calm and accepting of the time this took but Jane, the class teacher, expressed her frustration after some sessions that she thought some children were deliberately not sitting down in order to waste time.

This stage of the project was one of transforming their making and physical forms and researched materials into the digital. There were frequent discussions about robots, technology, philosophy and making with a plentiful opportunity to view Youtube clips, websites, articles, images, and books Sarah had brought in. During the final week of February pupils could circulate between three tables – a nature table, a people table and a transport table – here the pupils decided what to make, how to resolve their own problems and could move to other tables as and

when they wished. There was usually an adult at each table, though their role was to observe and help the pupils focus but not to direct or 'take over'.

During the first week in March the children continued working on the three tables, each covered with materials, images, paper, card, ipads etc. The children were absorbed in their own individual research with a clear sense of the homes, characters and animals they were each individually interested in.

After lunchtime the pupils came back in and started the afternoon session with the 'wandering and sharpening walk' which was renamed by one child as the 'walk of wisdom'. Once again the children wandered freely and silently around the room thinking about their chosen character and what they might have been doing, and once they could picture them in their minds and what they were doing they could sit down.

Their next task was to make little characters out of wire and tiny pieces of fabric/wool. Sarah demonstrated and explained how to make the characters and then the children were sent off to make their own. There was a sense of frustration from Sarah further into the session when she observed the classroom assistant making the wire figures herself and then handing them out to a queue of children. Sarah approached the class teacher to ask her to ask the teaching assistant to stop doing this so that the children would have to make their own figures. Sarah explained that even if it proved tricky and they had to experience a sense of frustration and persevere that was preferable to someone doing the task for them. At the end of the day all the individual figures (each one no more than about an inch in height) were scattered on the table with tiny scraps of silk as clothes – all unique. Then as with lunch time the day ended abruptly – a quick clear away and then home time.

The following project day in March began with Sarah having a reflective discussion with the pupils about Stephen Hawkins who had died in the night – the discussion flowed naturally and centred around his life, his work, and his perseverance, discipline and collaboration. The children then did their 'walk of wisdom' to think any thoughts. Again there was a slight sense of frustration from

Jane that some children just kept walking for the sake of it but this didn't seem to trouble Sarah. Once all sat down the children watched a video about a house which had been designed and built using computer aided design and manufacture. The children were fascinated and asked many questions. The tables and chairs were pushed to the edges of the room and the children sat in the middle and talked about books and computers and pre-computers and older technology. Sarah asked them to think of a question and write it down, when some children struggled to think of a question she said they could write down 'can't think of a question'. Here again there was a source of frustration for Jane who felt that some children were being lazy by not thinking of a question. They listened as Sarah read out the questions written down. These were then roughly grouped into types of questions, and as they all tried to re-phrase them Jane wrote them on the white board as topics of conversation. The children were given an electrical plug which they could pass round and only ask a question when holding it (or they could just pass the plug on). This discussion became a fascinating, rich and mature discussion about robots, the future, technology and society.

After morning break, the children were invited to look at the collection of large old reference books which Sarah had bought at the start of the project. Initially they were searching for any references to India. The children were fascinated and absorbed by this activity enjoying the big, old, slightly musty books which most were completely unfamiliar with – it seemed to be a different type of looking, contemplating and discovering to their attention whilst using ipads and search engines. After lunch they came back in, Sarah re-explained to them what a digital encyclopaedia was. They children chose which book they wanted to have as their own individual book to alter/rework and make into their very own 'digital encyclopaedia'.

The aim was to pull out pages and then to add in pages, images and stories as their own entries. These were to include their own ideas, photos, stories, mini figures and special digital codes which then linked/opened on an ipad to a film

or audio file they had found or created – a creative collection which complemented their own stories and individual interest in India.

A clear sense of frustration by Jane was now being quietly articulated – a frustration that even though she could see that the children were contributing and had greatly improved their research skills, they were not developing any writing skills, and underlying this that everything felt very unfocussed and slightly out of control. She was also concerned that this 'digital encyclopaedia' was not going to be the factual encyclopaedia as she had envisaged but was actually going to be a collection of quite disjointed interests in certain aspects of India – more of a collection of thoughts, interests, images, curiosities – some factual, some whimsical.

The third project day in March involved the children working in three groups – one a film team, the other a 'story team' and the third an 'encyclopaedia team' – there was now a real sense of trying to complete everything by the 'showing event'. Most children were expected to get on independently without adult guidance and though some were productive and self-directed, some seemed totally lost and in the busy classroom atmosphere they seemed to drift unnoticed. They continued to work on their physical and digital encyclopaedias after lunch organically exploring programmes and adding in as they chose to in their books.

Sarah focussed her attention on the 'digital story' team showing them how to use 'HP reveal' – the programme which would enable them to link from a code to a film or audio file. Jane seemed to have all but given up her attempt to co-steer or contribute to the final direction, looking tired, frustrated, and slightly despairing.

During the last session in March and the final session of the project the children worked on bringing all the different elements together. An exhibition and celebratory event followed in April to which the parents and other teachers were invited as the books, films, stories and art works were shared and celebrated.

There is now a highly decorated bookshelf in the school containing the series of pupils' physical/digital encyclopaedias.

Image 8: Wire and wool figures

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 9: Creative Habits of Mind workings

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 10: Re-purposing of reference books

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Lucy: Artist 4 – School C

School C is a newly established school in a large town (the children and staff had only moved into the school two weeks prior to the research commencing). The new school consists of the amalgamation of the former School 'y' and School 'z' and draws on a catchment area immediate to the school. The area is not an affluent area, unemployment amongst parents is high and the free school meal and additional learning needs percentiles are considerably higher than the national average.

The walkway up to the school and area in front of the school give an almost brochure-like appearance due to their newness and neatness. The school is open, light and easy to move around. It has an open, two-story atrium as you enter the entrance area. The architecture is modern and utilitarian and inside it already has an inviting welcoming sense. Everything is brand new – red plastic classroom chairs and formica tables, IT equipment, playground props, photocopiers and other school commodities. The new school has a number of purpose-built rooms – a cooking room, an art/DT room, computer suites, a nurture room, a generous number of 'intervention' rooms for small groups of children to receive extra support in literacy and numeracy, a library, and several reading areas. Though the school still had a great deal of 'settling in' to do it already had the impression of being used and enjoyed.

At the time of research, the school had approximately 400 pupils on roll and over 50 staff.

The children involved in the project were a class of 30 year 5 pupils. For the duration of the project the children worked in the new 'art room' and were divided into two groups – one group worked with the two creative practitioners in the morning and the other half worked with them in the afternoon. The class teacher always stayed with whichever half was not working on the project. He would pop into the art room several times a day to have a look, check that everything was ok and talk about what was happening and what was being created during each session.

The headteacher also called into the art room quite frequently as the project got underway. Though he was constantly busy, and in a rush, he explained how certain he was that children making work with their hands and being involved in arts projects had a marked benefit for them. He felt in no doubt of this and so ensured that the school should take part in the programme even though everything was in a state of change and turmoil due to the move.

The 'enquiry question' agreed at the outset of the project was 'Can using a creative approach through art and sculpting have an impact on the literacy, oracy and communication skills of the children?' The aim was also to involve the children in the co-design and co-creation of a ceramic wall-piece to go up as a permanent piece of work in the school's new entrance way/atrium – in order to make it a 'Hallway of Happiness'.

There were two creative practitioners working together on the project for a total of six days throughout the month of May and early June with a celebration day held after the six days. The pupils were taken off timetable for either the morning or the afternoon to participate in the project. Lucy and the second artist Trudi always worked side by side and their instruction and communication with the pupils often interwove.

Lucy is a sculptor – who usually works with wood, clay, cardboard or metal and sometimes wire and paper. She describes being drawn to working in three dimensions whatever the material. In her solo commissioned work, she works mainly with wood and metal – using heavy machinery and chainsaws, but when working with community groups and schools she works with whichever materials suit the project. She describes enjoying the collaborative elements of her work, of working with groups to establish what they want, rather than imposing her own preconceived ideas on others. She explains that the whole point is in empowering people to understand that they have opinions and a valid voice and that this can be fed into the entirety of a piece of work or a project. She also talks of learning from those she's with and being on a journey together. She recognises that everyone has different skills and also opinions, and that sometimes talking

or writing aren't people's 'thing', but they can communicate ideas through drawing or making, and talks of the importance of exploring and playing when generating ideas.

On the first day of the project Lucy and Trudi had introduced themselves to the children and explained that they would all be working together on a clay project. Both practitioners had also, by way of introducing themselves, talked about and shown examples of their own work. Later the children had started to explore the theme of the project – 'kindness, living together and what makes us happy'. Lucy and Trudi had laid out a large role of paper and the children had collectively, with charcoal, crayons, and pastels, drawn images which epitomised for them 'kindness, living together and what makes them happy'. They had also written words which came to mind on the paper in different languages, especially Welsh and English. During this first session the children had been given their own journals for their own independent use. In the afternoon Trudi and Lucy had repeated the morning session with the other half the class – this pattern continued throughout the course of the project.

On the second day the children arrived in the art room slightly later having first sat their annual standardised maths tests. They came in just after 10am, settled quickly and were immediately calm and attentive. The whole class then had a long and gentle conversation with Lucy about the work they had been doing with them the week before and the ideas for the theme of the project. Lucy sat on the side unit and, as they talked and tentatively volunteered their replies, she laughed gently and reminded them that it wasn't a test, that they had had their test for the day, and whatever they were thinking they could just say, in their own words. Lucy talked with them about their drawings of kindness, and of how this could relate to them and their friends but could also reach outwards into their families and community.

As she started talking about working with clay she asked who had worked with clay before and more than half the children put their hands up. She said that was very useful and asked them what they had made before in clay. One girl had

remembered making a clay figure and a clay plant pot with Lucy and said she still had it, Lucy remarked that they were excellent, that she still had hers too and it made her very happy. Other children described what they had made, one child said she had made a pot but that it had been too thin, and both her and Lucy immediately agreed that that was a lesson, not to make it too thin and agreed that that child would look out for anyone making something too thin and warn them. Having had the conversation about what previous clay work they had experienced they were then asked about what they had started to put in their journals. Lucy mentioned a spidergram and asked them about it, she paused and gave them the impression of needing reminding. One or two children volunteered answers and described them as emotions, 'like being disciplined'. When talking about collaboration Lucy talked of how sometimes it was great to do things on your own, but that it was also very good to have the skills and the patience to be able to work with other people and listen to other people's ideas.

Trudi then talked and gave a demonstration (see next artists account). At one point one of the children asked if they could make whatever they want. Lucy thought for a moment and then drew them back to the work they had done on the long sheet of paper the week before and the idea of making human figures and reminded them of the beautiful drawings and ideas they had made of people helping each other. She talked of how, in terms of being kind and helping each other, you could show this far more in terms of human figures, that it would be unlikely to see a penguin helping another but that this could be shown in human figures in many ways and explained the term 'visual language' to them. This reminded one child of a time when an older person on a mobility scooter outside the Bingo Hall had dropped their purse on the bumpy pavement, and she had picked it up and given it back to her.

Just then another member of staff came in to do some photocopying and told Lucy that she needed to come back in a moment and make toast for the children in the school. Lucy asked if that happened every day in the art room they were in, and mentioned that the tables and working area which had clay on them should be avoided but was accepting of the need to make toast. Lucy handed

out medium-sized blocks of clay and two lengths of wood to each child. As she carried on handing these out, she asked if anyone had any ideas what the lengths of wood might be for. A few children gave guesses and then one child gave half an answer, Lucy and Trudi agreed, and asked him to carry on going until he arrived at the right answer. Lucy said yes, it was to stop them all from rolling the clay too thin. She gave a quick demonstration and showed how the wooden sticks were a guide/support for the rolling pin and then the children started rolling out. She moved from table to table making sure everyone was ok, talking to the children about the clay rolling and how they were doing. The children were happy, softly chatting to each other or working quietly, concentrating on the task at hand. Some decided they could roll out better standing up and just did so. The next stage the children went on to was to start making figures from their rolled-out clay.

As Lucy knelt at each table when talking to individual children, she listened carefully to their plans and ideas, pausing for quite a while as they explained and tried out different clay figure poses. She talked of the qualities of the clay and how that would affect what they were making. She always listened to their ideas before suggesting any solutions and made sure their ideas were interwoven as they carried on making. She questioned gently and listened attentively and helped them understand how they could make multiple different decisions. Each focus on an individual child was total and the other children worked with a semi quiet hum around them. Occasionally she would stop to look at another child's figure which they had come across to show her. Again, she would give her complete focus and would talk about a detail or a texture or an overall idea which had been realised in the figures, showing her delight and praise. Sometimes she would talk to the whole class and then they would stop and listen calmly without fuss. She spoke of other artists working figuratively with clay mentioning Anthony Gormley's work, his cast figures dotted about in urban, seashore and rural landscapes. She talked of his 'Field for the British Isles' piece of many thousands of small clay figures. This led her on to talk of the importance of posture or

gesture in pieces rather than being too concerned about detail. She explained that it was posture or gesture which conveyed more of an impression of a piece.

As she went back to talk to each table, crouching or kneeling at their height to ask what they were thinking of making, if they were still unsure, she would say 'ok, let's have a think about it together'. As an idea evolved, she would sometimes take up the pose of the figure/idea, sometimes lying on the floor or being on all fours momentarily if that was a pose for the figure, in order to help the child to see where parts of the body were in relation to other parts.

Her conversation, whether with the whole class or to individual children flowed from technical suggestion of how to join clay, not making areas too thick or thin, and stability, to figurative considerations such as including pose and posture, to embodying emotion and a sense of interaction between the figures to engender a sense of community and togetherness.

The third day started with Lucy having a conversation with the class about how they were feeling and if anything interesting had happened to them in the intervening week since they had seen them last. One girl talked of her mother having to have an operation on her hand and Lucy said she hoped she got better and healed quickly. The conversation then turned to Lucy asking them what they remembered doing with her and Trudi the week before. The children talked about making the figures and Lucy told them they had been 'baked' and talked with them about the correct term for 'baking' clay. First the children guessed the term, and some remembered the word 'kiln'. Lucy gave them the word fired and explained that clay wasn't 'cooked' or 'baked' but that it was 'fired'. She also pointed out a piece of paper newly pinned to the notice board explaining that she was collecting new words to help them remember. She added that they were welcome to add words too if they heard a word they didn't know or had just learnt the meaning of one. She reminded them they had their books to use and wanted them to use them all the time. She wanted them to write notes and draw their designs in them, and to write any new words, and things like how many

degrees the kiln is fired to when firing the figures. The conversation then went on to briefly talk about what a first firing was called...a biscuit firing.

As the conversation turned to thinking about what they were going to make that day, she explained that they were going to make 'tile base things', that they needed to imagine making a comic strip.

She talked to them about thinking of a story or a theme for their tile 'comic strips'. She suggested they thought about something that had happened to them or someone close to them which reminded them of kindness and positive ways of being together. A table at a time, they picked up their fired figures from the last week and brought them back to their tables. She said for the first five minutes or so they should have a play around with their biscuit fired characters and have them interact and see if they could make a story by playing with them, reminding them to be careful.

Again, Lucy went from table to table crouching down or kneeling listening carefully to each child's ideas, pausing, looking at their figures, listening to the tables' chit chat, laughing with them at certain parts of their stories, and sometimes suggesting part of an idea to include in their story in relation to their figures. She also talked with them about learning from your mistakes when working with clay. Later in the conversation they talked together about how people are different shapes and sizes and that there's no such thing as a perfect human. She suggested that instead of playing with their own figures individually, they pool them together in the centre of the table to see if they could make a story with the figures together. She talked with one table about the sculptures they had...an angel, a very sad person, two people sitting next to each other and asked them to have a think, as they played with them together about what story they could create. As soon as she had left the first table the group of children started talking and playing with their figures and stories evolved quickly. They were completely involved, listening to each other and each adding in their own ideas in an animated, excited way. The story changed and grew. On one table the story emerging involved a homeless girl who had been sitting alone being

adopted by a passer-by into their home. Whilst most of the table thought this was good one pupil was uncomfortable about a girl going to live with a stranger. The group conversation amongst the pupils was exploring and mature and touched real topics of safety, trust and human interaction.

At playtime the class teacher came in to see how the session had been going and Lucy talked with him about one child who wanted to make his cartoon strip into a longer written story.

The fourth day started with a quick drawing activity in their books for five minutes. The children were asked to think of a word each, then a story around that word and then make a quick sketch of a scene or a part of that story. Later they practised scratching and carving letters into clay and joining clay in different ways to develop their techniques in preparation for making the final piece. They were reminded that they were exploring and learning what did and didn't work and how they could improve what they were making.

Lucy went on to talk to them about the fact that they were about to pay a 'site visit' to the place where their clay pieces would go. She reminded them of the importance of being very quiet and respectful because other classes around the space would still be working.

She encouraged them to have a 'quiet little think and wander around', thinking about what they were going to make and where it might go. She said there would be walls, flat surfaces, windowsills, and the possibility of suspending pieces, explaining what the word 'suspended' meant to a child who asked. She went on to explain that they needed to think carefully about how they would hang or attach their pieces – would they be screwed to a wall, sitting on a windowsill etc? She told them, as they walked around, to think of what they were going to make and for where. She explained that as a sculptor, the first thing she does is go to see where the sculpture is going to go before she begins making it. She goes to see if it will be inside or outside, and that this helps her choose which materials to use. She also told them to think about scale, how big their pieces would be, as they looked at the place.

As they entered the atrium area, she drew their attention to the different spaces there...the stairwell, the hallway, the walls. She talked about the window ledges saying that they might be good fun if they were making sitting figures. She asked them what else they could see and where else they could see their work in that space? One child asked if they could put some figures on the large hanging lights and Lucy talked seriously and logically about what problems may be encountered if they used the lights. She said that clay wouldn't melt but that interactions with electrics could be dangerous so they probably wouldn't be allowed to do that, though she liked the suggestion. She asked for other ideas and one child came up with an idea she wanted everyone to hear. The child had noticed pre-formed holes in the tiles in the ceiling and had asked if they could make little figures popping out. Lucy liked the idea and went on to talk with the whole class about what considerations they would need to factor in? They talked of scale, dimension, finding out how deep the holes were and whether they had permission to stick anything in them. They talked about other spaces as well...one child asked about putting figures on the balcony rail in the upper corridor and Lucy asked what a potential problem with that place could be. They realised that hands running along the balcony could knock them off, though she acknowledged that it would be nice for the other children to see them close up. Another child suggested attaching figures to some wooden panels on the walls and Lucy agreed that that would be a good space and they could attach screws which the pieces could be attached to. When another child said sadly that he was about to say that, Lucy replied that 'it's ok, it's good that we're thinking along the same lines, that we're saying the same things'.

After break, back in the class, Lucy asked them about physical activities they enjoyed. Trudi and she had had a conversation during breaktime about the fact that the children's stories were becoming increasingly centred around homelessness, drug taking and violence. After naming all the physical activities they enjoyed, Lucy asked them to do 20 second stick drawings of those activities. The children then went on to make their final clay pieces, predominantly from

rolled out clay in 2D but some 3D figures thinking about kindness, happiness and being a community together.

Later in the project the children were shown their final fired pieces. They were shown how to rub and brush oxides onto them to bring out the detail. The final session of that fifth day was an evaluation game.

The last day involved a trip to the Glynn Vivian gallery in Swansea to see the drawings, prints and sculptures of the artist Käthe Kollwitz.

After the work was installed in its permanent space there was a small celebration event for the pupils, parents and staff.

Image 11: Collection of clay figures

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Image 12: One of the final panels

Image credit: S. Hadaway

Trudi: Artist 5 – School C

The second artist working on the project in School C was a ceramicist, Trudi. She came to ceramics relatively late in life, having taken up ceramics in an evening class. She explained how she plays with scale, making huge, oversized teapots and tiny ones drawing on elements of play. She works with art college students and mental health groups in addition to working sometimes in schools and talks of how she draws people into the making process. She describes clay as something 'you can do anything with, if you treat it the right way'. With children she explains, you sometimes have to slow them down a bit when their ideas are coming thick and fast, but also use techniques to encourage and embolden others who feel stuck or unsure. She mentioned that, for the mental health groups, though some of the importance was about creating an object, the opportunity to create a safe space for interacting with each other was just as important. She talked of the value of expressing something through their work and that whichever group she is working with, the opportunity to externalise something internal was an intrinsic part of her work with others.

On the first day of the project Trudi and Lucy had talked to the children about their own work and showed examples on a power point to give the children a sense of what they made and how they worked. Later in the day they had asked the children to explore the theme of the project – 'kindness, living together and what makes us happy'. A large roll of paper was laid out along with charcoal, crayons, and pastels and the children had drawn images and written words or phrases. During this first session journals/sketch books were given to each child for their own independent use. (The afternoon always repeated the morning sessions but with the other half of the class – this pattern continued throughout the course of the project.)

On the second day the children came in slightly later having first sat their standardised maths tests. To start with Lucy talked with them for a while about what they would be doing that day and Trudi listened as she wandered quietly back and forth, only interrupting briefly to mention that she had seen lovely drawings about helping people older and younger than themselves. Just before

break they were handed lumps of clay and shown how to roll them out so that the clay could harden slightly over break. Trudi and Lucy told the children that it was important for them to get some fresh air, but they could come in after 10 minutes if they wanted instead of waiting the full 20 minutes of breaktime.

When they came back in Trudi talked to the whole class about what they would be doing with the clay. She explained that it was a 'back to front' explanation and that she would show them examples of the kind of things they might end up with before explaining how to make them. She told them they wouldn't be using bright colours but would be using copper oxide to colour the clay pieces and that in the past it had been made around there, in that very area. She talked about the copper oxide going into the textured areas on the clay and into any marks on the surface. Trudi also talked to them about the firing process, explaining that she would take their work away and put it in a kiln. From this they talked about what a kiln was, what temperature the work would be fired to and how this compared to a kitchen oven. Trudi often interspersed her explanations and demonstrations with joking, in this instance saying that a kiln could cook someone but that they wouldn't be doing that! She walked backwards and forwards to the window ledge showing finished examples or parts of pieces to illustrate different types of figures and what fired copper oxide looked like. She talked about the softness of clay and also used the made-up word 'smooshing' to describe smoothing and pressing in a gentle manner, one bit of clay to another in order to attach it. All the children laughed at this new funny word.

She also talked of creating a story with figures, of using these stories to make people feel happy and maybe even laugh as they came into the school, and that seeing these figures may remind people about being a little kinder to each other. She talked of how a lot of detail wasn't needed, that these figures were more like a cartoon, and that it was possible to tell a story with only a few lines.

As the children started making, if one child noticed or said something interesting, she would draw everyone's attention to it, for example one child commented that, if you broke into the clay you would see tiny grainy bits. Trudi explained to

everyone that this graininess was tiny bits of ground up stone hence the name of the clay being 'stoneware'. Trudi walked around the tables, pausing frequently to see how children were getting on, leaning in, asking questions about what they were making, listening intently. She would fix, offer advice, give technical explanations – her attention being given fully to whichever child she was talking to. She would be almost constantly making and fiddling with bits of clay, even as she walked about, explaining in 3D rather than with words.

When one child said she had liked writing her slogan in the initial drawing, Trudi asked her to show her and then said she should do that rather than feel she had to make a figure. As soon as she said that the child was then away, absorbed and fully involved in making this as she worked.

In another moment she asked a child what she was making and the child replied that she didn't know, Trudi said 'you don't know...you just playing?' and the child said 'yes', to which Trudi replied 'good, you just keep playing and then when you have an idea give me a shout' and the child carried on playing and exploring calmly (later her ideas formed into creating a collection of simple figures varying in scale, holding hands in a semi-circle). There was a sense of collective attentiveness to the work from all in the room, adults and children alike. The children seemed to have an almost instinctive willingness and knowledge of how to get on with moulding and modelling the clay – as though their hands responded immediately to the malleable clay in front of them.

At a later point she talked to the whole class again to discuss thicknesses of clay and what happens in the kiln when the clay is too thick and again talked about the need to be gentle with clay.

Day three started with Trudi and Lucy having a conversation with the children about what they had done the week before, and what had been happening in the intervening time. Trudi asked whether they remembered to what temperature their clay figures had been fired to, and some of the children remembered 1,000 degrees. Trudi explained that the pieces weren't muddy stuff anymore but were now quite hard and tapped a piece on the side so they could

hear what noise it made. (Though she did remind them that they were still slightly fragile and would be stronger again after their next firing). Lucy wrote down new words and terms on a piece of paper pinned to a notice board, as Trudi told the children the first firing is a biscuit firing, having first asked them what's nice to eat with a cup of tea.

Later on in the session she explained that all the pieces had come out of the first firing, but that a few arms and legs had come off and some had gone bald, due to the 'smooshing' not being done properly. When each child came up one or two at a time to collect their pieces, she talked to them carefully about what had happened and how to make sure any faults didn't happen when they made their next figure. The children then started to, in small groups or individually, form stories or 'pictures' with the figures representing kindness or happiness. Trudi walked around listening, leaning in over the tables, asking one or two questions, sometimes suggesting how their ideas could be realised in their next pieces. At one point she collected a few pieces and a tile from one child and asked the class to listen as she explained that they could use their pieces not only to create a story but also to create a picture which communicated something in itself, she showed two figures together and the tile which simply said, 'be my friend'. She talked about telling a story with one 'picture'. As she walked around talking to the children about what they had decided to do she was interested in how they had come to their decisions, how they had chosen to work together, and was interested in the stories which had or were beginning to emerge. She had a way of letting them be but was always attentive, walking amongst, listening unobtrusively, and not rushing them – but open to their ideas and their choices of ways of working.

She started day four by telling them she wanted them to do something very, very difficult. She explained that she wanted them to look at photos of their work almost 'as though they were someone else'. She wanted them to ask themselves what could make them a little bit better. One child says their writing could be better and Trudi replied that the writing was good, but the tool used could have been a better, a more suitable tool. She also talked to them about how important

it is that other people can read the writing, and explained that often, writing on signs is printed writing rather than joined up, to make it easier and clearer to read. She told them that if they can get into that way of thinking (as though they were someone else looking at their work), their work would keep getting better, but if they thought it was perfect it would just stay the same.

Later she told a group that they need to 'slow right down on that' – she showed them how to write carefully in clay with a modelling tool and talked to them about the need to make the groove in the clay slowly in order not to create burs.

The conversations between her and the children naturally meandered. At one point a child had asked where clay came from so Trudi asked the whole class. After a few suggestions she agreed with one child that it was earth and water, but from deeper down in the ground, that it was 'sticky earth with no worms.'

When Lucy, Trudi and the class went into the atrium area they talked together and she listened to their thoughts and observations as they walked around. She drew their attention to what would be eye level to someone walking through the space. The conversation followed about height, scale and closeness to pieces. One boy told her that sometimes people got upset out there, pointing to the entrance way area, as Trudi talked about helping people to feel welcomed and happy when they came into the space.

Later, back in the class, as Trudi was helping a girl make a clay hand with some of the fingers curling over each other, she asked the girl to really look at her hand to help her work out how the fingers went. As soon as she had made it, the girl laughed and showed others, and Trudi reminded her what a difference it makes 'when you really look'.

For most of this session Trudi sat amongst the children, listening and interested as they talked about their intentions for their pieces. She would explain if they needed to be fired in more than one-piece, or how to join work more effectively. The talk nearly always centred around combining their ideas with the practical requirements and considerations of working in clay.

On the fifth day of the project the children were shown their final fired pieces. They rubbed and brushed oxides onto them to bring out the detail. The last session of that fifth day was an evaluation game. The final day involved a trip to the Glynn Vivian gallery in Swansea to see the drawings, prints and sculptures of the artist Käthe Kollwitz.

After the work was installed in its permanent space there was a small celebration event for the pupils, parents and staff.

When looking back on the project Trudi reflected that the children were frequently reminded that their work would be up on the walls and windowsills for everyone to see for a long time. She reflected that this gave them an ownership of the project and it helped them see it as a collaboration which needed careful planning. She noticed that in the last couple of sessions many more children were coming together to work in teams and that over the course of the project the children had learned the language of clay including some of the science and maths involved.

Later in the term the headmaster sent Lucy and Trudi an email mentioning that he ‘was in school yesterday evening and the sun shone into the school...the work is wonderful and makes our school really special...’

Chapter Five: Discussion

How do creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning?

In this chapter I analyse the portraits of the five creative practitioners at work, presented in the previous chapter, to develop a discussion about how they have used talk to engender an environment for learning. The chapter moves from a consideration of the talking practice observed in the classrooms – the listening, the questioning and the use of body language, to the effect this has on the discourse relationships. At its most basic level, my analysis confirms that learning is a highly social and communicative process (Littleton & Mercer, 2013) and that many creative practitioners engage in a particularly dialogic and inclusive form of interaction when working with children in their learning environments. I argue that this way of interacting – the way the creative practitioners listen and question, allowing children the opportunity to share and build on their own and each other's ideas, their positioning, embodiment and use of space, their encouragement for children to play and take risks and learn through empathic feeling and making – created a rich, inclusive and accessible environment for learning.

The five portraits presented offer a unique insight into how the creative practitioners set up and engaged in an ongoing conversation with children. Conversation was integral to the ways in which the practitioners set up their projects and engaged children, sustained children's interest, focused on processes of learning, and completed lengthy and challenging tasks and celebrated success. There were several noticeable elements of the talk which, combined, contributed to the dialogic culture within the classroom.

The talk was distinctive, with key elements across all of the artists' practice. These elements were:

- How the lesson starts – the children are put at ease; the dialogue is a continuing conversation and is used to set the scene and mood and open the door to the collective work ahead.

- Body language – the creative practitioners walked amongst, crouched down, sat at the same level – a sense of 'in amongst' children.

- Questioning – with a real interest in what the children were saying – not merely for 'right or wrong', ideas and answers are included and built on.

- Listening acutely – a genuine interest, a 'seeing'/'recognition' of the child as a capable individual, children's ideas and thoughts of value and importance

- Encouragement of play, exploration, experimentation, empathy, abstraction – enabling children to engage with their learning by means other than merely writing, recall, recitation – enabling children to build their own ideas and understanding.

- Sense of inclusion, togetherness, and collective endeavour – the children active, valued and included – not passive and 'done to'.

I discuss each of these in turn.

How the lesson starts – the children are put at ease; the dialogue is a continuing conversation and is used to set the scene and mood and open the door to the collective work ahead

Creative practitioners often began their first session of the week by asking the children, in a relaxed, conversational and interested manner how they were feeling that day or how they had been since they had seen them last. This gentle, unhurried start to each new week's encounter was a way of showing interest and care – much as would happen in a friendly conversation. It had the effect of

putting the children at ease, engendering a sense of safety and establishing a discursive and flowing conversational pattern. Littleton and Mercer refer to 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' interactions when considering environments in which people are working and thinking together and the effect this has on children's ability to use language to think collectively and alone, (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). The conversation I observed was generally more towards the symmetrical end of the continuum, establishing more equitable power relationships in the classroom at the outset.

Due to the creative practitioners often only coming in for a day a week over a period of six to eight weeks, they would usually ask the children to remind them what they had all been working on together the week before. This served a valuable purpose of collectively reminding each other as well, and of re-establishing where they 'were at' and of making sure they all felt they were embarking on the next step together. By its nature this element of the conversation involved the children collectively remembering their experiences – something useful which they could all do without the fear of getting factual curriculum information wrong. Littleton and Mercer refer to these 'elaborative' conversations as those in which events are remembered and the situation in which they find themselves is discussed as they all think together about 'what's going on'. Here ideas are shared openly, and explanations are considered in an atmosphere of trust (Littleton & Mercer, 2013).Trust was established at the very outset of the project and re-established each day.

At the start of the day the creative practitioners would often discuss (and seek) ideas relating to what they would be doing that day, rather than solely that lesson. The impression given was that time was there to serve them collectively, rather than rule them – the task or project at hand would take as long as it took, if they needed to pick it up next session they could and would modify their plans accordingly – realising that some elements could take longer and others a shorter amount of time and that it was where they were heading to that was important (Thomson & Hall, 2014). This almost intuitive awareness and attention given to the flow and rhythm of the sessions and the children's immersion in the

work being carried out resonate with ideas and observations proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1997). Creative practitioners set expectations for "flow" allowing the children to become more aware of the collective endeavour and their involvement within it rather than the timings of each lesson.

Body language – the creative practitioners walked amongst, crouched down, sat at the same level – a sense of 'in amongst' children

There were distinctive practices in terms of the creative practitioners' positioning, mobility, and use of the space within the school when working with the children. Frequently the creative practitioners would walk amongst the children as they talked to them, whether addressing them as a whole class or talking with individual groups. Hall and Thomson refer to the arc of a creative practitioner as they move about a classroom, sometimes conversing with the whole class, but also patrolling to ensure that everyone is included and involved in the overall direction of the session (Hall & Thomson, 2017). If the creative practitioners were stationary when talking to the whole class, they tended to either sit more informally on a side unit or sit almost amongst the children at an equitable eye level, for example on the edge of the low stage in the hall. This engendered an equal sense of discourse relationship and mutual respect whilst also engendering in the children a sense of ease and a greater willingness to respond (Galton, 2008; Alexander, 2007; Hall & Thomson, 2017).

The creative practitioners used their bodies in concert with their more reciprocal interactions. When talking with smaller groups the creative practitioners would usually sit at the table for a while, listening and talking or sometimes demonstrating a making technique. At other times they would lean in over the table in order to fully be part of a conversation. This sitting amongst, listening, sometimes joining in the conversation had a casual, unobtrusive quality and the children would, if needed, ask for technical help or explain what they were trying to do, and at other times would talk anecdotally, less conscious of the creative practitioner as an adult in an authoritative role.

Artists embodied an accessibility and closeness to the children rather than taking the position of a distant expert. One of the creative practitioners, when working with individual children, would crouch down or kneel to talk with individual children at their eye level, often for some time. Comber and Hayes refer to this embodied pedagogical move of 'turning around' and stopping to listen to individual children's offered thoughts, and paying attention to these small interactions, as opening opportunities for learning both for the teacher and the students (Comber & Hayes, 2022). The creative practitioners' focus on the individuals' speaking was complete and their listening undistracted – this could be seen in their stillness and a leaning in of positioning − one of full attention.

Other creative practitioners encouraged and embodied moments of calm reflection. One practitioner, at the end of each day, would invite the children to join in a contemplative exercise. He would play the guitar and sing a song which had become the song for the project, as they wrote their thoughts from the day on post-it notes, and then would silently go up and stick them onto his guitar or jacket and sit back down. There was a flow and a reflective silence as he sang − both actions and atmospheres interwoven with the other. Franks & Jewitt talk of the physical action of teachers and learners − socially organised persons, as a potentially powerful mode of realising meaning in classrooms, seeing learning as happening when people act *in* and *on* the world and see physical action and verbal (or visual) modes of making meaning as integral and interactive (Franks & Jewitt, 2001). Another of the creative practitioners would play a small kalimba quietly as she asked the children to have a contemplative 'walk of wonder' around the room, as they walked quietly until their thoughts had surfaced and become clear in their heads and then they could sit down. Here again there was a contemplative air to the exercise, one without words where the embodied actions of the children and creative practitioner were reflective of the other. The creative practitioners' actions and words were congruent, both promoting meditative reflection.

The creative practitioners' and children's use of the physical classroom space and wider school was also noteworthy. The classrooms often had more of a workshop feel to them where children moved about the room with purpose and a degree of trust. Thomson and Hall refer to this greater level of mobility, both within the classroom and the wider school context (Thomson & Hall, 2014). Within this physically freer environment the children were autonomous and productive and often helpful to each other. The freer flow of bodies also manifest and contributed to the sense of flow and productivity in the sessions.

The creative practitioners were keen to use other areas of the school if they provided something in practical terms that the classroom did not. Such places included the frequent use of the hall, the use of the playground on the roof, the use of the neighbouring cathedral and the use of the stairwell and atrium/entrance area. The exodus of the children from the classroom into these other spaces was not seen as anything special or unusual – just a sensible and practical necessity, illustrating a natural awareness amongst the creative practitioners that the children's own desks were only one of many possible and useful places of learning. When in the hall for example, the children often worked in groups, and the openness of the space gave the opportunity to move freely and to negotiate and collaborate more easily – there was a sense of flow and space to move around in and interact with each other which would have been hindered or not possible had they been confined to sitting at their desks. The conversations were lively and concerned fully with the problem-solving at hand with all children within each group offering ideas and responding to each other. This greater opportunity for movement and collaboration was provided by a less restrained physical learning space and initiated an environment where collective 'interthinking' and peer-to-peer dialogue was facilitated (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). The children worked together, collaboratively and 'on task' without showing any urge towards disruptive or disengaged behaviour. They seemed to relish the greater trust and responsibility afforded them. Even in Jane's classroom, where she worried that certain children may have been deliberately spending too long on their reflective walking to provide time for thoughts to

emerge, there was no sign of misbehaviour, though as the teacher she felt the underlying urge to hurry along to the next part of the lesson.

Questioning – with a real interest in what the children were saying – not merely for 'right or wrong', ideas and answers are included and built on

The creative practitioners' discourse patterns, when it came to questioning and listening to the children, were distinctive both in terms of style and approach, elaborated in the following section.

Just 'say what you're thinking', 'it isn't a test' – not directing children towards predetermined answers

At times of addressing the whole class, when the creative practitioners asked a question, they would often give reassurance, saying to those giving a tentative reply that they should just 'say what they were thinking', and that 'it isn't a test'. They would also reassure them that it was 'ok to be wrong' stemming from a genuine wish to know what the children were thinking. This in itself was of importance to the creative practitioner – they were interested in the thinking, the understanding, and the learning of the child rather than their ability to state a 'correct' answer. Nystrand *et al* describe these questions as 'authentic questions' (questions for which the teacher has not prespecified or implied a particular answer) and that they signal to the students the creative practitioners' interest in what they think and know and not just whether they can report what someone else thinks or says (Nystrand *et al*, 1997). If a child did suggest an impractical or unusual answer, it wouldn't be dismissed or ignored, but would be explored and expanded upon and understood in the fullness of its context.

Mercer and Howe's research on teacher and student interactions describe episodes where questions are used in a different way than usual, where students come to believe that their views are valued contributions to such discussions and would not simply be judged as right or wrong depending on whether or not they had guessed what was in the teacher's mind, (Mercer & Howe, 2012). There

were multiple examples of this practice in my video transcripts. One creative practitioner used phrases such as 'that's an interesting take on it' before asking for further reasoning from that individual and suggestions from other children, often letting the suggestions from quite a few come to the surface as they collectively came closer to a shared view to a particular question. This time of offering and exploring answers didn't feel so much as a test of 'right or wrong' as more of a collective search for meaning, relevance or the truth. While I didn't observe the teachers at work by themselves it is likely that these were not the usual interaction patterns in the classrooms.

The artists' questioning is congruent with the literatures on dialogic teaching as opposed to more didactic approaches. Gallas research on classroom discourse reflects on the impact teacher response has on facilitating learning. She talks of the potential for interaction to reshape the meaning of preceding utterances, calling this 'interactional contingency' and discusses the notion of 'sequentially deleting' a student's contribution by ignoring it, brushing over it or not acknowledging a response. She goes on to talk of traditional classrooms where teachers tend to 'stick to the script' juxta positioning them with inquiry classrooms where there is an interactional space for students to consider and think about the interactions and the teacher to mull over apparent departures, asking themselves how these unexpected statements could become a tool for thinking and learning. This careful interactional negotiation can 'sequentially construct' unexpected or confusing student responses as contributions which are potentially leading somewhere important (Gallas, 1995; Rymes 1990).

There were frequent occasions when these times of questioning between the creative practitioner and the class to elicit the children's ideas became extended dialogic spells where the children took a sustained and active role in discussing ideas (Nystrand *et al*, 1997). The children shared and built on each other's thoughts and suggestions – realising that their individual thoughts were of relevance and that the questioning was authentic and stemmed from a genuine wish to hear what each of them were thinking. These episodes of extended dialogue gave opportunity for children to articulate and expand on their

thoughts with the support of the creative practitioner and the other children, providing them with the opportunity to enter a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Mercer and Littleton, 2007). On several occasions, when observing different creative practitioners, it became apparent that the children's construction of their own knowledge was growing as they were supported by a process of gentle scaffolding to a place of greater understanding. Another notable factor was the absence of the creative practitioner's giving evaluative feedback i.e. any sign of 'that's right' or 'that's wrong' when they asked a question, again signalling a real interest in what the child was saying without judgement, rather than whether they were simply saying what the child knew the adult wanted them to say. During these times questions and answers or reflections came from the adult or child irrespectively, there was a sense of equal participation in the dialogue without a sense of hierarchy – the conversation was attentive and evolving as ideas were considered and added to.

Wait time – time to think

Another feature of the creative practitioner's mode of questioning included them waiting patiently and being quite comfortable with pauses and silence during conversation as the children thought about what had just been asked. When questions were asked the children were neither hurried nor rescued – the expectation and implication was that it was necessary for the one being asked to take some time to think through their own thoughts in order to come up with a well-considered answer or response. Rymes and Gallas both describe how, in non-traditional classrooms, silence is interpreted as thinking time and they talk of the importance of being ready to wait through those silences or unexpected answers to discover what the students know that their teachers could never have predicted. Gallas notes that waiting through silence can give students who ordinarily do not contribute a chance to become participants (Rymes, 2009; Gallas, 1995). Rymes later describes silence as sometimes the most dramatic feature of an interaction. She and other researchers note that both sociocultural theory and research on classroom interaction confirm that waiting, allowing

students to think through a question or learning task asked by a teacher or peer, raises the level of learning in the classroom, though she goes on to acknowledge that even though these silences are so important to student learning, for many teachers they do not come naturally due to interactional pressures and norms not to wait (Rymes, 2009: Rowe, 1986; Owocki & Goodman, 2002).

Creative practitioners saw silence and "wait time" as highly productive and potentially necessary for new ideas to emerge. One creative practitioner described 'the fog' as a state of mind the children needed to enter into in order for them to really search for meaning and come up with their own ideas or understanding – a state which may not feel comfortable but from which they shouldn't be rescued with easy or predictable answers or ready-made solutions. They were not alone in this view. Galton describes the process of creative practitioners deliberately setting up situations primarily designed to engineer cognitive conflict so that children are forced to 'think outside of the box' (Galton, 2008). Other researchers describe the effect of having this opportunity to debate and discuss their thinking as bringing the learner into the heart of both the teaching and learning process as a co-participant (Emilia, 1996), and Bruner (1996) argues the principle that, in relation to metacognition, collaborative learning and the nature of the human mind – children must think for themselves before they can truly understand, stating the importance of teaching providing children with the linguistic opportunities and encounters to do so (Bruner, 1996).

Another effect of the tendency of creative practitioners to afford children greater wait time and thinking time was the effect it had on the pace and rhythm of the lessons. The atmosphere created was one of reflection with the encouragement to children to offer thoughts and ideas. Thomson and Hall in their research talk about this different rhythm and refer to the 'calm and focused' atmosphere generated in certain lessons within art departments and the effect this has on attention and behaviour also referring to this deep structure of recognition, negotiation and conversation (Thomson & Hall, 2021). The different rhythm – one of listening and a gentle two-way conversation, of slowing the pace, of

allowing ideas and reflections however tentative to surface was a common element in all the creative practitioners' ways of working.

Children instigating questions

It was not unusual for the creative practitioners to have conversations with the children about their own creative practice. When doing so the practitioners invited and encouraged the children to ask them questions – they were happy for the children to ask whatever they liked. Explanations involved creative practitioners describing their making process and sometimes demonstrating a technique used or showing a film of the process of making. The children would be talked to much as an adult would, in relation to the technical language used during these explanations. Thomson and Hall refer to this use of professional and technical language by creative practitioners during conversation as a key feature (a signature pedagogy) of their classroom discourse (Thomson & Hall, 2014). Such conversations were ones in which both teachers and children could and did ask questions which arose within them (Galton, 2008).

Asking questions was seen as desirable behaviour to be encouraged. The creative practitioners often complimented particular questions, enjoying the children's interest and deepening understanding. Apparently simple questions asked by the children such as 'why is iron dark?' then prompted a response from the creative practitioner encompassing material surface properties and its consequent effect on light reflection. As the conversations progressed the children's questions became increasingly technical and in-depth having allowed their natural curiosity and fascination to build, a consequence of the creative practitioners' approach of seeing the children as artists within their own right (Thomson & Hall, 2014). This encouragement and space for the children to ask the creative practitioners questions in conversation was reflected elsewhere, where the atmosphere became one of shared questioning and exploration with a sense of 'finding things out together', engendering a wider sense of a shared community of learning. Galton and Rymes both note research suggesting that in traditional/default

classrooms teachers ask almost all of the questions whereas in an inquiry classroom, students ask many of the questions and do much of the exploratory talk (Rymes, 2009; Galton, 2008). Myhill notes the scarcity of opportunity for children to ask questions in most classrooms where teachers dominate much of the discourse and the majority of questions are of a factual nature rather than a speculative, procedural or process-related nature (Myhill, 2006).

Permission to ask questions was an important way in which practitioners made information available to children. Galton observes that the children were consistently encouraged to pose questions when working with creative practitioners and were given the opportunity to consider problems and potential solutions together (Galton, 2008). The opportunity afforded the children to ask questions of their own making, according to their own personal curiosity and in relation to the creative practitioners' description of practice, engendered in the children a greater sense of agency and ownership in their learning. They were feeding their desire to learn and acquire information and understanding rather than passively absorbing (or not) information they hadn't sought to find out themselves.

The children's questioning was a signal to creative practitioners that information was highly likely to be meaningful and relevant to them. Rather than provide all of the information up front, information was guided by the practice – learning as it was needed – but also by children's curiosity. Questions arose spontaneously and were welcomed and taken seriously, the creative practitioners responding to a genuine desire on the children's part for information the children deemed relevant and of interest – information which was potentially more likely to build on and connect with their pre-existing and growing knowledge and understanding.

This questioning practice as a means of learning is described by Jeffrey, Woods and Craft in their research considering the main features of creative teaching and learning (Jeffrey & Woods, 2009; and Jeffrey & Craft, 2010). Roche describes seeing her students as significant and unique human beings who shared with her a capacity to question and enjoy active participation (Roche 2011), and Emilia

describes the effect of children being encouraged to pose questions and discuss their thinking as central in relation to becoming a co-participant in their learning (Emilia, 1996). These research findings chime with and affirm my research.

Interthinking – asking each other questions/intra-group dialogue

Children did not just talk to the artists but also with each other. Groups of children working together was a common way of interacting when the creative practitioners were working with the children in their respective schools. By and large when working in these groups the children had a collaborative and project focused task to work on together − a task interconnected with the whole class endeavour. This form of working in groups was not simply a matter of sitting together as a group but still working relatively individually, as is sometimes the case when children are asked to work in groups. These collective tasks contained within them a considerable degree of autonomy and decision making and as such demanded a high degree of child-to-child talk. Littleton and Mercer suggest that the ability to think creatively and productively together using spoken language is one of the defining characteristics of our species, and expands on learning and problem solving being both a social and highly communicative processes (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). The social talk characteristic was frequently evidenced during the three projects I observed. There was a high frequency of dialogue between the children − creating ideas, tackling problems collectively and asking each other questions was commonplace.

Littleton and Mercer describe three types of talk in their observation of talk when working in groups – *disputational talk* – characterised by only following own ideas, high frequency of disagreement, competitive rather than collaborative working; *cumulative talk* – simply accepting and agreeing with what others say; and *exploratory talk* – where everyone in the group engages critically but constructively with each other's ideas (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). The most common talk apparent when the children were working in groups collectively was *exploratory* talk – they frequently showed a critical but constructive

engagement with each other's ideas; self-initiated questions were bounced back and forth between them naturally as they sought explanation and clarification from each other; and they would collectively offer suggestions as to how to go about the task at hand.

Asking how an activity felt (here-and-now) – experience and connection with learning

Several of the creative practitioners asked the pupils about how an activity or exercise had felt, and what they had been thinking or feeling whilst they did it. For example, in one class the children had been asked to scrunch up and then smooth out a piece of A3 paper and draw a line following the contours of the crumpled paper from one edge to the other. Afterwards the creative practitioner asked how it had 'felt' to do that. The children described it as fun, random, uncertain, confusing – and the creative practitioner talked about the importance of being able to be confused or uncertain in order to be able to create something themselves and of themselves. One child, unprompted, made the connection between their uncertain lines across the paper and the uncertain journeys of the people they were studying in history.

Hall and Thomson refer to the often-unacknowledged value of the present in learning, where ideas are being formed and events are freshly experienced rather than simply remembered (Hall & Thomson, 2016). The acknowledgement of how the learning feels and how the children are encountering the learning in the present creates a sense of being engaged and rooted in the learning there and then, rather than (as is often the case in 'default pedagogies') being required to remember/memorise what has been learnt in the past or heading for a future learning target/milestone.

Craft *at al* (2014) talk about three characteristics emerging in a pedagogy for creativity – a central one being co-construction between and with children, involving real life contexts where dialogue is valued and reflection shared, and talk of a child-sensitive curriculum as a dynamic internal framework, personally

relevant rather than an external obligatory one (Craft, Cremin, Hay & Clark, 2014). The children's engagement with the learning in the here and now, in this dynamic internal framework, enabled children a personal connection with their experiences and pre-existing knowledge, not only from within school but from their experiences beyond school, allowing a greater inclusivity for many children. Mercer (1995, 2000) refers to the importance of connections between the already known and the new in order to provide learning contexts in which earlier experiences provide the foundations for making sense of later ones. These moments and opportunities of connection are characteristically recognised by creative practitioners, who provide time to reflect on them and stay in the moment in order for new learning and connections to take root, be felt and consolidated (Hall & Thomson, 2016).

Questioning - enabling children to input own ideas

When each creative practitioner talked about their approach to working with others, they all talked emphatically about the importance of hearing and including the children's own ideas into the shape of the learning or project at hand. They were adamant that they did not want to merely impose their plan on the children, and that the two-way process of asking and inviting questions was essential. They understood that for some children volunteering their own ideas and thoughts could be daunting and that it was part of their role to be aware of this and to give the time, space and confidence for these ideas to emerge. They also saw the children as inherently capable and as such invited and gave the space and opportunity for all the children to share their ideas and would respond to all ideas offered (Thomson & Hall, 2014). This practice is supported by the literatures. For example Craft *et al* talk of the development of children's ideas and ownership facilitated by strong trust and inclusion and describe children as both capable and vulnerable (Craft, Cremin, Hay & Clark, 2014). Profiling learner agency – providing opportunities for children to make their own choices and initiate their own activity is one of the key features of pedagogical practice which fosters creative thinking, argue Cremin, Burnard and Craft (2006) who describe

children being jointly involved in determining the direction of their work. This practice was common place amongst the creative practitioners.

Listening acutely – a genuine interest; a 'seeing'/recognition of the child as a capable individual; children's ideas and thoughts of value and importance.

Listening and questioning are closely, though not intrinsically, interrelated elements of classroom talk. The creative practitioners in all three schools listened to the children's ideas, thoughts and answers with an attentiveness and sense of individual focus on the child speaking that was distinctly noticeable. Their attention was direct, alert and undistracted. They would typically stop still and listen, turning towards and looking directly at the child speaking, sometimes leaning in, or crouching down to the child's level. There was often a stillness between both the creative practitioner and child, one of reciprocal focus and attentive listening. The effect of which was that any child speaking, however tentatively, appeared to feel seen and included even within the collective throng of the classroom. This, in turn, seemed to engender a sense of confidence in that child, both in themselves and in their ideas, often shown by their willingness to then proceed independently on their own or to join in with a group. Hall and Thomson (2017) refer to this careful listening and note the effect on students' behaviour and motivation, engendering a sense of both feeling respected and being respectful (Hall & Thomson, 2017).

Artists listened to ideas with patience and without hurry, interested in the thoughts or answers the children gave. There were times when, if a child wasn't sure, the creative practitioner would wait in companiable silence with the child as they thought, allowing their thoughts to clarify and come to the surface before saying them out loud.

These incidental silences had the effect of slowing the pace of conversation down and allowing room and permission for more considered thinking and reflection by the children and adults. This different pace and acceptance of silence gave the indication that the creative practitioners were not steering

children towards set or pre-determined answers but were genuinely interested in their individual ideas, aware of their value in contributing to the direction of the learning and the conversation. Galton (2008) suggests that if pupils are to take risks with their learning they need time and space to explore and work out their ideas initially. His research considers creative practitioners as being more comfortable with silence and a degree of ambiguity, and their importance in developing 'flexibility of mind' and 'cognitive challenge' (Galton, 2008). This pattern of dialogue seemed to foster an awareness amongst the children that the creative practitioners were not listening out for 'the correct answer' and this allowed for a different and more conversational form of dialogue – one where volunteered answers and thoughts were not being 'judged' but were essential in order for them to explore their own understanding. Other researchers (Nystrand, *et al* 1997) have been particularly interested in classroom dialogue where students take an active and sustained part in discussing ideas referred to as 'dialogic spells' and identified strategies which encouraged these moments, amongst which were actively welcoming students' ideas and asking questions that did not have predetermined answers. The creative practitioners demonstrated an acute awareness that in order for children to be willing and confident in contributing their ideas they needed to do so in an environment where those ideas would be listened to, in and of themselves. My research set out to study how creative practitioners' use of talk created an environment for learning yet within the process of analysing the film footage and my field notes it became clear that the nature of their listening was pivotal in providing such an environment.

At other times, when the classes were making or exploring something as groups, the creative practitioner would sit casually at a table amongst the children or hover next to a group, listening to what they were doing and saying, interested in how they had arrived at their ideas and decisions, never suggesting their own ideas before they had listened for a while first.

Listening is also showing that you have heard. Another noticeable feature of the creative practitioners' dialogic practice was the way in which they frequently interwove the children's answers or thoughts into their ongoing conversation, not glossing over or paying short attention to them but taking note and adding them into their explanations. Such acknowledgement is important. Myhill and Warren note that children's responses often fail to be followed up on, largely due to the desire to stick closely to the lesson objectives and keep a rapid pace to the lesson, making the agenda primarily a teaching agenda rather than a learning agenda (Myhill & Warren, 2005). This, they argue, fails to utilise talk in itself to promote learning and support higher mental processes. The practice by the creative practitioners, of incorporating the children's ideas and thoughts into their conversation (referred to by Nystrand as 'uptake'), often seemed to result in the children's contributions gaining a level of depth and unexpected empathy and understanding. Nystrand and Alexander note that there is little point in framing well-conceived questions and giving children ample wait time if their answers fail to be engaged with (c,f, Nystrand, 1997; Alexander, 2007).

Alexander points out that if we want children to talk to learn, as well as to learn to talk, what they say probably matters more than what teachers say (Alexander 2007). But what children said mattered in the three projects I observed. If, in individual conversations with a creative practitioner, a child said something which was useful to the rest of the class, the creative practitioner would stop everybody and repeat it to the whole class, such was its interest and importance.

The close attention to listening by the creative practitioners gave a weight and sense of value to each child's ideas and thoughts. The encouragement and reassurance given to the children to express their ideas and thoughts engendered a sense of safety, of being seen and valued as an individual, as well as creating a climate where ideas were genuinely perceived as being of value and a contribution to the collective thinking and learning of the classroom.

Encouraging play, exploration, experimentation, empathy, abstraction, embodiment and making and doing – enabling children to engage with their learning by means other than solely writing

The creative practitioners encouraged the children **to experiment** in what they were attempting to do and to be comfortable with making mistakes. The children were reassured that something may not work the first time but that that was a valuable and necessary stage in a learning and making process. The expectation was that several 'goes' would be needed, and this was factored into their planning of what they would be doing with the children. Thomson and Hall refer to this process of tinkering, experimenting and generating ideas and possibilities stating that it can be profoundly serious in intent and effect (Thomson & Hall, 2014). The either spoken or unspoken assumption that the children may need several attempts at something was an inherent element of the creative practitioners' way of working and gave the children greater permission and opportunity to take risks. Zosh *et al* refer to the iterative process of trying out and exploring ideas as allowing children an encouraging safe space which holds greater opportunity to hypothesise and explore their unknowns (Zosh, J. M., Hopkins, E. J., Jensen, H., Liu, C., Neale, D., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Solis, S. L., & Whitebread, D. 2017).

The creative practitioners **encouraged play**, not as a recreational pastime but as part of the working out process, a means of realising ideas and generating new possibilities. Craft refers to this as *possibility thinking*, where play is an essential stage in the creative process – the serious, highly engaged, extended exploration of developing and combining ideas, imagining situations and generating and solving diverse problems (Craft, 2014). This awareness of the role of play in formulating ideas was such that on occasion children were encouraged to continue playing with the materials until their ideas formed. They were working out their ideas, their thoughts were forming by physical and practical means, and this was an essential and valuable avenue for their learning to develop and come into being (Hall & Thomson, 2017).

Sahlberg & Doyle suggest that play, discovery and experimentation are the natural language of childhood learning but note that the current direction of travel in many educational systems is such that it is being systematically removed from schooling worldwide (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2022). This was not the case in these classrooms when creative practitioners were present.

During these times of playing as a means of working out ideas when they were in groups, there was a high degree of exploratory talk between the children. These times of peer-to-peer talk, where they suggested ideas to each other, raised different ideas, reasoned together, and worked out problems collectively were an important element of the project. The children's talk was purposeful and energetic yet also highly collaborative as their ideas interconnected. Littleton and Mercer note the value of these conceptual spaces of group deliberation where a range of relevant ideas are considered (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). They call this interthinking and evidence the considerable benefit interthinking brings to learning; a form of thinking which happens when children collectively and creatively use talk to solve problems and make joint sense of the world.

Collaborative talk and action establish a vital link between the development of children's language in social interaction and their development of cognition, noting how thinking collectively provides a template for thinking alone (Vygotsky, 1981; Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Creative practitioners were aware that the social dimension to learning was instrumental in the developing, and the realising of ideas was an innate part of their way of working – they naturally provided opportunities for the children to collaborate, work ideas out in groups and explore their thinking collectively.

The creative practitioners had their own distinctive ways of approaching the subject matter or curriculum area being taught and explored, whether it was history, geography or literacy focused. They each had a way of introducing their own ways of knowing and understanding which often wasn't simply or solely word bound. Words were used but the children were given the opportunity to focus on other ways of understanding and engaging with their learning.

Some of their approaches involved a strong element of developing **empathy and empathetic feeling** Their ways of working were combined with enabling an embodiment of the learning. One creative practitioner encouraged the children to engage in the subject matter through imagining the lives of those they were learning about through symbolic activities which developed their understanding. Children's learning was that of action and experience and to a greater or lesser extent putting themselves 'in the shoes' of those they were learning about. Another example involved the children walking to the nearby beach where those they were studying in history would have arrived in the 1840's. The children walked on the beach barefoot, felt the sand and stones beneath their feet, the cold fresh wind against their face and breathed in the smells of the seashore. This way of relating and, to some small extent, experiencing some of those physical sensations were haptic ways of knowing – involving children's feelings, their bodies and their tacit understandings. This experience of learning, where the mind and body are not considered as separate entities is described by Franks, and Shapiro and Stoltz, they refer to not thinking of bodies without minds or minds without bodies, but rather a holistic view of bodily presence indivisible from thinking and feeling (Franks, 2015; Shapiro & Stoltz, 2019).

Shapiro and Stoltz refer to embodied cognition where the mind, body and environment are integrated in cognitive processing. They describe embodied cognition as involving synchronous cycles of activity and the dynamic balance of support which emerges from interactions with the environment (Shapiro & Stoltz, 2019). Franks refers to such meaning-making as intimately connected processes that on the one hand consist of communicating with others and on the other involve processes of internalisation – whereby we make sense of the world to and for ourselves (Franks, 2015). Franks and Jewitt talk of action and the direct, reciprocal and developmental relationship between activity on the realm of social interaction and the realm of the inner mental activity of individuals (Franks & Jewitt, 2001). Creative practitioners all used this form of learning – and took it for granted that this is how learning was – that learning wasn't solely an internal, sedentary, solitary endeavour but one in which the

children were connected to each other and their environment and so were given rich and meaningful opportunities to interact with both.

The use of abstraction and symbolism was employed in a serious and thoughtful manner and had the effect of helping the children form strong emotional and cognitive links with their learning. On one occasion the children were encouraged to write words on the stones in coloured chalk noting what the people arriving may have left behind and what they may have been feeling as they arrived, and then symbolically, in unison, throw these pebbles into the sea. Again, the combination of action, their environment and physical engagement as well as the use of symbolism enhanced and extended the children's connection with their learning. These ways of engaging with and representing their deepening understanding of the subject matter involved modes of representation other than the frequently used default mode of the written, yet their learning was often profound and in depth, demonstrating instances of ZPD and meaningful examples of scaffolding.

Learning through physically making was also an approach adopted naturally by all the practitioners. They would talk with the children about how ideas and thoughts could be expressed by means other than words and would ask the children to consider how an image, a sculpture or an abstract form could communicate an idea. The conversation would then become far more exploratory as the children considered out loud how an idea and an image or a physical form could be combined to communicate rather than via their more familiar mode of written word. One practitioner had tasked the children with putting together an 'encyclopaedia' where text, images, QR codes to video clips and interviews were contained within the expansive books. Within the scholarly literatures this learning is often referred to as multimodal. For example Kress refers to multimodal ways of communicating ideas and the differing yet combined potential of image and text communicating meaning (Kress, 2009). He also notes the prevalence of the perceived power and overriding approval of the written word regardless of which means of communication may be most

effective, attributing this to traditional notions of the power and legitimacy of the written word (Kress, 2009). In these projects, multimodal ways of knowing and understanding, of allowing the children to connect with their learning in often very different ways to traditional written classroom practice, not only tended to be inclusive of each child, but also often had an absorbing and tangible sense of flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1998). This could, in part be attributed to learning in a physical, active embodied manner and engaging in periods of making, experimenting, and collectively exploring their ideas.

How the creative practitioners spoke and what they focused on led to more equal discourse relationships and the sense of an inclusive collective endeavour.

Sense of inclusion, togetherness and collective endeavour – the children active, valued and included – not passive and 'done to'

The sense of collective endeavour engendered by the creative practitioners, both explicitly and implicitly, was perhaps the most deep-rooted element of their talk and work with the children. This whole-class sense of a shared purpose meant that the social process of creating or approaching their learning together was constantly at play (Hall & Thomson, 2016).

Sometimes the creative practitioners talked to the class of being on a 'shared journey', of collectively exploring and working together. They would frequently talk of journeying together, asking the children at intervals how they were, as though they were fellow travellers. The unspoken assumption was that all could take part and actively contribute regardless of ability and each child could find their own 'in'. Because there was no desire or attempt by the creative practitioners to individuate or introduce a sense of competition, at no point did a child experience a sense of feeling excluded (c.f. Hall &Thomson, 2016). Often there was a collective sense of solving something together and of supporting each other along the way – a sense of 'in it together'. There was a collective attention to the project or task at hand – by adults and children alike – and

accompanying that, a sense of collective thought and shared dialogue (see Craft, 2015).

The sense of collective endeavour was a result of the combination of features previously discussed – the way in which the creative practitioners opened up the conversation at the start of the lesson in a gentle, welcoming manner – starting in a dialogic manner from the outset; their authentic questioning stemming from a real interest in what the children were saying – not merely searching for 'right or wrong' answers, inviting ideas and thoughts to be shared, included and built on, creating accessible opportunities for individual and collective learning; their highly distinguishable way of listening attentively and acutely and the effect this had on 'seeing' each individual child and making them feel valued and included; and the children's awareness that they were allowed to explore their ideas and problem solve through play, experimentation and trying things out and that they would be representing their learning by various means often in an actively participatory and collective manner. All of these features had the effect of helping the children feel safe, seen, valued and included in the collective activity of their work with the creative practitioners – all instrumental in engendering a sense of collective endeavour and shared journey.

The positioning and movement of the creative practitioners within the classroom also engendered a more equal discourse relationship, with the creative practitioner often sitting or walking amongst the children.

Another manner in which the creative practitioners engendered a different power dynamic with the children was by talking about their own work and creative approaches. This allowed them to be individuals of interest and reality beyond the role of 'teacher', often engendering a level of respect, understanding and interest in the children, evidenced by their reciprocal conversations. The creative practitioners shared with the children the fact that they sometimes found elements of their work difficult and talked about why they are so drawn to their chosen practice, again relating to the children as interested equals.

This different power dynamic was often a noticeable feature of the time the creative practitioner spent with the children. Behaviour management was rarely an issue, due to the inclusive nature of the approach to the task at hand, the use of attentive listening and the commitment amongst the children to the collective endeavour. Muhonen *et al's* research considers the correlation between children's positive relationships with their adults in an educational setting and the quality of educational discourse and effectiveness of the learning dialogue (Muhonen, Pakarinen, Rasku-Puttonen & Lerkkanen, 2022).

The sense of collective endeavour extended to the explanation and understanding that the collective work they were doing together was in every sense a collective effort and that in essence everything they did or made also belonged to each other. This highly social way of working together towards a shared purpose resulted not only in a high level of co-working, collective talk and collective thought, but also gave the children a sense of safety and reassurance and, with it, an inner confidence.

The creative practitioners seemed to hold within them an attention to, and a respect for, each individual child with an accompanying determination to include them in the collective learning, ensuring that each child knew they were capable, included and valued.

The creative practitioners adopted an approach to learning with the teachers and children which enabled an environment and way of working with the children where the four pillars of learning identified by UNESCO (Delours, 1996 pp 86- 95) – *learning to know*, *learning to do*; *learning to be* and *learning to live together* – were constantly and inextricably interwoven. Schools tend to focus predominantly on the first of these two pillars, that of *learning to know* and *learning to do,* yet the creative practitioners, without exception, focused equally, if not to a greater extent, on the latter two – *learning to be* and *learning to live together*.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This work set out to explore and gain a greater depth of understanding into how creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning when working in schools. The research's significance lies in its detailed exploration of creative practitioner dialogue within a learning context.

In this chapter I summarise the key findings, contributions to knowledge and implications, and consider further research as well as my own reflections on my personal learning.

Summary of key findings

My research asked the question 'How do creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning?

My research has shown that the creative practitioners I observed initiated and engaged in distinctive dialogic patterns when working with children. The creative practitioners used talk to generate a climate of trust and safety from the lesson outset by starting their days with the children in an interested conversational manner. This mode of showing interest and care established a sense of symmetrical rather than asymmetrical interaction establishing an atmosphere of safety and inclusion. These initial conversations also served as elaborative opportunities to collectively remember where they were in their project or what stage they had reached in their work together, engendering a sense that they could remember together, remind each other, and share their ideas (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). In addition to these reoccurring preliminary conversations the creative practitioners had a common practice of positioning themselves in amongst, or at a more equitable eye level with the children when talking, whether talking to the whole class or working with individual children or small groups.

The research clearly identified the nature of questioning adopted by the creative practitioners as shaped by a real and genuine interest and purpose in hearing the children's ideas and thoughts. Phrases such as *'say what you're thinking'* and *'it isn't a test'* suggested an interest in the thinking of the child rather than an unyielding steering towards prespecified answers. These authentic questioning episodes where learning and understanding were explored openly and without a sense of right or wrong resonate with the sense of talk for learning rather than purely talk for teaching (Nystrand, 1997; Myhill, 2006). The willingness to allow the children time to think when questions were asked, with the children being neither hurried nor rescued, raised the level of learning and cognitive challenge within the classrooms. Children were given time to grapple with their thoughts and explain their emerging understandings without the pressure of having to give rapid responses or instantly correct answers. Alongside this came a higher occurrence of purposeful group work providing frequent opportunities for exploratory talk between the children and the opportunity for interthinking (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). The talk consisted of a critical but constructive engagement with each other's ideas as frequent, self-initiated questions were bounced back and forth. They sought explanation and clarification from each other and offered suggestions as to how to approach the task or problem at hand, engendering within them a strong sense of engagement and active inclusion in their and each other's learning.

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of creative practitioner talk pinpointed by the research was the distinctive nature of their listening. Their direct, alert, and undistracted attention when listening to the children's ideas and thoughts was acute and attentive, creating a stillness and sense of reciprocal focus between the creative practitioner and child. The effect engendered a sense of being seen and heard and the children's ideas having a true individual value, causing a greater internal confidence and a subsequent willingness to take part and actively engage in the learning process. Again, the nature of the listening raised the level of learning in the classroom by allowing time for

thoughts and reasoning to emerge, whilst also providing a space for children who rarely spoke in the classroom to contribute (Rymes, 2009).

My analysis showed that the creative practitioners involved in the research encouraged the children to engage in multimodal means of engaging with and communicating their learning providing, rich ground for inter-pupil talk, and the requirement to communicate their ideas and understanding by other means than the standard written word (Kress, 2009). This pointed to an awareness amongst the creative practitioners that writing was only one form of communicating learning and by no means the most appropriate in every situation. The use of abstraction and symbolism was used in a serious and thoughtful manner and had the effect of helping the children form strong emotional and cognitive links with their learning. Also identified in the analysis was the creative practitioners' awareness that children would need to explore their ideas through moments of experimentation and play in order to allow ideas to surface. The combination of action, dialogue, the environment and physical engagement as well as the use of symbolism enhanced and extended the children's learning, yielding learning and dialogue that was often profound and in depth.

Finally, my analysis shows that the creative practitioners developed through their talk, a tangible sense of collective endeavour, and I argue, an environment where every child felt valued and integral to the purpose and direction of the learning. This whole-class sense of a shared purpose meant that the social process of creating or approaching their learning together was constantly at play (Hall and Thomson, 2016). The collective sense of solving something together and of supporting each other along the way – a sense of 'in it together' engendered a collective attention to the project or task at hand, by adults and children alike, and an accompanying collective thinking, confidence and shared dialogue (Craft, 2015).

Contribution to knowledge

The findings of my research make a contribution to both the fields of dialogic teaching and the fields of creative practitioner pedagogy.

1) The creative practitioners I observed effectively used a dialogic approach when working with children. Extensive prior research has demonstrated the considerable educational value of effective dialogic teaching in developing children's understanding and cognitive challenge and in engaging them as active participants in their own learning. However this research has been focused solely on teachers' dialogue within the classroom. My research has applied a similar analysis of discourse to the dialogue of creative practitioners as they work with children. By taking this approach I have shown that the creative practitioners I observed skilfully adopted a dialogic approach in their work creating a rich and inclusive learning environment with the effect of extending children's learning, engagement and sense of inclusion.

2) The research adds to literatures on creative practitioner pedagogical practice by providing a specific focus on talk. The focus on talk within this professional group has not been researched in any significant depth prior to this research and adds to our understanding on why creative practitioner practice in schools can have an educational impact often exceeding teacher expectation. An unexpected finding surfaced during the research analysis centred around the nature of the listening shown by each creative practitioner – the research had set out to explore and investigate talk, yet the significance of the intensive and focused listening to the children had a profound effect on their willingness to search for and volunteer ideas and thoughts and to engage confidently and willingly in their learning.

This research enquiry has limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results. The number of creative practitioners studied was very small *(N=5)* when considering the number of creative practitioners who have and continue to work in schools in Wales. The number of school settings was

again low *(N=3)* compared with the overall number of schools participating in the Lead Creative School scheme. There were three recording days per school *(N=9*), where video recording was made for the majority of the day. My analysis focused on talk with specific elements which I considered to have a particular impact and effect on the learning environment – another researcher could easily identify different dialogic patterns and approaches of significance. I interviewed all five creative practitioners, several not long after finishing intensive sessions in the classroom and in hindsight I feel this did not allow them sufficient time to reflect and gather their thoughts as they may have desired in answering my questions.

The research methods I chose to adopt, the case study approach and observation though film making, taking field notes and interviewing was followed by detailed dialogic analysis. These methods, together with the observations and analysis all contributed to the construction of individual portraits which enabled me to develop my awareness and understanding of the distinctive dialogic approaches of each of the creative practitioners involved. The portraiture methodology developed by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) was particularly valuable since it enabled me to generate a complete picture paying close attention to context and describing the fullness of the happenings being observed (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

This research has implications for both practice and policy as described below.

Implications for practice

The documentation and analysis of the talk of the creative practitioners provides insight for teachers into how effective dialogic approaches can be adopted within the classroom. This detailed understanding into the less obvious but perhaps more significant elements of a creative practitioner at work helps demystify the effectiveness of their interactions and their ability to engage learners and scaffold their learning so successfully. The research offers insights for teachers into some of the creative practitioners' dialogic ways of being –

ways of being that have a significant effect on children's sense of inclusion and of valued collective belonging within the classroom.

As such the research has an implication in relation to how creative practitioners can contribute to in situ professional development. The creative practitioners actively demonstrated an adept and fluid dialogic approach which, by its very nature, is possibly best demonstrated and understood by actively witnessing and partaking in such dialogic interactions in real time. However there needs to be a conscious awareness of dialogue in order for this in situ professional development to happen, rather than simply an alertness to the creative techniques and collective endeavours taking place. There is also potential for creative practitioners to contribute to Initial Teacher Education, bringing with them their own pedagogical approach and practice illuminating the importance and effectiveness of their dialogic approach in relation to generating a genuine sense of student engagement and inclusion.

The research also offers insight for those working in Early Years non-maintained nursery settings when considering the potential of creative practitioners as 'enabling adults' and their practice and dialogic approach contributing to 'engaging experiences' for the young children in their midst, again considering the opportunity for in-situ professional development.

In addition, the research provides creative practitioners with an understanding of the essential role of dialogue in learning and possibly brings a more conscious awareness to the surface of their tacit understanding of the importance of supportive, collective dialogic spaces.

Implications for policy

This research provides a clear validation of the educational benefit of adopting a dialogic and inclusive environment in teaching and learning and the direct correlation with the intentions and underlying principles of the Curriculum for Wales.

My research also draws attention to the value of creative practitioners working in schools – a factor to be considered when senior leaders and educational policy makers are setting budgets and deciding upon educational programmes. The significant educational benefits of adopting a more dialogic approach to teaching and learning have been well evidenced over the years and yet the adoption of such approaches in schools has still been relatively low. This research provides insights not only into the intuitive tendency of creative practitioners to adopt a more dialogic approach and by so doing engage and extend children's learning, but also provides a real time opportunity for teachers within the classroom to have an exposure to such dialogic approaches – illustrating the potential of in situ professional development. There lies within these implications a consideration for the potential of creative practitioners to contribute towards initial teacher education and teacher professional development where their skilful and natural dialogic approach can inform teacher pedagogy and practice. One of the aims identified in the programme was the development of a powerful cohort of trained artists and creative practitioners. The action plan points to evidence from elsewhere in Europe suggesting that such professionals, once trained, remain active within the educational sector employed and supported directly by schools and other agencies (Creative learning through the arts – an action plan for Wales, 2015).

Further research

The practice of creative practitioners working in schools is complex and multifaceted and researchers need to continue to document this complexity. There needs to be more fine-grained, in-depth research into elements of creative practitioners' work in collaboration with teachers especially in relation to their dialogic approaches. I have focused on dialogue and carried out a small but in-depth piece of research. A larger scale piece of research into creative practitioner dialogue would further add to our understanding. Many other

aspects of creative practitioner work in schools are worthy of research in order to contemplate how their pedagogy can inform educational practice.

My own personal learning reflections

This research has informed and developed my once tacit awareness of the importance of talk in relation to learning. I have always had a fascination with talk and how we communicate with each other – this research has helped me articulate my thoughts and challenge my assumptions. I became curious about the dialogic element of creative practitioners' classroom interactions – a form of interaction which is so commonplace and ubiquitous that no-one seemed to pay it conscious attention − yet I believed it to play an essential role in children's engagement and the development of their learning. Through doing this research I have improved my critical engagement and pedagogical thinking in relation to the use of dialogue in learning. In addition, by carrying out this research, my understanding and awareness of talk has grown in areas beyond education – be they in personal, professional, political or social arenas. Through undertaking this research I can now evidence and point to research which firmly articulates the importance of dialogue in relation to our sense of self, our willingness to share and build on ideas and thoughts, and our collective and individual learning. I can also describe how creative practitioners use their dialogic approach to create rich, cognitively challenging and deeply inclusive environments for learning.

Appendix

Appendix 1: School and creative practitioner information

Name of school	Number of pupils on roll	Class researched	FSM %	Location/demographic	Creative practitioner(s)	Type of practice
School A	518	Year 5	13.3%	City, South Wales – wide catchment of pupils because it is a faith school, also more multicultural than many local schools in the area	Toby Claire	Film, music, narrative Sculptor - metal and ceramics
School B	96	Year 3 & 4	6.6%	Rural town, Mid-Wales - remote, rural surroundings	Sarah	Mixed media artist
School C	412	Year 5 (1/2 class – no teacher)	39%	Large town, South Wales – urban, high unemployment, areas of deprivation Brand new school – modern, light, pupil friendly, well designed	Lucy Trudi	Sculptor – wood/clay Ceramicist

Appendix 2: Creative Practitioner consent form

Sophie Hadaway
Regional lead – Lead Creative School Scheme (ERW region)
Arts Council of Wales
The Mount
18 Queen Street
Carmarthen
SA31 1JT
Phone: 07710026079
Email: Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear (Creative Practitioner)

My name is Sophie Hadaway, and as well as carrying out my role as Regional Lead for the Lead Creative School scheme, I am also studying for an MPhil at Nottingham University within their Education Department. The research I am conducting involves studying the way in which creative practitioners use talk in the classroom to develop exploratory learning. I am writing to you to seek your involvement and agreement to become a part of this research. I would greatly value working with your school and involving the members of staff involved in the process.

My research will be an open and reflective process – the focus will be on talk and learning and I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with yourself and the staff within the school. I would need to video record the creative practitioner and teachers working with the pupils and would then carry out a detailed linguistic analysis for the purposes of this research.

This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professors Christine Hall and Pat Thomson (University of Nottingham).

I am hereby seeking your consent to be involved in this research, including being filmed and being interviewed as you carry out your Creative Practitioner role.

I am also providing you with an information sheet outlining my research proposal and the necessary consent forms.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide the school and yourself with a copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales or Sophie.Hadaway@nottingham.ac.uk or on 07710026079.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request,

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Hadaway
Regional Lead – ERW region

University of Nottingham
and
Arts Council of Wales

Appendix 3: Teacher consent form

Teacher PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title Does creative practitioner talk with pupils develop exploratory learning?

Researcher's name Sophie Hadaway

Supervisor's name Christine Hall and Pat Thomson

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be video recorded during the research.
- I understand that data will be stored as video files, transcripts and a final report in electronic form at the Arts Council of Wales - to be accessed by the lead researcher.
- I understand that should the video files and transcripts be needed longer term for use in training in the public sphere further consents will be sought by the lead researcher.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed: …… (research participant)

Print name: …… **Date:** ……

Contact details

Researcher: Sophie Hadaway Sophie.Hadaway@nottingham.ac.uk
Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales Phone: 07710026079

Supervisor: Professor Christine Hall Christine.Hall@nottingham.ac.uk

Phone: +44 (0) 115 9514440

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator: educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Teacher- request to conduct research letter

Sophie Hadaway
Regional lead – Lead Creative School Scheme (ERW region)
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The Mount
18 Queen Street
Carmarthen
SA31 1JT
Phone: 07710026079 Email: Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear (Teacher)

My name is Sophie Hadaway, and as well as carrying out my role as Regional Lead for the Lead Creative School scheme, I am also studying for an MPhil at Nottingham University within their Education Department. The research I am conducting involves studying the way in which creative practitioners use talk in the classroom to develop exploratory learning. I am writing to you to seek your involvement and agreement to become a part of this research. I would greatly value working with your school and involving the members of staff involved in the process.

My research will be an open and reflective process – the focus will be on talk and learning and I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with yourself and the staff within the school. I would need to video record the creative practitioner and teachers working with the pupils and would then carry out a detailed linguistic analysis for the purposes of this research. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professors Christine Hall and Pat Thomson (University of Nottingham).

I am hereby seeking your consent to be involved in this research, including being filmed and being interviewed as you carry out your role as a teacher in the Lead Creative School project. I am also providing you with an information sheet outlining my research proposal and the necessary consent forms.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide the school and yourself with a copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales or Sophie.Hadaway@nottingham.ac.uk or on 07710026079.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request,

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Hadaway

Regional Lead – ERW region
University of Nottingham
and
Arts Council of Wales

Appendix 5: Headteacher consent form

Sophie Hadaway
Regional lead – Lead Creative School Scheme (ERW region)
Arts Council of Wales
The Mount
18 Queen Street
Carmarthen
SA31 1JT
Phone: 07710026079 Email: Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear (Head teacher)

My name is Sophie Hadaway, and as well as carrying out my role as Regional Lead for the Lead Creative School scheme, I am also studying for an MPhil at Nottingham University within their Education Department. The research I am conducting involves studying the way in which creative practitioners use talk in the classroom to develop exploratory learning. I am writing to you to seek your involvement and agreement to become a part of this research. I would greatly value working with your school and involving the members of staff involved in the process.

My research will be an open and reflective process – the focus will be on talk and learning and I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with yourself and the staff within the school. I would need to video record the creative practitioner and teachers working with the pupils and would then carry out a detailed linguistic analysis for the purposes of this research. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professors Christine Hall and Pat Thomson (University of Nottingham).

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct this research in your school, interviewing key members of staff and filming the creative practitioner at work with the pupils.

I am also providing you with an information sheet outlining my research proposal and the necessary consent forms.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide the school with a copy of the full research report.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales or on 07710026079.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request,

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Hadaway

Regional Lead – ERW region
University of Nottingham
and
Arts Council of Wales

Appendix 6: Parent consent form

Sophie Hadaway

Regional lead – Lead Creative School Scheme (ERW region)

Arts Council of Wales

27th April 2018

Creative Practitioner research

Dear Parent

I am conducting some research looking at the way in which artists use talk in the classroom to develop pupils learning as part of my MPhil at Nottingham University within their Education Department.

The focus of my research is on artists talk rather than the pupils talk. As a part of my research I will be videoing the artists as they talk to the pupils over the days that they are in (School C). I will then carry out an analysis of the artists talk for my research.

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct this research in your pupil's class.

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Hadaway

Regional Lead – ERW region

Sophie.hadaway@arts.wales

University of Nottingham and Arts Council of Wales

As the parent or guardian of _____ (write your child's name)

I grant my permission for Sophie Hadaway to conduct educational research examining artist talk in my child's classroom.

Appendix 7: Research information sheet

Information Sheet

Research question: Does creative practitioner talk with pupils develop exploratory learning?

The aim of this project is to look at the different types of talk which develop creative learning – I will focus mainly on the way that creative practitioners use talk in the school environment and how this develops exploratory learning.

This will add to the body of knowledge about the role of talk within learning in our schools and how this has an impact on pupils learning.

The participants (mainly the creative practitioner) will be filmed while they work with pupils. Teachers and the creative practitioner will also be interviewed and field notes will be taken. The filming sessions will take place 3 – 4 times during the course of each individual school study for approximately 1 hour at a time.

All participants' names will be anonymised and the film data will be kept on an encrypted Arts Council of Wales device. Interview and film transcripts will be kept in digital form on an encrypted Arts Council of Wales device. The main researcher will have access to participant information however the information will be anonymised in all published material.

Should the film material or transcripts will be needed in the longer term in the public sphere, for training or in additional reports, further consents will be solicited.

Participation in the research is completely voluntary, participants are at liberty to withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences and non-participation will not affect individuals in any way.

The film recording will have a main focus on the creative practitioner and their use of talk but it will inevitably include pupil's responses – however this filming is carried out purely for research purposes and all pupil information will be anonymised.

The benefits of taking part in this research include the opportunity to add to the greater understanding of the role of talk in pupils learning, motivation and engagement. The research will be open and reflective and will be shared with the school and all participants involved.

Should further information about this project be required please contact:

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Appendix 8: Interview questions – five creative practitioners interviewed, audio recorded and recordings then transcribed.

Questions:

1. Can we just start by you telling me a little bit about your own practice?

2. Can you tell me also about your work with others?

3. And so this was a question more related to language, to talk. So, can you tell me how you encourage the people that you are working with to engage or participate or join in?

4. This brings me on to the next question which is - how do you encourage them to explore deeper into their thinking or ways of working? (Or on a deeper level or on a different level?)

5. *(a continuation of question 4)* Yes, and with children how do you feel you explore thinking - you know, you encourage them to explore really?

Appendix 9: Interview example (Toby)

Interview with Toby: January 12th, 2018 - School A

Sophie: So, Toby can we just start by you telling me a little bit about your own practice?

Toby: Ok so I am involved in socially engaged artwork which means most of the work I create is not about me on my own. It's about a group of people working together to generate art and so hopefully I bring in some skill sets there.
A key process of the design and the concept is about the other people coming into that process. So, it's a gathering of people coming together to create art together and I'm bringing in some skill sets to move that process forwards.

Sophie: Yep, brilliant ok - thank you. So, can you tell me about the kinds of people that you work with?

(A pupil came to the classroom to ask where a member of staff was)

Toby: In the last 15 - 20 years a lot of my work has evolved through different streams and the reason why I have worked with a different group is sometimes I pursue a certain group of people I want to work with. Others it's because of practicalities come in and I am aware of a funding stream which presents itself and I find myself in a certain arena and then one thing leads to another. So, I trained for a while as a primary school teacher and I love this age range in a primary school, so energising to work with these pupils but in the last five years I have spent a great deal of time working in the Youth justice system. So, working with teenagers who have been excluded from school right through to serving 2- or 3-year sentences in prison. So, working in extracurricular settings and then in youth justice settings and prisons and things. So, between that range of primary school children youth justice a lot of the time I spend in youth groups. I try to do as many kinds of Intergenerational projects as possible. I love that combination of teenagers and over 60's working together, that dynamic. I think looking back there are very few kinds of sectors or groups I haven't touched on by working with them.

Sophie: And so this was a question more related to language, to talk. So, can you tell me how you encourage the people that you are working with to engage or participate or join in?

Toby: The creative landscape can be very scary and very daunting and a lot of the groups that I work with come from environments where creativity and imagination haven't been nurtured or haven't even been on the agenda at all. Some of these are very poverty-stricken areas, quite violent backgrounds. The idea of play and imagination, of doing something purely for the enjoyment of doing something are alien concepts sometimes, so you have to like in a RBA analysis go back a few steps

to first of all make friends. So, in a group it's about making friends. And formerly you would call that a kind of ice breaking exercise but it's more about making friends, so sharing is the key thing. So, I have learnt ways about sharing things about myself I'm getting people involved in my life which then makes them feel confident about sharing their life and so we create a safe space and so a safe place where people feel we're actually friends here sitting around the table with no one saying I'm better or greater or anything so creating a space for sharing common experiences. That then helps people be freed up to establish exploring some of their own personal stories. So mostly creativity comes from their own very personal stories and finding that there is an arena to drop some little elements in and see how that is picked up by the rest of the group and then taken on a journey of creativity. But I think that relational friendship 'We're all here together' is the key to establish because unless it is established you can't really move forward through that. So, the language is just for me being me, and I would adjust my level of vocabulary depending on which group I'm working with. So, for the primary school or the people I would find the right vocabulary for that group to work with. It's just being honest. (Bell rings) One of the things that is my default is that I can't help making fun, doing, having a bit of a joke. That is kind of my default being so as long as I'm not... that's the thing about finding the arena and finding the relationships because you need permission to have a bit of a fun with people. You need permission from them to be a bit cheeky and stuff, but there's nothing quite as catalysing as a bit of humour in a situation to make people relaxed and feel that they can share. And so humour has been a part of the way I kind of interact with people I try and get some humour going there and finding that balance and that level of permission within a group at times, that can really help people and relax people and get to another level and we can start actually really enjoying the process. And when enjoyment comes in and those endorphins from enjoyment come in, then you're really sailing do you know what I mean you can really cruise ...(a ….*couldn't make out last word.*)

Sophie: That's really interesting. It brings me onto the next question which is how do you encourage them to explore deeper into their thinking or ways of working?

Toby: So, I have established a safe place and I have established and shared of myself, things that I know I'm happy to share. So, they know I'm just an ordinary person doing things I'm not someone coming in saying this is how we do this. And I've introduced humour as part of who I am in my character and so people feel they can, that if I'm being a little cheeky, they can be a little cheeky and we can start this little interaction between them. And that, I said they can draw from this (country??) it's about feeling good in a group. If anything, that works really well is if there is a group that is already established. If I'm working with an over 60s knitting group or something, there is already that lovely flow between them as they are sitting there doing something you can feed into. And with that established then those little stories which start sharing, those little snippets of stories - and those stories start

building on each other until you have a bigger narrative going on…. Yeah, does that answer your question?

Sophie: Yes, and with children how do you feel you explore thinking - you know, you encourage them to explore really?

Toby: With children it's a lot easier because they just love their hands that are always moving. Do you know what I mean, you have to occupy the hands. The same thing kind of applies when you're working with kind of teenagers. With the teenagers who I work with in the youth justice system they need to be doing something, they need to be doing something and if you ask them to sit still and whatever you're losing them. So that means doing something and knowing that even when they're doing something they're still clued in. When I did my revision for all my O' levels I listened to music all the time. I had to have a distraction before I could then focus on something. So, it's finding that balance of how a group can work doing something but knowing they're still receiving the information that you want to give them. (*pupil interruption)* So not being worried that there's something else going on. That's actually feeding into it and picking up on it and so a lot of the little exercises that we do are about giving them things to do which will then actually feed into a bigger project as well.

Sophie: So that is very interesting - do you feel that if they weren't touching or making or doing something that that would inhibit their flow of thought?

Toby: Yeah, yes. Particularly with the group (....) is the idea that with the group that I work with a lot from very deprived backgrounds it's an emotional trigger point that has been cut off in their development. And so to expose them to emotion, and creativity is about emotion - it is about sharing some experiences which are genuine and real, that's what makes art so powerful - it is genuine and real - they don't have a vocabulary to read emotion and understand emotion properly. So by giving them a mask or a something for them to stand behind so there's a bit of a safety barrier, or by giving them something to do or an actual role. So one of the things which we do, I do is create a TV production crew, and giving everybody in that crew a role to do and whereas before if you asked 6 teenagers to sit down and interview 6 over 60's it would be very hard. But by giving them all roles they are a step back and a step removed. They're listening to the person, and so the person who's filming Is staring at a camera watching and listening Everybody's listening and because they have got this role they feel safe to listen and take in that information and then if you ask them to kind of relay that information back so they have been doing a task the information has gone in deeper because they felt safer. There was a distance between them. And then that's nice, after you say stop and you say cut very soon you see the conversation carrying on after everybody has said stop because they're, you know, it's a typical kind of over 60's thing, you can't stop them talking once they've started. When you've revved them up they keep on going and then the teenagers also want to share some of their stuff. They have been silent for all of

that time so they're ready to share then back into that process. And they've heard stuff which they can think 'Oh I understand that' 'I get that' You know that story. We talk about heritage and common pathways that people have trod in an area and trying to bring people together. So roles, activities that allow them to have a little bit of a third person removal and then give them permission to cross that barrier when they feel comfortable.

Appendix 10: Example of transcribed and coded filming of Lucy and Trudi working with children

Film 1: 02.05.18	
Lucy: Lovely, you remember the type of metal as well, was that quite easy to move? So you had steel and aluminium wire and you kind of modelled them into different figures did you?	
Lucy: What else happened, can anyone else tell me what happened on Monday?	M
Pupil talks about drawing on long sheets of paper about things that make them happy)	
Lucy: Great, they look really really exciting, I'm quite excited by a lot of stuff that's on there, mainly because I can see there's lots of different ideas and designs and you know, ways of looking at things…and yeah, hopefully some really good ideas that we can turn into clay.	
Lucy: So what was the theme, what were you writing down…what did you say…happy things?	
Lucy: So someone from this table…what's the theme of this project? Where are we going with this?	
Lucy: What were you told on Monday about your drawings? In your own words, don't worry…it's not a test…	
Lucy: Great….so it's about positive thoughts…you know, having positive conversations, looking after each other and supporting each other…is it also about looking after our community as well perhaps….i think if you have that positive attitude and kindness in your heart you can take that out of the classroom aswell…to your family and friends, to your community, to someone in the shop …doesn't really matter who!	E, K
Trudi: There are lots of really lovely drawings about helping people that are older than you and helping people that are younger than you.	E, K
Lucy: Great, great – so do you know what we are up to today?	
Clay figures…yes we're definitely going to get some clay out today – have any of you guys worked with clay before?	
Oh there's loads of you have, that's brilliant! Yes, Lindy has bought in some examples, some little models of things she has made.	
There's loads of hands up, what have you guys made in clay?	
Looks at one child and laughs…yes you have made stuff with clay, beautiful clay faces from when we were last in doing a project – they	

were excellent, and you made little clay pots with plants in them….you've still got them…hooray! You've made clay pots too (to another pupil) conversation went around the pupils as to what they had previously made…one pupil said they had made a fish… **Lucy:** Have you still got it Pupil: No it's broken, it was too thin…got a lesson **Lucy:** Ahh, so you got a lesson to take with you, carry with you …perhaps if you see anyone else who's work is too thin, you can keep an eye on that too…brilliant **Lucy:** So did you guys get some books on Monday too, your little project books and you had a look at…what was that spider web thing? A spidergram, yeah, did you remember what was on that? Pupil: our emotions, if we are determined, are you creative? **Lucy:** Great, Did you work out which you were strong at and which ones you maybe needed to work a bit more at **Lucy** …Ah it's good to recognize that, it doesn't mean that that's wrong it's just good to recognize it, that's great, brilliant, fantastic **Trudi:** There's some big strong characters…so what was that one…was it collaboration? **Lucy**: Sometimes it's great to do things on your own, but it's also incredibly …it's really good to have the skills and the patience to be able to work with other people and to have the ability to listen to other peoples ideas or problems, if we're going to help other people out we've got to listen to their needs don't we. **Lucy**: Lindy would you like to show them the little clay figures? **Lucy:** Have you got anything else to add about Monday? We've only got this morning with you, we've got the other half of the class this afternoon. We've got breaktime in about 20 minutes, how do you guys feel about…what shall we do… having a shorter breaktime **Trudi**: …so if break is in about 20 minutes time we can get the clay rolled out before then..and that is quite a good thing because then it will be a little bit stiffer when we come back in. **Lucy:** It's important you get outside and get a bit of fresh air, we're not stopping you having your breaktime,	AB G

Trudi: But we will say…if you want to come back in after 10 minutes you can, we'll be here	
Trudi: I'm going to do things a little bit back to front in that I'm going to show you roughly what your things are going to look like when they're finished ok. We're not using bright colours…we're using something called.. well…tell me what name of the road outside your school is called…Copperworks road…well I've got some stuff called copper oxide, which used to be made around here, mined around here, and they would have made it around here, so I thought that would be quite a nice thing to make our stuff out of…	H
Trudi: When you use oxides, any texture that there is on the clay, or any mark that has been made in it, the oxide goes into. When you have made your stuff here today, I am going to take it awa y from here, get it as dry as possible and then put it in the kiln. Anybody know what a kiln is…yes it cooks clay!	H
When you use your cooker at home do you know how hot it gets….yes about 200 degrees…So it gets a little bit warm. When you cook these you have to make the kiln get to 1200 degrees…that's 6 times as hot as your cooker…that's really, really seriously hot	H
Trudi: You can cook yourself!	
Trudi: When you've finished I'm going to take it away, I'm going to cook it to 1000 degrees, then I'm going to bring it back to you, and you're going to decorate it with these oxides and then I'll take it away again and it will be cooked to 1200 degrees….complicated but we'll get there.	H
Trudi: So something as soggy as that (holds a little ball of clay) you can squish around, …no you can't squish it on your nose…turns into something (bangs a fired clay figure) you can knock about and you can drink your tea out of it…oh yes, it can smash, if I threw it up into the air it would fall onto the floor and smash into lots and lots of bits…well no that's the same things and knocked a tea mug on the table. That's the same thing,	H
Lucy: Have you guys ever broken a mug before…they are made out of clay…it is the same process, they go into a kiln…china is a different kind of clay…just the same though, it's the same process….squishy to start with then you model it and shape it and it goes into the kiln and comes out hard. But yeah, they can be smashed, they're tough…but you know they do smash	
Trudi …And we're going to start off making figures…we've got a a few things to help you with…so you roll out your sheet of clay…you've got cookie cutters, another way of doing it is to draw out a shape…I want to avoid…(shows a premade figure she's bought in) …as much as possible I'd like you to make these figures all in one piece, because when you start sticking arms and legs on you've got an inherent weakness there….it can fall off yes, some pieces you will have to attach…and when we get to that	

I'll give you a demonstration on how you do that, but today we are going to try to make them all out of one piece because the figure will be stronger Trudi *did a demonstration on how to roll out, showed some of her pre made examples…and talked about how to make them stand up, not making them too thick* Lucy: That's the best tool you can have…your hands *Trudi pretends she can't get the clay roll off her finger. Asks them to help her …they laugh…she makes a pop noise* Trudi: and that's the man who did all the figures, do you remember his name…the angel of the north…somebody has got to remember his name….Anthony Gormley *Continues demonstrating….* *Pupils start spontaneously singing 'head shoulders knees and toes…'* Lucy: Actually it's an interesting point…it just made me think, you singing that song, I don't think, it's interesting when you look at a figure, you don't need all those things, you don't need heads, shoulders, knees and toes to understand that that shape is a human figure, because even the one that Lindy has made, that she is demonstrating to you, it doesn't have legs, knees and toes – it's just got that shape hasn't it and it's still a figure. So I want you to understand that if you are making a figure it does not have to be perfect. We are not interested in seeing perfect little nobly knees or 5 perfect toes, or 5 fingers at the ends of the arms..i think it's just that impression, please don't worry about trying to get things perfect. Perfect is a word that doesn't really exist in my vocabulary anyway. Trudi … There's a lovely saying on that sheet over there. It was a joint effort anyway because we were all doing that exercise of moving around (…more demonstrating) – pupil 'it looks like a penguin…' Trudi: yes who's doing penguins, who's drawing penguins? …is he in the other group…yes, because there's a really good way of doing penguins isn't there…like I said, although they're figurative…if he likes penguins, then you can have your avatar can't you? *Pupil asks 'can we make anything we want?'* Trudi: Well….figurative Lucy: I think the idea that we're doing human figures is because you know on Monday, that you guys were talking about …you know there are some beautiful drawings here of people helping each other, and someone else of someone helping someone up off the floor …I don't think a penguin can do that. You know, so the conversations that we have between each	H N G

other or the acts, kind of, the acts that we do for each other – like helping, like if I put my arm around your shoulder. There's something about that body language isn't there that is helpful and positive and kind and warm and um...and I think we could find much more, kind of, I would call it visual language, in a body, than you could in animals so I wouldn't stray too far into that way…does that make sense? *Pupil talks about how she saw an older person in a mobility scooter by the Bingo hall, and the road/pavement was bumpy and their purse fell out, and she picked it up and gave it back to them.* *(A member of staff comes in to explain that they are about to make the toast breakfast run in the room – Lucy says there's clay on the tables so doesn't recommend they put anything on the actual tables)* *More demonstrating – Trudi asks a pupil for the word…'smoosh it' and they all laugh* *Trudi holds up figure she has just made:* Trudi: We have got the start of a kindness story … you know you can put much more detail on that, you can put eye's nose if you want to…you can out curly hair,…you can do anything you like but the important thing about what you're trying to do is to make people happy, sometimes make them laugh a little bit, you know – we were talking about putting the figures on the window ledges. Some of those could be a little bit funny, but they are to lift people's spirits a little bit and think about maybe being a little bit kinder and a little bit happier. So you can go into as much detail as you like with the figures but you don't need to go into a lot of detail. Trudi: It's like a cartoon, very often a cartoon hasn't got a lot that much detail in it - so you can tell a story, like Lucy says, with very few lines. There were some beautiful stories on these sheets that were just matchstick people and that's fine, that's just fine. Lucy: I suppose though in a way Trudi, you could say that the figure you've just made there is like a matchstick figure really, they're just filled out a little bit but they are just based on those simple lines of drawing – so you know, so you don't have to be, you know a kind of master at detail to get the feeling of making something in clay. *(Pupils get going with rolling out…first Lucy asks about what wooden strips/guides are for, Trudi talks about the type of clay as they get going)*	N N N
Film 2: 02.05.18 *(observations only)* *Lucy works with individual pupils – she always crouches down/kneels next to pupils as she talks with them. She listens attentively and discusses at length with each pupil she's working with, focusing fully on what they are trying to explain, discover, work out to make* *She says things like…hmm what else could you do?*	

Asks them what they want to do/try out *She gives a lot of encouragement* *Suggests they try something and 'play around with it'* *Pupils are utterly engrossed in their making*	
Visit 2: 09.05.18 Film 3: **Lucy:** (waiting for them to settle down...asks): Did sir give someone a felt tip pen to give to me? Diolch yn fawr iawn. How are you all? Are you happy? Have you had a good week since we saw you last? Anything interesting happen? (*one girl says yes and explains that her mum has been into hospital to have an operation on her hand)* **Lucy:** Wow that's a big deal, crikey. *(girl explains some more)* **Lucy:** Well, I hope she heals quickly **Lucy:** Um, so, can we just remember what we got up to last week? Let's just turn the volume down and put our hands up just to work out what we got up to? *Lucy points to a boy...what did you get up to last week (he talks about making the clay figures)* **Lucy:** in fact your clay figures have been….ooo, they haven't been baked, do you guys remember the word? What was the word that we put them through the process of? We haven't cooked them, we haven't baked them but what have we done? **Lucy:** We put them in a kiln, well done, that's brilliant, the fancy oven is called a kiln, and what did you say, do you remember what that word was? *Pupil says 'I want to say kiln but…'* **Lucy:** Good I'm glad you remembered that word, but they've been fired, they've been fired. We haven't baked them or cooked them, we've fired them. **Trudi:** Does anyone remember how hot it's got to be for that? *Pupil answers….* **Trudi:** that's the one! 1000 degrees, 5 times as hot as your oven at home. So they are not muddy stuff anymore. They're quite hard, you can...listen to the noise they make *(taps a piece on the side cupboard)* **Trudi:** Don't bang them too hard 'cos they're still slightly fragile, not very fragile, but slightly fragile. They'll be a lot stronger, they'll need to be fired again, does anyone know how high the second firing goes? *Pupils offer answers….* **Trudi**: 1200 degrees...that's the one! And when they have the second firing they will be much harder. **Lucy:** So guys, I was thinking have any of you bought pencils with you? *Pupils…'no'* **Lucy:** So how are you going to work in your books then? Perhaps we are going to have to send somebody back for pencils	M H H H H H

Trudi: I think everyone should get pins, and stick them in their fingers and write with blood! **Lucy**: That's quite a quirky way of doing art! **Trudi**: So who would like a pencil and who would like some blood?! **Trudi:** But pencils is a bit easier and not quite so messy **Lucy:** I was thinking though, I'm writing on a piece of paper up here (stuck to the wall) words, you know new vocabulary of words as we're working with clay. SO if any of you hear a new term or a new phrase or a new word or anything like that that you would like me to add or you would like to add if you can reach that just let me know, because it would be great if you guys wrote these words down in your books...i would like you to use your books all the time. These are your books to write notes in, you can use your books to design things in or to write some ideas, and some of this vocabulary but also those figures you've just said, which have gone in this ear and out the other **Lucy:** 1,000 that's 3 zeros is it...is it degrees celsius? Is that the first firing? Biscuit firing that's what it's called **Lucy:** could you get 13 pencils please - you can start off using your journals, did you look at your spidergrams? **Lucy:** So I was thinking we could start off by thinking what we're going to make today. We're going to do more tile-based things. You guys will have a chance to look at your work. So first of all we're going to actually imagine making a comic strip - so you're designing and drawing on paper. That's why we're going to use our books so we'd like you to think of a story, what kind of a story are you going to be looking at. **Lucy:** Ok, so if you guys have a look in the middle of the table, we left you some different examples (let's just turn around so I can see your faces, it's easier to talk to you then) **Lucy:** What's a font...do you guys know what a font is? Yeah...so a font is the different shape, the different style of a writing … and so there are different pages, different examples if you guys want to use them … for designing your comic strip So first of all before you do that...what kind of theme do we have for this project...are we going to be looking for a story with positive things or negative things...are we going to be looking for a story that includes people….friends….different or positive body language , looking after each other **Lucy:** So think about a story that's happened to you...that you could put in a few squares, that you could put in these squares...some could have just words, some patterns...stage by stage but to help you do that I think it would help you...for the first 5 minutes, we can look at the work, the figures you made last week. When all the work is on the table, have a play around with the figures you made last week...see if you can make a story. **Trudi:** Just be aware that you still need to be a bit careful with them. They all came out of the kiln alright… a few that hadn't been smooshed properly the arms and legs fell off and some went bald, but when you pick them up we can have a chat about that and next time you make a figure you'll know not to do that.	Z AA
Film 4 **Lucy** *crouching down at the table at pupils sitting height, observing, listening, adding her thoughts)*	

(one pupil says they should have probably used more clay…)	AB
Lucy: So this is the brilliant thing about now, is that this is where you learn from your mistakes	N
Lucy: It's a representation isn't it, it's not about making a perfect human	
Lucy: I wonder if we could make a story...put them all together...instead of sitting with one pile each I would like you to use the centre of the table - just be gentle with them.	G
Lucy: At the moment that's a very sweet idea -	
Lucy: but what I'd like you all to do is not to hog your work in one spot but to put your work in the middle, play around with it and see if you can create a story with your sculptures ok	G, AA
Lucy: What could you do, what could you do? You've got an angel...you've got a very very sad person, we've got someone whose got a broken foot..?...or shall we forget the broken feet! We've also got this couple here...oh I didn't mean like a partner...I just meant a couple of people. And what does this say...oh I didn't see that last week	AA
Lucy: ok I think you guys could just start very gently moving things around and having a think about the story you are going to create with what's in front of you ...does that make sense and you can write your stories in here…*(pupil asks a question)*...it's entirely up to you, you can combine them if you like.	AA
Lucy moves to another table and kneels on the floor to be pupil height…	
Lucy: ok so how did these come out...i love this one...tell me about this character?...ok, so this is the stage where we learn from our mistakes...did you smoosh it on?	AB
(They all have a discussion with Lucy about what has and hasn't worked/broken and they all offer reasons/consider the reasons why)	
Lucy: So put them all in the middle of the table...see what you can all create together in the way of a story	G, AA
Pupils think out loud/suggest things amongst each other	
Lucy: Ok guys...see if you can put your ideas down on the piece of paper...good I'm going to leave you to it.	
(Pupils on the three different tables are all on task, happy, making up and discussing possible stories with their characters)	
Lucy: How are you guys getting on? Ok...I like that, it's great. Please don't feel like you have to be very precious about your drawings for your stories...they are just rough sketches and ideas ok, I'm not interested in masterpieces.	Z
Pupil says they're not sure how to make a model sitting down	
Lucy: well a good place to start is by actually doing it (goes over to her place on the table…)	Z
Lucy: Is this your book? Do you mind if I draw something in it? So all I was going to do is a line ok, and the line is just to give you the shape of what's happening here…(indicates to her kneeling feet). This is from the side so the head would be there ok, the body comes down, and the knees come forwards and touch the ground (another pupil watches attentively)...does that make sense?	H Z
Lucy: Ok...so what's the difference between drawing and moulding? ...pupil answers...exactly...do you know what the 'd' stands for in 2D and 3D 'D' stands for dimension, so the measurement in a certain directions...so if it's 2D what are the dimensions...that's right that's how	H

you would describe it...in 3D what are the dimensions? Length, width ...and height **Lucy:** Exactly So we have length, width and height so if you've got the three dimensions...something is wide and high and deep...you have got three dimensions...and it can be a sculpture or us...we're three dimensions...if it's two dimensions it's not deep, it's like a piece of paper...so that's why it's flat...so that's 2D and that's 3D **Lucy**: Ok so let's get drawing these stories… **Lucy:** And how is this working for everybody else can you all see you're all a part of this...I'll be back in 5 minutes...so I can see what's going on	H H Z G
<u>Visit 3 15.05.18</u> **Film 5:** **Lucy:** So what we're going to do in 15 minutes ..can I just have your ears for a minutes please...we've got 15 minutes before break. We've had really good observations about what does work and what does not work and how to improve what we've made this morning. For the next 15 minutes we need to be this quiet because when we go back down, and look at the space we're going to make and install our work for, that means we may well disturb other classes which is an absolute no go ok. So we need to keep our voices down and be respectful of other classes ok. **Lucy** So what we're going to do, is we're going to have a look at the space, which you've already looked at, right at the beginning of the project. Were you here on the first day, right at the beginning of the project with Lindy when I wasn't here. **Lucy:** So we're going to have a quiet little think and a wander around and thinking about what we're going to make and where it might go. There are walls that we can mount things on, there are some flat surfaces, there are window sills where some of you have made lovely figures that sit down anyway. There's also the chance, the potential, that we could suspend … what does that mean? Hang things...if they're not too big, very lightly from the ceiling, so it could be that you make something that looks as though it is holding onto a rope, or a figure like that. ...it's hanging from a piece of string or a piece of metal...it's suspended so it will be free moving from a piece of rope. Or string or whatever it might be. *(pupil asks how you will put it - the string - inside its own back)* **Lucy:** So that's the thing we need to think about, how are we going to hang things? Are they going to be screwed to the wall? Are they going to be sitting on a window sill? So you're going to need to be thinking about your final piece as we walk out and work out what we're going to make and for where. Does that make sense? **Lucy**: Every artist...certainly for me as a sculptor...when I'm making a piece of artwork, the first thing I do is I need to go and see where it's going to go to first. Is it inside or outside, and then I choose the materials that are appropriate, we're using clay, perhaps string too...it might be that strings too thin and we might need a piece of rope if your work is heavy. So we need to think about all of these things. **Lucy**: If the work is going to be in the far corner of the ceiling, and it's that big (makes a tiny hand size) is anyone going to see it? Scale...so we're thinking of size, we're looking at scale. The writing that we've been looking at, some of you have said it's too small, can't understand what it	H AC AC AC AC A, C, AC AC

says - therefore you need to make your work bigger so the writing is clear, ok, so all these things need to be thought of and we're going to quietly, quietly discuss them in the next 10 minutes as we stand outside and look at that space ok. Are we good to go?	AC
Film 6: *(Pupils outside in upper balcony/corridor. Looking at ceiling and over edge of solid balcony down to lower level...library and atrium area)* Lucy: You can see all sports of different spaces and places... in this stairwell, hallway - that we could possibly mount our work. We've got a few windowsills here that might be quite good fun, really good fun. Some of you have already made figures that are sitting on the edge of something. What else can you see, where can you see your work in this space? Lucy...on the light...ok what problems might we have if we put things there.....ok so yes, things might get hot ...it might melt? I don't think clay would melt...but I think if we had any interaction with electrics we probably wouldn't be allowed to do that, so I think we'll stay away from electrics, but I like the idea of it being on a hanging thing perhaps. Lucy: What else can you guys see, what other thoughts have you had? *(Lots of discussion and pointing to spaces and places)* Lucy: ok so you had a suggestion...everyone listen so you can hear it: *(one pupil suggests little heads peering out of the small patterned holes in the ceiling tiles)* Lucy: So there's things popping out from the holes in the ceiling! So if you did want to have things popping out of those holes what do we need to know? Yes...how big it is. What the dimensions are of that space there. Yeah...how deep it is, if it's hollow all the way through...we probably do need to ask permission too. Lucy: So we need to think about designing it for some other space. Were you suggesting something to me as well? ...Hanging it from a window...yeah we could do that. Lucy: Yeah, that's another good question, how are we going to get it up there? Ok, I'll be doing the installing with Trudi ...so that shouldn't be a problem. Lucy: Who else suggested something? What was your suggestion....? To sit them on here. What are we thinking? It would be nice to see them close up ...lovely, ok.... what else do we need to think about? Something sitting on a ledge. (As in the balcony horizontal rail...) People might touch them...yes, they might fall off. Because they are quite delicate, they still are quite delicate, so it's probably best if we make things that are out of reach. *(More discussion)* Lucy: Yes, that's a good spot. Yes, that's got wood in the walls, that's handy we can put screws and little tacks in. *(A boy quietly complains that he was about to say that...)* Lucy: It's ok, it's good that we're thinking along the same lines, that we're saying the same things. *(More talk about the balcony Lucy is leaning her arm over it)* Lucy: What am I doing? (*they see that any work would be pushed off by peoples arms)*	AC AC Z AC AC AC G

<u>Observations:</u> *Both: Allowing the children to '**play**', and explore what their characters might be doing, allowing them the space and time to co-create a story collectively – an implicit understanding that playing is a necessary part of the design, decision making process* *(incidental filming of the pupils discussions amongst themselves during these story building chats ideas came up involving things like homelessness, being approached by strangers, being taken care of, using 'begging' money for things like drugs)* *Lucy sits amongst the pupils most of the time, crouches down, kneels - talks with very concentrated listening, asking simple questions, probing a bit, offering her thoughts...very much in amongst them...unless she is addressing the whole class especially at the start of a session)* *Importance of children seeing, being and discussing where the work is actually going to be situated after it has been made…..*	

Appendix 11: Initial reflections after watching films of Toby working with children

Initial reflections from Toby's films (at least one still to view again)

Themes/patterns which resonate with his interview (and additional ones):
He uses humour lightly to put pupils at ease – often mentioning how he's feeling in a humorous way

He spends time asking them about the last week, in an interested manner – a collective remembering

He uses empathy, encourages their use of empathy – this comes through strongly in sessions later that day – almost an understanding of the subject matter through feeling/empathising

Notion of a journey – they are all on a journey together

Introduces 'imagination' as a way of using your brain – deliberately and carefully – uses examples to clarify, all of which they discuss together. He talks about ways of thinking and exploring

Individual tasks become part of a whole class structure/sculpture

Also no sense of competition – 'your words may help others find different words'

Makes sure they realise there's no rush

Encourages them in the paper scrumpling exercise to find their own way

Talks about making a journey across the paper carefully, following the creases, not knowing exactly where you're going – one pupil directly leaps to the connection with the migrants even though the lesson hadn't mentioned them that week.

Pupils feedback is genuinely sought (during post it guitar song exercise)

He praises the pupils for staying with the journey

He uses quite 'grown-up' language – e.g. 'literally' but explains with them what the words mean

He explains that they don't know what will happen exactly (with the block sculpture) and that's what he's looking forward to

And for the paper line he asks them to allow the creases to guide them without knowing exactly where it's heading

Journeys, a way through, exploring – all referred to several times

Appendix 12: Emerging themes

Emerging themes

'Talk honours the other – as an equal knower who can speak and think for themselves'

Learning and problem solving are social and highly communicative processes – Littleton and Mercer, 2013 .....

.....talk is an essential element in learning.....

Overarching research question: **How do creative practitioners use talk to create an environment for learning?**

Key themes which *illustrate/explain/illuminate* how creative practitioners use talk ... ways of working which generate an environment rich in discourse/cognitive challenge etc.....

..... and their related 'sub themes' *(there is considerable interconnection)*

Creating a sense of collective endeavour

- Group/whole class 'project/sense of purpose'
- Meaningful/purposeful collaboration – sense of collective purpose/collective approach/collective thought and dialogue
- Authentic problems/challenges/situations
- Collective problem solving and constructing knowledge - ZPD
- Sense of exploring together/'all in it together'
- All can contribute/all have something to offer
- Co-workers/co-learners (incl. sometimes w/ teacher)
- *(Inclusion/safety/reassurance/purpose/confidence from the sense of collective endeavour)*

Developing a relationship/conducive power dynamic

- More equal discourse relationship ('equal but in charge') – more symmetrical interactions

- Not 'telling them what to do' – not channelling towards pre-determined answers or recitation, or being prescriptive as to the exact outcome
- Asking questions for children's thoughts/ideas not for 'correct answer' (IRE)
- Listening attentively *(Listening and questioning also are key themes)*
- Share information about own practice and approach
- Use technical language of making – not assuming a lower level of understanding. Teaching them the language of the discipline
- (The above generates a lot of questions **from** children – curious and intrigued)

Listening

- Attentive/focussed on individual child speaking
- Unhurried/patient/interested
- Aware of value and importance in contributing to direction
- Not listening for 'correct answer' – interested in children's own thoughts/ideas
- (Without judgement)
- *(Inclusion/safety/reassurance/valued)*

Questioning

- Asked how they are/how they have been/what they did last time...(*very conversational)*
- Encouraged and enjoyed their questions – often praised a good question
- Questions were for thoughts/ideas/understanding not 'correct answer'
- Due to purposeful group work – children asked each other questions as part of their inter-group dialogue

Body language

- Walking amongst
- Listening with complete attention
- Leaning in
- Crouching down
- Sitting amongst
- Making sure everyone can see a demonstration – waiting patiently so
- (Some CP's would also take them to different parts of the school if needed/useful to do so)

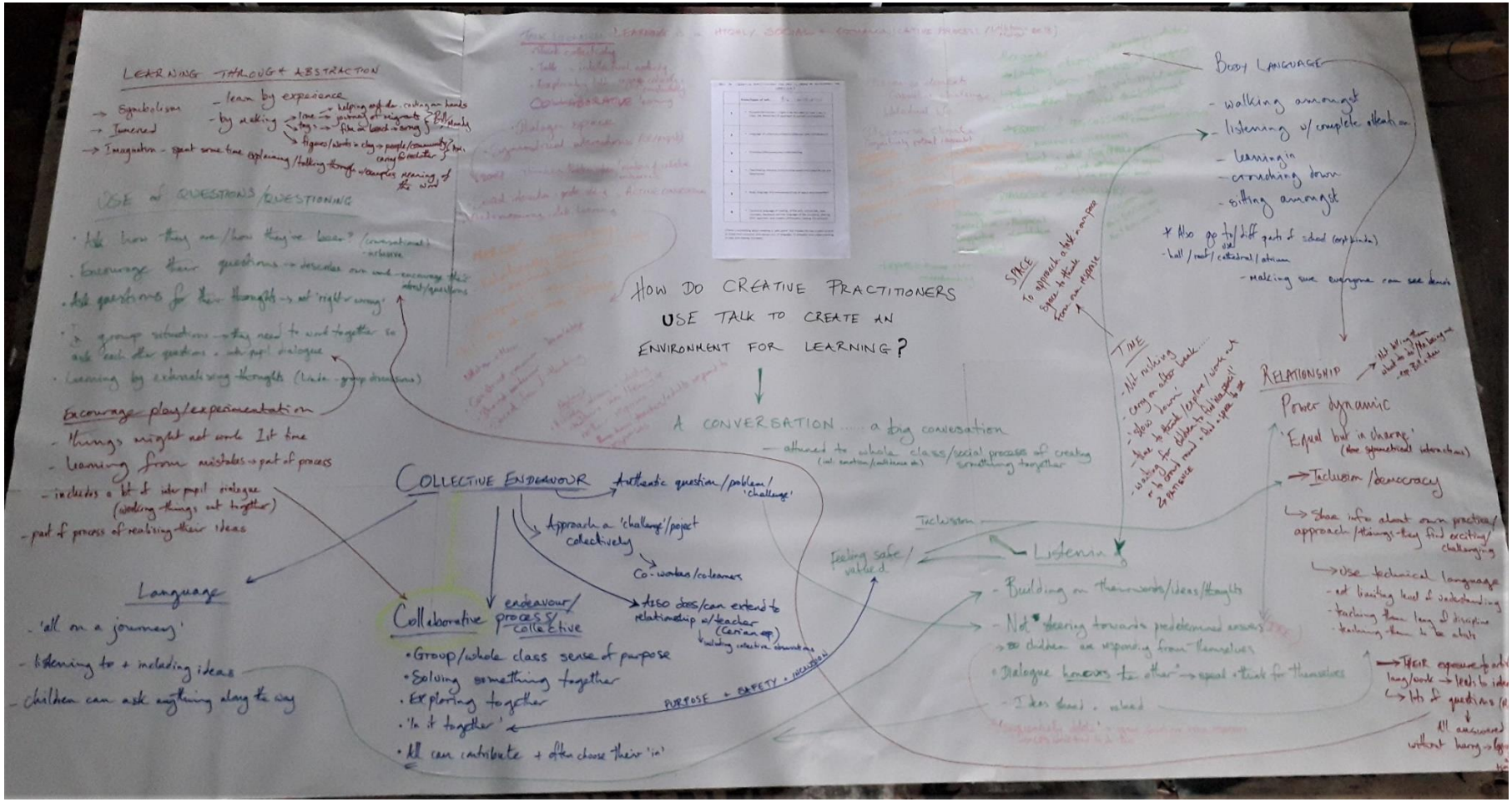
Play and exploration/experimentation

- 'it might not work 1st time' – assuming this is part of making/learning process – a helpful stage
- Allowing/encouraging a time of 'play' as part of the process of realising their ideas/helping their ideas emerge
- These stages encompassed a lot of inter-pupil dialogue/talk and suggesting ideas to each other.
- Important part of the collaborative process and as such the collective endeavour...'working things out together'.

Empathy and abstraction

- Learning in other ways – symbolism/empathy/abstraction
- Learning by experience
- Learning through making
- Attention given to what 'imagination' actually is

Appendix 13: Interconnecting meta themes



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