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INCONGRUITY BETWEEN PEDAGOGY OF AUTHENTICITY AND CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL APPARATUS

Person-Centred Phenomenological Studies

FEBRUARY, 2023

Abstract

While individual motivations can vary greatly, becoming a teacher is commonly conceptualised as a socially constructive choice. Using the concept of teachers' authenticity, this doctoral work examines that notion in the lived experiences of teachers working in England. This examination occurs in self-emerging stages, as a consequence of pursuing a person-centred understanding of teacher's authenticity as a socially constructive pedagogy and its viability in context of contemporary education.

The first part of the literature review begins with an overview of person-centred theory relevant to the concept of authenticity, with its ontological underpinnings, to then expand on how it applied to teachers' authenticity. This is followed by the exploration of teachers' authenticity from other theoretical perspectives. The resources explored are also from different geographical locations to explore the potential unique and universal aspects of authenticity. In the second part, the focus shifts to the educational environments and implicit and explicit values underpinning education in United Kingdom, however some of the issues are discussed in their worldwide context.

The methodological approach is explored in context of person-centric research framework, and each next study is an expansion of the previous one, in pursuit of deeper understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic conditions that might facilitate or inhibit teachers' authenticity. This begins with Qualitative Metasynthesis of existing research on teachers' authenticity, identifying themes of shared understanding of teachers' authenticity and external conditions promoting/inhibiting authenticity. This is followed by the Interpretative (Creative) Phenomenological Analysis where three white female teachers explored the complexities of working within the state funded education (SFE) system, where caring for children was experienced as meaningful and energising, while keeping up with increasing demands of standardised and performative education was seen as disempowering and exhausting, having negative impact on teachers psychological wellbeing. The reflective lifeworld

case study of one white female teacher examined further the tensions in being a teacher, capturing structural challenges of striving for authenticity.

Autoethnographic studies were conducted alongside the IPCA and Reflective Lifeworld study for transparency as well as development of a deeper understanding of self, emerging from the system, and system being co-created by self. First part present findings from focusing on intrinsic, psychological conditions that facilitate or inhibit learner/teacher authenticity. Whereas the second part offers insight into understanding socio environmental conditions and their impact of authenticity as teacher and pedagogue. The processes and challenges in conducting the research are brought forth in the critical reflexivity section. The work culminates with capturing and discussing three main threads, present across all studies; this is where teachers' authenticity is explored as a pathway to experiential safety, a way of relating to learners and as facilitative to transforming educational communities to meet the evolving needs of modern societies.

Acknowledgements

The current thesis is further evidence of our interconnectivity and the life-altering potential of positive relationships in learning, here in the context of formal education and otherwise. Although I am listing different people here, the order is there only because the language forces it, but my experienced gratefulness to all flows out of my being in a simultaneous stream, without differentiation.

I feel grateful to my participants for sharing their time and experiences and allowing me to step into their daily realities while letting me complete an important part of this research as a result.

I am forever changed, for the better, by the relationships with my supervisors. Stephen's Joseph's patience and his capacity to expand his presence to accommodate all parts of me made the whole journey feel authentic. His willingness to meet me, in my own (mis)understanding, and trust that I am going where I need to. I continue to have those little lightbulb moments: 'Ah! So, this is what Stephen meant!'. David Murphy, with his open invitation into 'the world of tomorrow', his feet firmly on the ground, seemed to be floating just above the limitations of what appears to be possible; his insights were invaluable and his positive energy contagious.

Publication Status of Chapters

The following chapters are based on manuscripts that have developed from this thesis and have been published. Contributing authors" names, title of article, and the journal where the paper was published are noted below.

Chapter 5

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Chapter 7

Plust, U. Joseph, S., Murphy, D. (2021b) '*Sucking Results Out Of Children'* Reflective Lifeworld Case Study Of A Primary School Teacher Striving For Authenticity. British Journal of Educational Studies, DOI: 10.1080/00071005.2021.2006600

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

ATL - Association of Teachers and Lecturers

CoW - Conditions of worth

DfE – Department for Education

HoCEC - House of Commons Education Committee

HSE - Health and Safety Executive

IPA – Interpretive phenomenological analysis

IPCA – Interpretive phenomenological creative analysis

ITT - Initial Teacher Training

MAXQDA - Max Weber Qualitative Data Analysis

NQT - Newly Qualified Teacher

NUT – National Union of Teachers

OECD - Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OFSTD – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

QT - Qualified Teacher

RCT – Randomised control Trials

RLR – Reflective lifeworld research

STF -state funded education

TALIS - Teaching and Learning International Survey

UK – United Kingdom

Dedication

The one that quietly carries the weight, hardly even complains and yet most

exposed to the storms when chaos and despair take over my spirit.

The one brave enough to push me to pass my own limits.

My home is where you are.

To Osaze.

Preface

Personal Journey

I seem to have always had an interest in the contrasts between my own perceptions of reality and the experiential worlds of others. This curiosity has been twofold: I had a veracious thirst for stories of others and a desire to see if my own sharing could shift the perspectives of others, just like theirs transformed mine. I also seemed to be particularly sensitised to the experiences of social injustice on a micro and macro scale. Following both of those intrinsic motivators led me to the 'implicit hypothesis' that the solutions to many of our problems and dilemmas can be found in that inbetweenness, in the human connection that differentiates and integrates perceived realities. The implicit hypothesis, because I doubt that I even knew the meaning of the world hypothesis as a 12-year-old, and yet, I am sure, based on my earliest writings, that I implicitly knew the transformative potential of an authentic human encounter.

The transformative potential stretches across the spectrum between meaning and meaninglessness, belonging and alienation and flourishment and extinction of human spirit. I soon learned that authentic encounters were to be cherished because they were so incredibly rare. This knowledge only

made me more eager to pursue them. It is my understanding that it is this pursuit, the need of authentic being and becoming with others, that led me to devalue social constructs of schooling, religion and even family. At the age of 13, I 'ran away' from home and towards the entirely unfamiliar and objectively unsafe reality. Perhaps, I unconsciously decided to test if I was really as cowardly, lazy, worthless and sinful the adults in pedagogical roles seemed to be convinced of.

I remember that I desperately wanted to be different than those who tried to forcefully mould me into their image. I wanted to be authentic, and I instinctively knew, in contradiction to everything that I was taught, that it meant being creative, constructive, caring, open and trustworthy. Many years of struggling, surviving on the fringes of societies in Poland, Italy and Germany, where concepts such as death, hunger, violence, self-harm, addiction, modern slavery and trauma became part of my experience and places of learning. I continued being hopeful. I was even more convinced that a large part of our psychopathology that leads to maladjusted behaviours is consequential to inauthentic ways of being. I began to realise that the structural constructs of the existing social environments where learning takes place, whether in the workplace, school, church, family, implicitly or sometimes explicitly, favour and promote inauthenticity.

These were my experiences, my own subjective truths, values and beliefs existing in my own phenomenological field that existed long before I could articulate them in academic terms. It is my understanding that many of

them are congruent with the experiences of others whom I encountered across my lifespan. It is in these encounters where my researcher-self eventually emerged, alongside the conviction to attempt to reveal what occurred within the person in response to an unfavourable environment, here with a particular focus on authenticity.

I am Us

A voice that was meant to be swallowed

lips sewn with red thread

tongue that keeps growing back—to the systemic dismay

I am Us

unteachable

unruly

socially disintegrated

excluded and unworthy of care

I am Us

ruled out before consideration

resisting instinctively without grace

cultivating repudiated space

Rogerian sad, pale, spindly human sprout

crawling towards the light

I am Us

eyes that close so they can see

ears that bleed before they hear

hands that punch before they kneel

feet that walk away from where they rather be

spine that's faulted for crumbling under a dehumanised regime.

Moulded in the image of those who couldn't see.

Fragmented humans who didn't trust in what they could have been.

And yet we have a choice to be the ones who love despite the fear.

This poem reflects this 'blurrification' of 'I' and 'Us' in my perceptual field. My writing and research illustrate the duality of my insider-outsider

positionality as a researcher. In this context, love refers to an openness to experiences that are perceived as challenging and that are characterised by various degrees of risk and aspiration towards unconditional positive regard.

Since I was 13 years old, I grew accustomed to existing without a plan, muddling through the chaos and rejecting the order proposed by others. My reality was shattered regularly, and any attempts at organising it seemed futile. My self-concept was forcing itself to override my own experience, belittling everything that I believed to be of value within me. And yet, against all odds, in its own maladjusted ways, my organism kept seeking out the opportunities where I could grow, even just a little. In 2003, I found myself in the United Kingdom, and after an initial period of manual labour, I started in the field of support work. I was drawn to helping professions partly because I could easily identify with those in need and partly because I aspired to be there for others in a way that some counsellors, mentors and educators were there for me. Being a lifeline for those who lost themselves seemed like a meaningful path.

In 2008, I began my adventure with higher education. I completed a diploma in counselling but soon found that my own maladjustments, lack of unconditional positive self-regard and deeply embedded conditions of worth interrupted the formation of trusting relationships with my clients, inhibiting my ability to be fully present and open to experiencing. I also experienced or coexperienced a futility of efforts towards becoming a fully functioning person when existing in a maladjusted and alienating shared reality. At the same

time, I began experiencing a thirst for knowledge, finding newly formed confidence in my own abilities.

Education began to have a therapeutic dimension for me. I experienced learning as a liberating force, and I was increasingly fascinated with the interconnectivity between the fields of knowledge. Enrolling in a postgraduate teaching course was a spontaneous decision in response to the opportunity that presented itself. It was a funded course I was made aware of by a friend that I studied with before at Bolton University. I experienced it as instructional training rather than person-centred learning, but I found the teaching practice meaningful and personally rewarding. Following this training, I worked as a 'special educational needs' tutor for four years. During that time, I also supported children as a primary school counsellor while observing my own children go through the motions of schooling.

This was where my personal direction moved from hazy and instinctive to a conscious choice. The connection between my own disheartening experiences of compulsory education and experiences of those whom I encountered brought me back to my early passions for social justice and human connectivity. There is an untapped liberating and therapeutic potential, especially in compulsory education, where no child is meant to be left behind. I decided to walk towards a possible reality where schools could support individuals' learning in how to be authentic; how to trust themselves; embrace their creativity and constructive, prosocial nature; and not be defined by the conditioning in the initial environment in which they emerged in. At that point, I

held teachers responsible for providing the conditions for the children and young people to follow their own direction. I reflected on my own relationships and learning that occurred as a result of those interactions, both constructive and harmful. I held myself responsible, which contributed to the experiences of guilt and psychological distress when I did not seem to be successful in following my own values of freedom, trust and unconditional positive regard.

As will later unfold in the autoethnographic chapter, I have no doubt that my own personal experiences at home contributed to my distrust in teachers and other adults in pedagogical roles. School was safer than home, but it was very distant from the Rogerian idea of the freedom to learn. Although most of my experiences of schooling seemed rigid, teacher-centred and disconnected from my perceptions of reality, I also have been fortunate to have a few teachers whom I experienced as person centred. Those teachers approached us as trustworthy individuals, and they facilitated spaces of belonging where all our individualities were appreciated and accepted: we became a learning community, in which the differences of opinion, the value of belief, could be an exciting discovery rather than a threat. Emotions, instead of being suppressed, could be constructively released and utilised as learning resources rather than inhibitors. Those pedagogues seemed to have trusted that we were capable of self-regulating and making choices, as well as learning from the choices that led to negative outcomes. The respect we had for them was not a result of fear and hierarchical structures, but rather, it was a natural response to being respected by them as equally valuable human beings. The environment we created did not have consistent characteristics;

there were tensions, heated arguments, tears and uncomfortable silences, as well as laughter, transformational debates, authentic encounters and the contagious flow of being engaged with what is meaningful.

While reflecting back on experiences that contributed to the formation of my self-concept during my childhood and adolescence, I am conscious that my current meaning-making is very different from what it was back then. Based on the journals from my adolescence, I attached more importance to the subject matter and interactions with other participants than to 'authentic pedagogues'. It is only recently that I have realised that, when following the subject matter with more authoritarian educators, I eventually disengaged with the learning because it was the environmental conditions that motivated me more than the subject itself. Therefore, it is my understanding that reflexivity and the perspective of time can contribute to an evaluation of what mattered in my own strive for authenticity and what has continued to shape me. It is also relevant in the context of the transparency of my own positionality that influences my own direction and, consequently, the direction of my doctoral work. This work is dedicated to exploring the socioenvironmental conditions that promote or inhibit the possibility of becoming an authentic pedagogue as a teacher in school or as a tutor at university.

CHAPTER 1

1 Thesis Aims, Objectives and Chapter Map

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the current thesis is twofold. First, a goal is to explore the research on the understanding of teacher's authenticity and contextualise this in person-centred theory. Second, the thesis investigates the potential impact of authenticity on teachers' eudaimonic well-being and job satisfaction in connection to issues with teachers' retention. Specifically, the aim is to tentatively explore the motivations and underpinning values held by teachers who chose to work in state-funded education (SFE) and how those values and motivations interact with their job satisfaction. These research pursuits are accompanied by researching the self as a teacher/learner across the educational lifespan.

The research questions guiding the phenomenological inquiries include the following: Is there a tangible connection between teachers' well-being and authenticity that will become apparent when asking teachers about how they experience their well-being at work? Are teachers able to engage with pedagogies consistent with what they experience to be best for the enhancement of their learners? Are teachers aware of their role in the systemic structures of education and the influence of external political forces?

What are the sources of teachers' motivation, and what sustains/drains teachers' motivation? Is it possible to be an authentic teacher/learner in context of SFE/marketised education?

1.2 Analytical Approaches

The qualitative methodologies identified for the current research were informed not only by the research questions, but also by the potential properties of qualitative inquiries that can facilitate healing, restoration of justice and social transformation (Denzin, 2010; Stanfield, 2006). This starts with the qualitative metasynthesis aimed at appreciating the pursuits of shared goals, building bridges between the existing understandings and recognising and learning from the perceived differences.

Qualitative methods seemed appropriate because the primary interest of the present research was to gain a better understanding of experiential lifeworld's' of teachers working in SFE, and it was difficult to capture phenomena such as authenticity, well-being and motivation. Furthermore, my intention as a researcher is to share the knowledge, to test it and continue co-creating it, along with engaging and encountering others in ways that are familiar, accessible and facilitative to connectedness and equality.

Qualitative, phenomenological, creative and ethnographic approaches seemed to be more appropriate in this regard. Creative methods are also employed as a possible path for engaging teachers in a nondirectional manner. For example, simply displaying images in the space of the interview

room without asking teachers to respond, leaving it up to them was an open invitation that seemed more aligned with the person-centric research framework.

There are existing measures of authenticity (Holland et al., 2021; Joseph & Wood, 2010) or well-being (Wood et al., 2008) that could be utilised and examined against statistical evidence on teacher retention to answer my initial question: Are authentic teachers more likely to stay in the profession? However, as my understanding of authenticity and context expanded, my curiosity shifted towards the experiences of teachers striving for authenticity in the context of education and that needed a phenomenological approach. There is no questionnaire (yet) that would encapsulate a live interaction between the participant and their subjective perceptions of the environment that led to my evolved version of the research question: Are teachers perceiving/recognising the possibility of being authentic in the context of marketised education?

It was also my intention to diffuse or disrupt interpretations of power dynamics in the process of the interviews. Accessing teachers in UK primary schools proved to be challenging and, in many ways, intimidating to a student-researcher, so although it is commonly implied that it is the researcher who 'holds the power', this was not my experience. As my commitment to a person-centred way of being and researching was developing, I decided to conduct nondirective interviews with my participants, which helped as a way creating a safer and more facilitative space, one where I do not take away power by

imposing my own direction. This was a liberating but also more risky approach

because it did not offer a structure that could ensure that I collect the data I

need for answering my research questions that standardised interviews would.

1.3 Chapter Map

1.3.1 Literature Review

The primary aim of Chapter Two is to position my own research within

the existing educational reality in the UK and provide a sound argument for the

consideration of teacher's authenticity from the perspective of a person-

centred theory as a possible factor impacting teachers' job satisfaction. The

secondary aim is to consider authenticity as a pedagogical approach that has

a direct and positive impact on the human flourishing of both teachers and

learners and that contributes to promoting social justice.

To achieve this, I begin with an introduction to person-centred

philosophy of human nature and the concept of optimal functioning because it

is a lens through which I have examined the state of 'education' today. Then,

existing conceptualisations of teacher authenticity will be introduced and

disseminated by considering contemporary tendencies, including political and

social values. The argument will be strengthened by a conceptualisation of

authenticity as a form of pedagogy that enhances not just learning capacity,

but also therapeutic and restorative qualities and that promotes socially

constructive behaviours. This will be followed by the proposition of

understanding teachers' authenticity as one of the predicting factors of

teachers' job satisfaction and, consequently, its potential impact on teachers' retention and potential outcomes for the overall quality of education. This theoretical proposition will be reinforced by the empirical findings from existing scientific studies in the social sciences field.

This is followed by a description of a current structure of state-funded and higher education in the UK, providing the basis for the unfolding critical evaluation. This will be reinforced by contextualising the influences of the nation state over the purposes of education and followed by an examination of explicit and implicit neoliberal and capitalist values and beliefs that, I will argue, have saturated into all branches of education in the UK today. This will serve as a foundation for a discussion of the ongoing issues on teachers' retention, with a particular focus on teachers' satisfaction.

1.3.2 Methodology

This research progresses through stages where the outcomes of one study inform the next. Chapter Three explores the positioning of the researcher and theoretical approach of the person-centric framework in educational research. The framework is then applied to the phenomenological methods listed in Figure 1. The individual methods are discussed individually; this includes an exploration of the creative aspects integrated into the interpretive phenomenological analysis.

Figure 1. Research in stages.

Qualitative Metasynthesis — Interpretive Phenomenological Creative Analysis — Reflective Lifeworld Research — Autoethnography Part 1 — Autoethnography Par 2
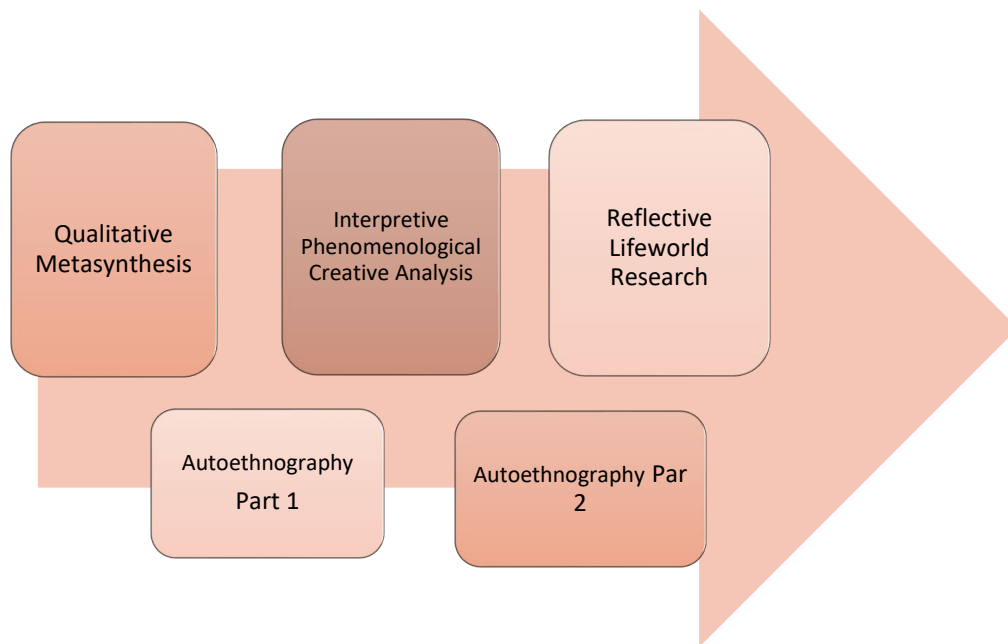
of this thesis is twofold, firstly, it is to explore the existing research on understanding of teacher's authenticity and contextualise those in person-centred theory. Secondly, it is to investigate the potential impact of authenticity on teachers' eudaimonic wellbeing and job satisfaction in connection to issues with teachers' retention. Specifically, it aimed to tentatively explore the motivations and the underpinning values held by teachers that chose to work in State Funded Education (SFE) and how those interact with their job satisfaction. These research pursuits are accompanied by researching self as a teacher/learner across the educational lifespan.

The research questions guiding the phenomenological inquiries include: is there a tangible connection between teachers wellbeing and authenticity that will become apparent when asking teachers about how they experience their wellbeing at work; are teachers supported/permitted to engage with

pedagogies consistent with what they believe to be best for the enhancement of their learners; are teachers aware of their role in the systemic structures of education and the influence of external political forces; what are the sources of teachers motivation and what sustains/drains teachers motivation; is it possible to be authentic teacher/learner in context of marketised education?

1.3.3 A Note on Illustrations

A substantial part of this doctoral work is encapsulated in the illustrations that are located at various points in majority of the chapters. The illustrations serve a number of purposes. For instance, they work as a conduit for connecting to the theory by the researcher; inclusion of those serves a function of offering a visual representation of theoretical ideas. In the context of empirical research, they function as a medium for encapsulating the experiential claims of the participants or meaning making processes identified by the researcher. Inclusion of such illustrations aims to facilitate an creative connection with the research data; this is where the experiential, visual responses to the image might precedes the intellectual understanding of what it might mean. They are also relevant to the evocative qualities of the thesis as well as analytical processes of the researcher.

1.3.4 Qualitative Metasynthesis

Because the concept of teachers' authenticity itself has often been referred to as elusive and the differences in theoretical understandings opens it up to a somewhat discrediting critique regarding its usefulness (Bialystock, 2015), qualitative metasynthesis of the research on teachers' authenticity has

offered an approach that could investigate the points of convergence and differences. The metasynthesis identified the core themes in what is understood as being authentic, as well as which conditions are noted as inhibiting/facilitating the authenticity of teachers.

1.3.5 IPCA

Chapter Four encompasses findings from the first research project, the IP(C)A, which is based on implicit hypothesising that, if I ask about teachers about their well-being at work, I will hear about authenticity. This brought me back to the exploration of eudemonic well-being as part of 'job satisfaction' in connection to authenticity. The IPCA study 'Burning Teachers Out' explores the experiences of three primary school teachers. The interpretations of the findings have been expanded with illustrations that capture some of the meanings communicated by the participants.

1.3.6 Autoethnography

Autoethnographic study parts 1 (Chapter 6) and 2 (Chapter 8) explore the psycho-socio-environmental conditions that are experienced as positively or negatively associated with teacher–learner authenticity. The first part focuses on experiences in education, both formal and informal, that shaped my self-concept as a learning person, drawing connections between authenticity, eudaimonic well-being, motivation and various forms of distress.

The subsequent part, the autoethnography, provides insights into the relational components presented as connected to teacher–learner

authenticity. This second part is also concerned with understanding the role of the environment in facilitating/inhibiting the capacity for authenticity of the teachers and learners that was not fully explored in the work of other researchers, here offering p-c theory to as a way of understanding it.

The autoethnographic study includes creative methods such as poetry and drawing for communicating the experiences and encapsulating the composites of informal interactions with others in a form that ensures anonymity.

1.3.7 Reflective Lifeworld Research Case Study

The reflective lifeworld research case study 'Sucking results out of children' refocuses on the concept of teacher authenticity in the context of state-funded primary education and experiences of striving for authenticity by one teacher about to leave the profession. This study seeks a greater understanding of the values and motivations of the teacher and her inner tensions resulting from incongruence between what she experiences as a facilitative environment to wholistic learning and the imposed values of the UK's education system.

1.3.8 Critical Reflectivity, Conclusions, and Implications

Chapter Nine is a discussion of the findings that emerged throughout the thesis. It begins with elevating the relationship between authenticity and safety, which is a foundation of all my findings. Then, it synthesises the

findings from the studies to examine the connection between teachers'

authenticity, eudemonic well-being, integrity and the possibility of being

satisfied with the work of a teacher in English contemporary education. Here,

the relational components are at the centre of the discussion. This is followed

by a critical analysis of the damaging impact of incongruence as it manifests

in a person, a learning community and educational systems. Finally, the

chapter ends with a personal reflection and exploration of future directions in

research.

CHAPTER 2

2 Literature Overview

2.1 Introduction

The primary aims of this chapter are to position my research within England's educational reality and to provide a sound argument for why a teacher's authenticity should be considered from a person-centred theory perspective as a possible factor impacting their job satisfaction. I also aim to consider authenticity as a pedagogical approach that directly and positively impacts the human flourishing of both teachers and learners and promotes social justice. To achieve these aims, I will introduce the person-centred philosophy of human nature and the concept of optimal functioning as a lens for examining the state of education today. This will be followed by a description of the current structure of state-funded and higher education in England to provide a basis for the unfolding critical evaluation. This will be reinforced by contextualising the influences of the nation state over the purposes of education, followed by an examination of explicit and implicit neoliberal and capitalist values and beliefs. Exploring the relationship between the formation of the authentic individual as well as collective and the system that they are part of is the most important aspect of this literature review.

Following your own pathway, being passionate and committed, maintaining intrinsic motivation, collaborating with others, making socially constructive choices, having understanding and acceptance towards others, can all be viewed as desirable characteristics of a teacher and they are consistent with becoming authentic. Therefore, understanding the harm of applying market values of competitiveness and self-interest, aimed not at caring for all but increasing profits of few, decreasing costs at the cost to those that already struggle, pitting individuals against each other, seeing knowledge as commodity that can be purchased for a right price becomes central to understanding conditions impacting on of becoming (in)authentic. Based on this foundation, I will discuss the ongoing issue of teacher retention, with a focus on teacher satisfaction. Then, existing conceptualisations of teacher authenticity will be introduced and disseminated in consideration of contemporary tendencies, including political and social values. The argument will be strengthened by conceptualisation of authenticity as a form of pedagogy that enhances not just learning capacity but which also has therapeutic and restorative qualities and promotes socially constructive behaviours. This argument culminates in the proposition that authenticity is a predictive factor for teacher job satisfaction; consequently, it has a potential impact on teacher retention and the overall quality of education. This theoretical proposition will be reinforced by empirical findings from existing social scientific studies.

2.2 Person-centred Understandings

Living and learning in a globalised world presents numerous exhilarating opportunities, but it also presents complexities that lead to chaos and uncertainty. 'Common truths' and dominant ideologies established in cultural, religious and political structures are threatened when examined in light of alternative or contrasting sources of knowledge, and nothing seems certain. Embracing diversity and expanding the horizons of freedom challenge existing systems, which offer us the perception of safety and stability needed for our functioning. The need for safety is one of the basic human needs, advocated as essential to our optimal functioning (Maslow, 1943; 1954). Therefore, if optimal functioning or self-actualisation is seen as purpose of education (Kristjánsson, 2016; 2017; hooks, 1994; Moustakas, 1966; Rogers 1967) safety is essential to wholistic and meaningful learning.

With the overload of accessible information and the 'blurrification' of existing boundaries between countries, cultures, morals and values, we are understandably threatened by the experience of a chaos for which we do not seem to be prepared or educated. Although everything seems to be changing, power structures appear to continue striving to maintain the status quo including the traditional forms of education. Human experience shows that problems, like the phoenix, keep rising from the ashes: new wars, diseases, pollutants, oppressions, injustices and discriminations arise to replace the old.

This broad perspective is important to bear in mind when searching for pedagogies that are responsive to today's challenges. In this context, the

person-centred philosophy originated by Carl Rogers (1957) offers a unique understanding of ourselves and the formation of our subjective and collective realities. The person-centred approach accommodates all those issues, complexities and uncertainties, by embracing our socially constructive orientation as well as adaptive and problem-solving capacities (Rogers). In doing so it projects hope for the future if we are willing to open ourselves up to learning about ourselves, others and accept our role in co-creating the existing reality.

2.3 Philosophy of Human Nature

Person-centred philosophy rests upon a specific view of human nature that is paramount for a wholistic understanding of the non-directivity that underpins person-centred approach. Rogers's (1957) view of human nature proposed is grounded on his experiences:

My experience is that he (a person) is a basically trustworthy member of the human species, whose deepest characteristics tend toward development, differentiation, cooperative relationships; whose life tends fundamentally to move from dependence to independence; whose impulses tend naturally to harmonize into a complex and changing pattern of self-regulation; whose total character is such as to tend to preserve and enhance himself and his species, and perhaps to move it toward its further evolution. (p. 201)

Conservation and creativity are two aspects of human nature that can be viewed as contradicting as well as complimentary, and this is not a new discovery (Kriz, 2008; Lawson & Silver, 1973; Rogers, 1957). This inherent contradiction, with enhancement and maintenance on the opposite sides of the spectrum, exists as a source of energy or motivation within the human organism, manifesting as the actualising tendency (Cornelious-White, 2007c; Rogers, 1959). Actualising tendency is also evident in our tendency to self-actualise: in our need to self-improve and change parts of ourselves that do not serve us, as well as in our need to maintain a consistent self-structure that is experienced as acceptable to our-self's (Kriz, 2008; Rogers, 1959). Although Rogers' theory offers a much more hopeful way of looking at humanity, his work was in no way utopian nor naive. Rogers recognised the occurrence of maladjustment or psychopathology that occurs in a human organism when their actualising tendency becomes thwarted, hence resulting in maladaptive and often destructive behaviors (Rogers, 1959). Person-centred theory explains that it is the interaction between the person and their social environment that can thwart or inhibit the actualising tendency of the human organism (Joseph, 2021). This view challenges the idea that destructive or maladaptive behaviors are intrinsic to the person, instead proposing that these behaviors can be viewed as reasonable responses of the organism to the environment that is perceived as compromising or inhibiting their actualising tendency. This is not to take away the responsibility for one's responses to the environment away from the individual—on the contrary, this approach embraces autonomy and attached to it ownership of own actions (Joseph, 2016; Rogers, 1977).

It is through the awareness of how the environment influences our development as human beings that we can experience personal power in making more constructive choices and seeking new pathways or challenging old ones (Rogers, 1977). This in turn, highlights the interconnectedness of self and the environment. Cornelius-White (2004, 2007c) proposed that the concept of actualising tendency mostly utilised in application to the individual must be considered alongside a broader concept of formative tendency that applies to enhancement and maintenance of groups, social systems, and all of the living world. In any case acknowledging the importance of the environment in the formation of the person signifies the importance of the person in the formation of the environment.

To begin to understand the extent of the revolutionary potential of viewing the very nature of every human organism as socially constructive and trustworthy, one must examine the existing social systems within which people continue to function. These systems have a long history of hierarchical distribution of power that belongs to few individuals or privileged minorities, and while in democratic societies the hierarchies are meant to emerge through a bottom-up approach (Toelstede, 2020) the influence of those with existing vast resources is ever present.

The field of psychology also has an impact on the distribution of power in society. For instance, Freud's (1930) view of human nature as primarily sexually motivated, aggressive and orientated towards hegemonic pleasure

without any self-emergent morality continues to influence and justify the ongoing need for external control. While Freud (1927) was explicitly critical of religion comparing it to 'childhood neurosis' his view of humanity could be seen as closely aligned with existing Christian views of human nature as weak and sinful. It can be argued that with the recent movements in the field of positive psychology (Linley & Joseph, 2004) we are moving away from the conditioning influences of the past. At the same time, the progressiveness of capitalism in saturation of all spheres of our lives seems to offer an alternative pathway where 'having' eradicates the need for 'being' (Fromm, 1976).

Cornelius-White (2004) argued for balanced valuing of both being (maintaining) and doing/becoming (enhancing) tendencies of the human organism; valuing 'having' not only interferes with that balance but devalues them both. Conversely, the work of Kasser et al. (2014), Kasser (2016) focuses on the costs of that shift, reporting on the negative results on the psychological wellbeing when being driven by materialistic values. It could be argued that the collective acceptance of 'capitalist realism' (Fisher, 2009) is connected to its clear path of progression without the need for messiness of self-exploration; this is where the worth of the person is defined by their accumulated wealth and status. In that light capitalism is not a progression of humanity but an intentional avoidance of existing human problems at a massive scale.

Person-centred approach invites us to encounter the uncomfortable realities asserting that we already have solutions to our own problems if we

are prepared to open our-self's to experiencing what moves us (Sheffield et al., 2011). Sheffield et al. (2011) argued for wholistic, person-centred education that is inclusive of embodied feelings occurring in response to experienced realities. Furthermore, similarly to Moustakas (1966) they argued that emotion-less, fragmented to purely intellectual activity education is not only mis-educative but dangerous. Dangerous as it fosters in-action, disconnection from self and others, disempowerment and as pointed out by Sheffield et al. (2011) it deactivates democracy. It is this wholistic connectivity between the nature of persons and their environmental conditions that is explored in this literature review, here with a particular focus on the field of education through a person-centered lens. This exploration can be contextualized within the broader discourse of education that aims to facilitate human flourishing.

2.3.1 Flourishing and well-being

Person-centred theory underpins what it means to be a fully functioning person and how this aligns with the more familiar concepts of psychological or eudaimonic well-being or, as discussed below, human flourishing (Joseph et al., 2020). In his book *Freedom to Learn*, Carl Rogers offered theory and practicalities of facilitating learning environments where people engage with learning that is purposeful and meaningful to them and, as a result, become more fully functioning. Both Rogers and Moustakas argued that the same applies to teachers who find their occupation to be more intrinsically rewarding and meaningful when they are part of these learning communities. Person-centred learning communities can be seen as naturally occurring gardens where all living beings flourish. There is a growing number of

researchers advocating for human flourishing as the purpose of education; some scholars have thread it back to the Aristotelian philosophy of morality, virtue and ethics (Kristjánsson, 2016; 2017), while others linked it to new concepts such as positive (Seligman, 2011) or self-determined (Barable & Arvanitis, 2018; Deci & Ryan (1994) education.

It has been noted that the work of Rogers has been omitted when considering human flourishing as the aim of education (Joseph et al., 2020), here supporting Shmid's (2012) argument that the non-directivity inherent to person-centred approach threatens existing structures and, in this case, established educational apparatus.

Being a fully functioning person might be seen as an ideal, but perhaps it is more useful to consider it as direction rather than a final destination because our conditions, both intrinsic to our human organism and extrinsic (environmental factors), are unlikely to be ideal. We are constantly faced with challenges that might apply to, for example, our physical health, safety, relationships, financial security. Here, becoming fully functioning means that we strive towards identifying the most constructive ways of facing and overcoming these challenges. Although human flourishing or well-being itself exists outside of the medical model because it does not function as a diagnosis, it is often presented alongside mental health debates and within a broader discourse of health itself.

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1948) defined 'health' as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. This definition creates unhelpful and unrealistic expectations of what it means to be a healthy person. Furthermore, it can also be seen as giving grounds to medicalisation of human distress, where psychological distress can be treated as disorder or an actual biological ill-health (Sanders, 2006).

This further acknowledges that our realities are complex and that complexity might be seen as a reflection of our complex nature, here presenting us with many competing needs. Person-centred theory does not offer a reduction of that complexity by suppressing, overriding or neglecting some of those needs; instead, it sensitises us to those needs so that we can choose the ways that are the most constructive individually and collectively. What I mean is that instead of judging and suppressing, we recognise and give validity to all our needs so we can evaluate them and choose the most constructive pathway forward.

2.3.2 Fully functioning person

Becoming a fully functioning person is facilitated by trusting own organismic valuing of experiences; a conscious process of intrinsic evaluation of what is perceived as helpful or unhelpful to the wholeness of human organism free from the unwanted influences of others (Sanders & Joseph, 2016). The process of organismic valuing that enabled the person to develop in congruence with their actualising tendency can be considered

straightforward in the case of a newly developing human organism (an infant) who has not yet been significantly contaminated by the environment and whose needs are met as they emerge. The needs become more complex when they begin to compete against each other and against the needs, choices and expectations of others. In this example, environmental contamination refers to exposure to the conditions of worth and introjected values, where the acceptance of a person is conditional upon them meeting the expectations of significant others (Rogers, 1957).
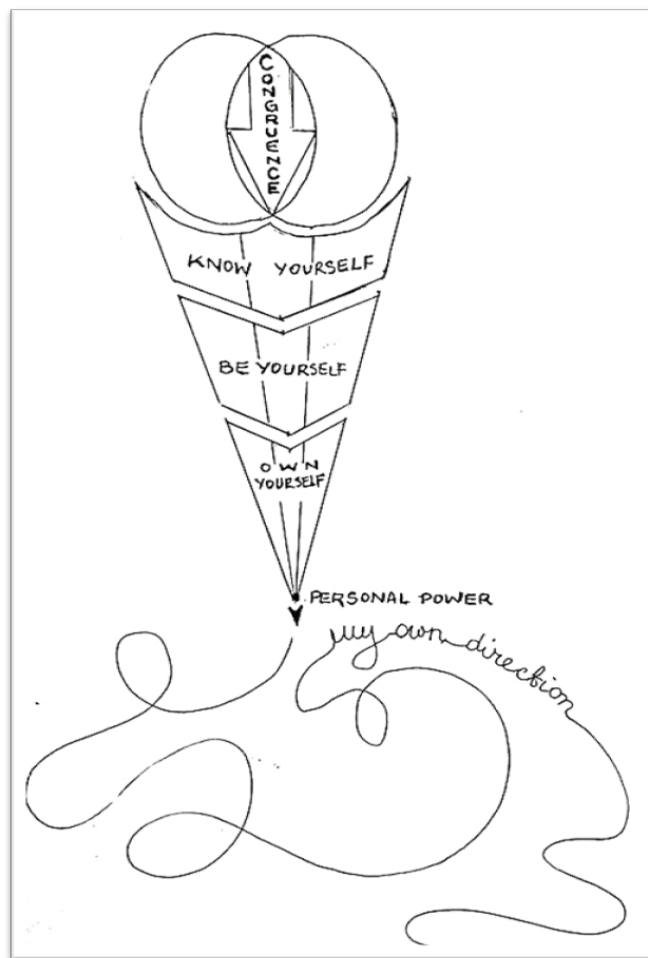
Figure 2. The power of becoming.

The process of conditioning can lead to the integration of introjected values that are not acquired in the process of intrinsic valuing but are accepted as such. This, in turn, might lead to the incongruence between the experiencing of the organism and perceived self-concept (Rogers, 1957). The more incongruent the person, the less personal power (motivational energy) they release to pursue their own path (Figure 2). Being authentic here does not mean being a fully functioning person but striving towards it; following own direction in finding a way of being that is most optimal, closest to intrinsic values, within the possibilities of existing circumstances. As in the illustration 2 the more congruent the person in all three dimensions of being authentic (know/be/own), the freer the flow of personal power (Joseph, 2016).

2.3.3 Authentic: Always Learning Person

Rogers (1995) wrote about becoming a person as a journey of learning to trust oneself; that process can be enabled by staying aware of oneself; instead of controlling or suppressing one's thoughts, feelings and impulses, the objective is to understand them. He referred to an individual's fear of the unknown, unpredictable, unconscious and possibly unwanted feelings, reactions and responses, identifying fear as a trigger for authoritarian guardianship of oneself. He argued that once the individual becomes the 'comfortable inhabitant of a richly varied society of impulses and feelings and thoughts', that person can recognise themself as a 'free agent' with a number of personal choices '(Rogers, 1995, p. 268).

This process is known as integral to the self-actualisation of psychological well-being because it enables the integration of the organismic self and self-concept and achievement of a state of congruence (Behr et al., 2020; Sanders & Joseph, 2016). This process is visualised in the figure 3, where through the process of critical reflection and unconditional positive self-regard (Murphy et al., 2017), an individual can increase the congruence between organismic self and self-concept.
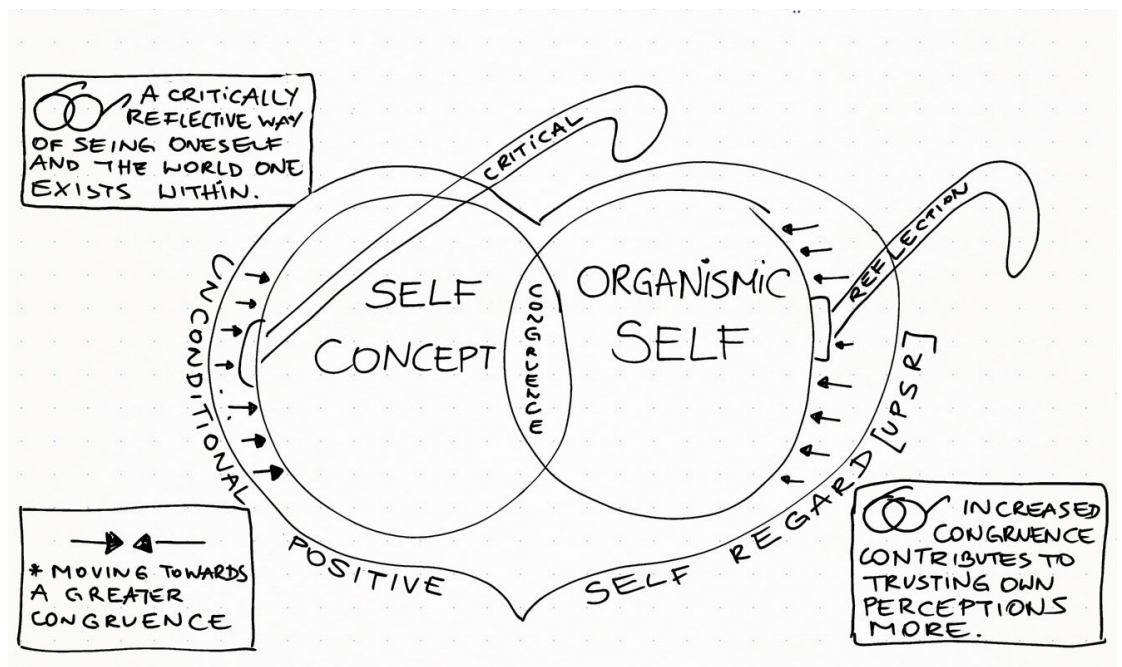
Figure 3. Trusting oneself: moving towards greatest congruence.

Rogers' (1959) person-centred theory states that for optimal functioning, the human organism relies on an intrinsic valuing process to recognise experiences contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of the

organism. As such, being authentic manifests in trusting the intrinsic valuing system, resulting in autonomy and self-direction. The natural process of learning to trust our own intrinsic valuing system can, however, be usurped by our 'need for positive regard' from others, which makes us vulnerable to the processes of conditioning (Standal, 1954; Rogers, 1959). As such, the developing person is subject to conditions of worth, thus introjecting values from influential others (Joseph, 2016; Rogers, 1959). In turn, this leads to the incongruence between the experiencing of the organism and perceived self-concept. Being authentic can be equated to a state of inner congruence, which requires an environment in which the person experiences the freedom to learn and trust their own self-direction in exploring their own values and meanings (Joseph, 2016; Joseph et al., 2020; Moustakas, 1966; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

Joseph (2016) explained that authenticity begins by 'knowing yourself', where the person strives towards uncovering constructs within their self-concept and intentionally focusing on the experiences that might or might not be congruent with that self-concept. Consequently, 'being yourself' is connected to one's own experiencing and being open and flexible in the construction and deconstruction of one's self-concept.
Joseph (2016) implied that only then can the person fully own themself: their experiencing, their values and their actions are symbolised accurately and integrated into a fluid self-concept (Rogers, 1959).

Rogers (1959) asserted that the actualising tendency is the source of energy within the human organism, that is, the origin of all aspects of motivation. This has significance in understanding the phenomena of authenticity because it suggests that by being authentic and following one's own direction as evaluated by the intrinsic locus of evaluation, the person's motivation can be nourished/maintained. In turn, inauthenticity—an incongruence between our experiencing and the structure of self—stifles and inhibits at least some aspects of human motivation (Patterson & Joseph, 2007; Rogers, 1959). Being open to learning as a way of enhancing oneself, is an expression of actualising tendency resulting in intrinsic motivation or in other words it the need to learn (Deci & Ryan, 1994; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Meaningful learning satisfies that need and maintains the motivation to continue engaging, it fits well with the basic psychological need for agency that is also connected to wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This seems particularly relevant in light of ongoing concerns around teacher's retention and well-being (Barnes, 2019; Kidger et al., 2015; Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

2.3.4 Authenticity as a Creative Path

Being open to learning and experiencing is one of the characteristics of authentic person; Xu et al. (2021) in their study of N=300 college students found that openness to experiencing and openness to change were the factors that enhance both the authenticity and creativity. The links between authenticity and creativity have been established in many other empirical studies that vary in their philosophical underpinnings (see: Afridi et al., 2020; Černe et al., 2013; Montani et al., 2019; Rego et al., 2014; Ribeiro et al.,

2020; Xu et al. 2022). Studies like Cropley et al., 2008; Gutworth et al., 2018; Xu et al. (2022) and Zhao et al. (2021) report encountering the 'malevolent creativity' where creativity produced harmful and destructive outcomes. This potentiality of creativity that can have both constructive and destructive products has been explored by Rogers (1954). Rogers explained that for creativity to manifest as constructive, there are inner conditions that need to be present. This included openness to experience (extensionality); playfulness, feeling accepted and understood and having an internal locus of evaluation. Moreover, conditions that foster constructive creativity are almost the same as the inner conditions that characterise authentic people (Joseph, 2016).

While (…) found that authenticity has been reported as positively correlated with creativity it does not mean that complying is inauthentic by default. The illustration above represents a spectrum between creativity and compliance where to be authentic is to be open to both while evaluating the value of those experiences from internal locus of evaluation.

Rogers (1954) presented creativity as a manifestation of the enhancing capacity of actualizing tendency; in fact, it is the innate creativity that enables human organism to enhance and just as actualizing tendency, creativity can be thwarted by unfavorable conditions. While Roger's understanding of creativity moves away from a value judgement of the final product, the definition does imply that creativity is evidenced by the emergence of a novel product:

My definition, then, of the creative process is that it is the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the material, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other (Rogers, 1954:251).

In that definition creativity seems to be the process of interacting with the environment (material, sound, person, situation) that results in a novel growth of some kind. This emphasis on the product is explained by the scientific orientation of Rogers (1954) where for something to be defined it must be observable. The word creativity is commonly associated with arts and then with the aesthetic and conceptual evaluation of what is recognized as valuable art which can be seen as unhelpful when understanding creativity through person-centred lens. Furthermore, the idea of 'novel product' might strengthen that most common conception making it more difficult to approach it from an alternative conception of creativity as 'novel growth'. Therefore, it might be required to move beyond the common meaning of 'novel product' in relationship to creativity. Under the umbrella of 'novel relational product' Rogers (1954) offers examples such as: child devising a new game with their friends, symbolizing fantasy in words, 'creating new forming's of one's own personality', inventing a torture device as well as composing, painting or problem solving.
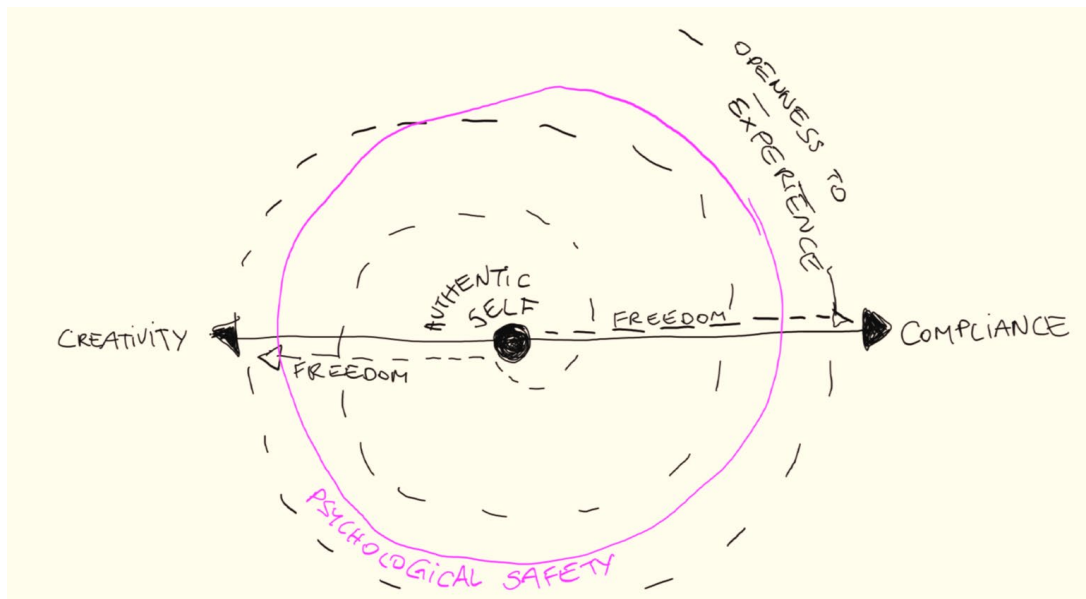
If actualizing tendency and creativity are flowing from the same source, one might argue that by inhibiting creative expression, we also lock away at least some aspects of the human capacity; inhibiting the flow of our motivational energy experienced as being fully alive. Our organisms are creative by nature, they continue growing and changing until they exert all their lifeforce. Natalie Rogers (1993) claimed that there is a connection between the essence of our life force and the life force of all of the living world. This view seems to be cutting across cultures and theories and is reflected in the work of others such as Lorde (2019) or Pinkola-Estes (2005) where creative energy flows as sensuality, sexuality, inner power, emotional expression, freedom, interconnectedness, healing and transformation.

2.3.5 Well-being and authenticity

In light of current research, it has become apparent that 'authenticity is one of the strongest predictors of well-being' (Wood et al., 2008, p. 396). Wood et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative study in the field of counselling and psychology to develop an authenticity scale that can be used in investigating the possible correlation between authenticity and well-being. The sampling strategy, choice of methods and their implementation, as well as the process of analysis, were clearly outlined and supported by thick descriptions. Their diverse sample consisted of N=855 participants and their findings provided empirical evidence for the significance of authenticity in the individual's psychological well-being, as well as shedding light on the correlation between authenticity and self-esteem. Importantly, these findings have been replicated in another study by Stevens and Constantinescu (2014), who aimed to validate the scale in a different context while investigating the relationship of authenticity and two components of an individual's well-being:

• Eudaimonia: Living according to one's nature

• Hedonia: Happiness

According to the findings, the components of authenticity bore significant relationships with both forms of individual well-being (Stevens & Constantinescu, 2014). This was presented as an important finding because it '*supports a critical proposition of humanistic-existential theory that living in accordance with one's organismic self is not only related, but also possibly conducive to adaptive and healthy functioning* (i.e., vitality)' (Stevens & Constantinescu, 2014, p. 12). Therefore, in person-centered theory where human nature is understood as being constructive and pro-socia,l eudemonic

well-being aligns with actions that will be experienced as constructive and pro-social.

Furthermore, existing Freudian (1930) arguments assert that humans are primarily orientated towards pleasure- or self-satisfaction seeking behaviors that often oppose values of morality and ethics, hence the need for external and imposed codes and principles that aim to subdue or suppress those needs. Rogers (1961) argued that it is the externally imposed suppression of our needs that contributes to inauthenticity and maladaptive behaviors because although the needs are repressed, they continue to exist within the self. The trustworthiness of human nature offered by Rogers (1961, 1980) is not based on the blind faith that the person will always make a constructive choice, but in its capacity to learn from experiences and motivation to keep searching for the better choice. Self-regulating in this context is linked to authenticity and eudaimonic well-being, where in recognising one's own organismic values, one needs to act in ways that align with those values to remain congruent and avoid inner distress. This follows from understanding psychological distress as incongruence; applying multidimensional model of congruence proposed by Cornelious-White (2007a) to incongruence can facilitate individual reflection on its sources and expand self-understanding. For instance, in that multidimensional model, authenticity is presented as one of five dimensions, alongside genuineness, symbolisation, flow, and organismic integration (Cornelious-White, 2007a). In that model authenticity applies to the relational dimension of congruence and encapsulates persons strive to, when appropriate, communicate themselves,

their experiences, perceptions as accurately as possible, to others. This in turn can be viewed as connected to eudaimonia, where genuine communication with others can support finding ways of living closer to our nature as individuals and collectively as a humanity. Rogers (1954) argued that it is openness to experiencing self and others, or self in relation to others that activates the prosocial tendencies of the person; these can be understood as both actualizing and formative tendencies as discussed in the next paragraphs.

Intentional striving towards knowing oneself, exploring own experiential world as a way of deepening self-awareness is part of being authentic (Joseph, 2016). A self-aware person would experience distress within one's own organism when acting in ways that are incongruent with one's values, and the most organismic choice is to avoid emergence of sources of distress. Furthermore, the self-awareness that results from commitment to learning about how we become our-self's cannot exist in separation from observing ourselves in others, as well as becoming more conscious of the relational impacts on our becoming; this means that it is in the person's best interest to search for ways of being that avoids distress not just to oneself but also to others once the interconnectedness is recognised through experiencing instead of being denied (Schmid, 2013).

This can be understood in relation to the prosocial nature of a fully functioning person where actualising tendency manifests in enhancing oneself as well as the environments we are part of. This also fits well with the concept

of formative tendency as a sphere beyond self-actualisation, where individual might prioritise a collective wellbeing at some cost to oneself in order to stay congruent with their own values. For example, if one values human life, it would be incongruent or inauthentic to be non-responsive or compliant when encountering actions that cause harm to others. Conversely, Sheffield et al (2011) argued for education that creates space for experiencing potentially distressing emotions as they occur in response to real life problems, as a way of activating learners as members of democratic society. Authenticity can facilitate that process, as ownership of one's own actions means recognising the role that one holds in shaping one's own life as well as the degree of an impact one might have on shaping the environment (Joseph, 2016); in this context, enhancing one's own as well as the collective wellbeing.

2.4 Conceptualising Teacher's Authenticity

The exploration of teacher's authenticity cannot be separated from the context of 'capitalist reality' and its impact on educational systems, which can fragment pedagogies and stifle human flourishing (e.g., Ab Kadir, 2016; Akoury, 2013; Amsler, 2011, 2014; Ball, 2003); this seems particularly important in thinking about teachers' retention (Department for Education, 2019). This is because teachers' report being motivated by taking part in a wholistic growth and flourishment of their learners and their job satisfaction is connected to building positive relationships with learners and both of those aspects are inhibited by the individualistic, transactional and instrumental values of neoliberal capitalism.

2.4.1 Elusive phenomena of teachers' authenticity?

Although teacher's authenticity is not a new concept, it is only recently that it became of interest to teachers and educational researchers, and it could be considered a fairly new research territory, with the first identified empirical study being completed by Cranton and Carusetta almost two decades ago (2004a). The relevance of teachers' authenticity has been attributed to the diminishing levels of teachers' autonomy in view of changing policy (Kreber et al, 2010), the duality of contemporary teachers' roles as teachers and researchers (Kreber & Klampfleitner, 2012), the fragmentation of educational practices and purposes (Akoury, 2013; Kreber at al, 2010) and in light of student satisfaction and outcomes (De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016; Johnson & LaBelle, 2017).

In the broad sense, the definitions of authenticity are located on a wide spectrum, with one extreme being individualism and servantship being the other. Individualism as a social construct is structured in line with entrepreneurship values, self-discovery and the pursuit of individual goals with the aim of achieving self-fulfilment (Potter, 2010). Opposing this, authenticity as servantship reflects the higher purpose of an individual in a cosmic hierarchy, where authenticity manifests in serving others often at the expense of oneself (Akoury, 2013). Both of these concepts have been criticised as problematic or elusive, resulting in the ongoing pursuit of a satisfactory explanation of what it means to be authentic.

Most studies on teacher authenticity have been presented either as a moral and ethical concept where being an authentic teacher can be assessed by the number of characteristics found in the work of Taylor (Kreber, 2010), with some studies presenting an additional layer of communitarian or religious values that dominate this understanding of authenticity (Akoury, 2013; Rabin, 2013; Ramezanzadeh et al., 2017; Ramezanzadeh, 2017). Others see the roots of teachers' authenticity in existential theories, which means becoming increasingly conscious of oneself, others and context through the process of critical reflection (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). Other studies have examined students' perspectives on the authenticity of their teachers, where care, expertise and genuineness seem to be the most prominent themes (i.e., Brookfield, 2006; De Bruycker & Kirshner, 2016, 2017; Johnson & LaBelle, 2017; Kreber & Klampfleitner, 2012, 2013). Existing conceptualisations present contradictions between authenticity as individuation (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Cranton, 2006), individualism (Vanini, 2007; Biaystok, 2015; Bialystok & Kukar, 2018), care for students learning through nondirective pedagogies and 'ethical coercion' (Brookfield, 2006; Cranton, 2006) or the concepts of self-efficacy and exercising power over others as a teacher (Brookfield, 2006).

Most studies of teachers' authenticity have explained the decrease in teachers' agency in terms of educational reforms and control, authority and hierarchies in education. The exception are studies by Cranton and Carusetta (2004) and Carusetta and Cranton (2005), where the emphasis appears to be on collaboration and facilitation and the intentional release of control by the

teacher. Understanding the influence of external factors seems important, but equally so is an understanding of what authenticity means in relation to human nature. Brook (2009) drew on the work of Heidegger, proposing that authenticity represents becoming truly human, where one's striving towards authenticity is intrinsic to human nature but inhibited by a 'primordial tendency to fall away from our own being' (Brook, 2009, p. 52). This emphasises yet another variation in applying the concept of authenticity exclusively to the self-construct of the person or to their whole human organism. Kreber et al. (2007) attempted to accommodate these multiple and often contradictive perspectives in the multidimensional model of authenticity. However, none of the current studies on teacher authenticity have explicitly drawn on the theoretical work of Carl Rogers, who provided a conceptual framework of authenticity that both accommodates the view that authenticity is intrinsic to human nature and that its development becomes thwarted by forces external to the person.

Being congruent and connected to oneself and others (Rogers, 1994) or trustworthy, as noted by Moustakas (1966), has been one of the prominent themes in the empirical research on teachers' authenticity. Johnson and LaBelle (2017) found that the factors determining teachers' authenticity as perceived by students included being 'approachable', where approachability has behavioural indicators of being trustworthy, open, displaying elements of their humanity and admitting their mistakes. Congruently, Wright (2013) discussed the importance of taking the emotional context into account: having the courage to use true emotions in the classroom and displaying morals

through actions, which, in turn, communicates the teacher's credibility. Although Kreber (2010) separated being sincere and honest and the 'process of becoming' as individual dimensions, it appears closely related to the person-centred theory of congruence.

While probing the concept of 'being one's own self', Ramezanzadeh et al. (2017) presented what could be perceived as a superficial account of the extrinsic factors impacting teaching practice rather than the intrinsic condition of personal/teacher's identity. Nevertheless, Ramezanzadeh et al.'s (2017) analysis of 'ultimate meaning' compensates for this lack of depth in the initial theme, addressing the strive for congruence and process of discovering oneself while subjected to external constraints.

Being connected to oneself could also be viewed in light of a strive for freedom through self-discovery; that is, freedom from the values that might have been imposed on us, compliantly accepted as the only choice or integrated without much consideration. This kind of liberation enables us to connect to our internal values and beliefs:

The majority of the participants referred to their attempt to free themselves from the external expectations as one of the most important goals of their teaching to ⸢SEP⸣discover their own true selves, accomplish their internal purposes and expectations, and escape from the existing cliches. (Ramezanzadeh et al., 2016b)

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Furthermore, critically reflecting on oneself leads to the deconstruction of behaviours or, in the case of teachers, pedagogical practices, to reveal the construct of our self-construct and begin questioning and understanding why we do what we do. The results of such a challenge are observable in participants' contributions, where being authentic ultimately correlates with being human: 'I teach my students how to be human through my words, actions, reactions. before anything else, my students should learn how to be a human how to live as a human' (Ramezanzadeh et al., 2016a, p. 11).

2.4.2 Underpinning theories and philosophies
Existentialism & human nature

Wald and Harland (2017) identified 'the existential authentic self' as one of three perspectives through which authenticity can be examined. This view of authenticity as intertwined with human nature—a process of becoming, searching for meaning and fulfilment—is reflected in existential philosophy. However, Wald and Harland (2017) concluded that this field does not seem to offer a grounded conceptualisation of authenticity that is stretched across different ontological positions within existential and humanistic approaches.

Kreber et al.'s (2007) comprehensive review on the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of authenticity in teaching encapsulated the ongoing dialogue between authenticity and identity. However, Kreber et al. (2007) differentiated the two by presenting the essence of identity as potentially

authentic or inauthentic; a similar view was presented by Brook (2009) in referring to the possibilities of human existence as authentic or inauthentic. Kreber et al. (2007), Brook (2009) and Ramezanzadeh et al. (2017a) emphasised the contributions of Heidegger in the construction of authenticity as a 'process of becoming'. However, Brook (2009) grounded the development of teachers' authenticity solely in Heidegger's phenomenology, where learning and teaching are seen to be an expression of being human and the purpose of education could be defined as becoming truly human (Heidegger, 1998, as cited in Brook, 2009), while Kreber supported Heideggerian views with communitarian and critical theories.

Here, one might note the emerging pattern where authenticity becomes intertwined with the human condition and where becoming authentic signifies becoming fully human. For this reason, before engaging in the conceptualisation of authenticity, as suggested by Wald and Harland (2017), one should ponder the ontology of human nature and its impact on relatedness to each other. Heidegger's view of relatedness or care for the 'Other' is based on the concept of care as solitude, where the notion of solitude is a spectrum of possible responses to the Other, ranging from being indifferent to being directive (Crisp, 2015). Crisp (2015) discussed Heidegger's continuum between being directive as a 'leap in', where oneself dominates the other, and 'leap ahead', where oneself liberates the other. In both interactions, the power rests with oneself, not with the Other; the omission of this stance reflects the neglect of referring to 'superiority' as another dimension of teachers' authenticity. Expanding on this and applying it

to the teacher–student scenario, if caring is expressed through directing the student, the more proficient and effective the teacher is in 'liberating' their students, the more authentic they are.

Although Kreber et al. (2007) refrained from entering into the field of theology and spiritual essence of human existence when dissecting the construct of authenticity, Akoury (2013) recognised it as central, implying an explicit correlation between teachers' authenticity and spirituality. Akoury (2013) viewed authenticity through the lenses of existential theories, morality and spirituality when attempting to answer the question, 'What does it mean to be an authentic teacher?'. The foundations of his framework are rooted in theological traditions, including Buddhism and Christianity, and are underpinned by the philosophical texts from Buber, as well as Heidegger, supported by the systematic review of empirical and conceptual educational literature; he defined authenticity as follows:

> *Teacher authenticity is a trust that, through the desire and intention to care, the teacher can awaken through teaching a profound potential of goodness for the well-being of oneself, others and the world. This trust is the teacher's faith perspective, and is lived, dynamic and iterative, which makes authenticity an ongoing process. (Akoury, 2013, p. III)*

His work revolved around the concept of connectedness to the following:
- God by rejection of sin and ignorance;
- oneself through the process of critical reflection and meditation;

- others through the concept of God and a process of being able to identify with other's humanity; and

- the world itself recognising oneself as part of wholistic interconnected nature.

However, authenticity in Akoury (2013) can also refer to the duality of human nature, where the ego or devil exists within our being, leading to temptation; therefore, to achieve authenticity one must continuously resist the flawed or self-centred part of human nature. Contrary to other approaches in the Christian and Buddhist religions, the authority rests with God rather than oneself and the connection to God becomes a motivating factor in connectedness to others and the world, as well as the realisation of fragility of human life and always present concept of mortality, which has also been addressed by Heidegger (Akoury, 2013).

The acknowledgement of different potentialities within human nature has also been captured in Jungian theory of individuation, underpinning the work of Carusetta and Cranton (2005a, 2005b) and described as different parts of the human psyche in which one becomes authentic by discovering and integrating those varied and contrasting parts of self (Jung, 1933). Similar to Akoury's (2013) view of the everlasting struggle with one's nature, Jung's analytical theory reflects the duality of human nature and existential pain that accompanies the process of becoming that acknowledges and goes against the 'evil' parts of human nature (Jung, 1933). Cranton and Carusetta (2004b) also connected authenticity to Heideggerian critical reflection as a foundation for transformative learning (see Brook, 2009).

In conclusion, the above discussion is congruent with Bialystok's (2014), Thomson's (2015) and Wald and Harland's (2017) critiques of the inconsistencies in ontological and philosophical positions from which authenticity is examined. However, I would argue that these inconsistencies do not invalidate the inquires; on the contrary, the identified themes of authenticity as a conscious and reflexive process of becoming fully human, an acknowledgement of different constructs and limitations within oneself and a strive for self-actualisation, meaningful existence and flourishment despite the contextual challenges all appear to be consistent. Simultaneously, a number of researchers have argued that existential theories do not encapsulate the multidimensional character of defining authenticity (Kreber et al., 2007; Ramezanzadeh, 2016a) or are not sufficient in providing a convincing argument for promoting authenticity in teachers (Bialystok, 2015). Furthermore, as noted by Wald and Harland (2017), the individual does not exist in isolation, and when examining authenticity, one must consider the impact of relationships and human connectivity in the context of 'meaningful life', which takes us to the next part of the discussion on theories of communitarianism.

Communitarianism

Although viewing authenticity through existential philosophies concentrated on the notion of connectivity to oneself only briefly touches on the relational dimensions, communitarian theories primarily focus on the

nature of relationships with others. Widely quoted and utilised in understanding authenticity in teaching (Kreber et al., 2007; Ramezanzedah, 2016; Splitter, 2009; Thompson, 2015; Wald & Harland, 2017), Taylor's (1991) work outlined its moral aspects under the umbrella term 'ethics of authenticity'.

Perhaps, before engaging with the notion of ethics in relation to authenticity and the widely recognised Taylor's horizons of significance, one might examine the term 'ethics'. According to the Oxford online dictionary, ethics can be defined as: 'Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity', or as offered by the Collins online dictionary, 'a system of accepted beliefs that control behavior, especially such a system based on morals'. At this point, one might note that the purpose of ethics is to 'govern' or 'control' a person's behavior; therefore, this suggests that to be ethically authentic is to be governed/controlled by a set of principles or beliefs.

The concept of the need to control or govern one's behavior is congruent with the discussed earlier existential philosophies of Heidegger and Buber, the theology of Christianity and Buddhism and the analytical theories of Jung. Taylor (1991) was critical of what he called a 'modern freedom' achieved through the destruction of the old hierarchical order in society: this is the freedom gave birth to individualism and instrumental reason. This freedom, though, also resulted in individualism, self-centredness and social exchange (see Homans, 1958 on social exchange theory); and here, disguising instrumental reason behind the actions of the individual are

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increasingly present in the context of teacher education as influenced by neoliberalism (Zeichner, 2010).

Therefore, a plausible argument is that being authentic is reflected in a set of behaviors towards others; Kreber et al. (2007) applied the concept of horizons of significance as a guide for constructing a teacher's identity in response to what deeply matters—not to the individual but the collective, which would in the context of politics, education and the environment.

Therefore, a teacher's authenticity might be expressed by challenging oneself and the contextual realities that might have a diminishing effect on education; Splitter (2009) also discussed the duality of authenticity when referring to Taylor's 'being in the world' as the dialogical approach between oneself and something more significant than oneself that exists in the world itself. In the same vein, Ramezanzadeh et al. (2016a, 2016b) acknowledged the need for authentic teachers as agents of change, engaging in debates and upholding their inner values despite these challenges.

There are consequences to presenting authenticity as a moral ideal, starting with its becoming extrinsic to oneself; Bialystok (2014) noted that Taylor's idea of guiding one's behavior in servantship of others at the expense of oneself appears to be contradictory to the previously discussed existential philosophies focused on the self. Second, applying what Thompson (2015) referred to as the 'moral communitarian framework' to the phenomena of authenticity can implicitly give privilege to the 'morally authentic' to make

decisions on what matters to the community. In light of this, authenticity is consistent with Potter's (2010) view of authenticity as privilege, and when applied to the reality of a classroom, the teacher remains in the position of power and authority. Although communitarian theory provides a counter-balance to individualisation, it comes at the expense of personal freedom and autonomy. This inhibiting tendency begins to be challenged through the application of critical theories in conceptualising authenticity.

Critical theories

Although social theories seem to reflect the social aspects of authenticity and its relevance to human nature, they were not sufficient in exploring the individual striving for independence and freedom. This aspect has been approached from the critical stance of social theories (Adorno, 1973) and critical pedagogies (Freire, 2006). Adorno (1973) critiqued Heidegger for centralising an individual's intrinsic world in the conceptions of authenticity, neglecting the impact of social context and historical consciousness (Kreber et al., 2007). In the same vein, Dewey, as referred to by Ramezanzadeh et al. (2016), Splitter (2009) and Thompson (2015), emphasised the intrinsically social nature of human beings; as a result, social interactions form an essential ingredient in the process of self-actualisation.

Perhaps the most significant in explicit relatedness of teachers' authenticity and critical pedagogy has been the influential work of Paulo Freire (2006), where authenticity emerges as a pathway to liberation of both the

'oppressed' and 'oppressors'. The uniqueness of this theory has appealed to many because of its empowering potential, where the individual, through a critical approach and self-evaluation, liberates oneself.

2.4.3   *Socioenvironmental Influences*

One of the objectives of the current research project is to provide the opportunity for teachers working in the SFE sector to critically reflect on the contextual influences that either contribute to or inhibit the development of their authenticity. The studies by Carussetta and Cranton (2005a, 2005b), Haynes (2010), and Kreber and Klampfleitner (2013) identified the importance of socioenvironmental factors contributing to its development, including the following:

• quality of the relationships with students and colleges;

• a collaborative, diverse and nonjudgmental atmosphere;

• engagement in a critically reflective practice; and

• openness to changes as part of organisational culture.

When evaluating the wider contextual confines and expectations placed on the teachers in SFE, as well as their working conditions, it is difficult to identify the influences that might have a positive impact on teachers' authenticity and well-being. However, Akoury (2013) argued that teachers' desire to care for pupils and commitment to self-care might provide a counter-balance to negative factors and enable teachers to maintain well-being and contribute to developing their authenticity. Akoury's (2013) project was based in Christian

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schools, and his participants reported faith and spirituality as important components of authenticity. Although sharing similar values and beliefs might contribute to a collaborative atmosphere, Haynes (2010) identified difficulties and challenges experienced by teachers when working in multicultural environments.

Multicultural classrooms are representative of contemporary education. The concepts of truth, faith, values or what constitutes a meaningful life might vary greatly in the typical classroom of 27 pupils. Teachers need to form relationships not only with pupils, but also with their parents or guardians, which might present further challenges in fostering a student-centred approach.

The notion of teachers' authenticity in the context of working with children and youth has been approached in the book called *Authentic Teacher: Sensitivity and Awareness in the Classroom* by Clark Moustakas (1966). However, his contributions have not been acknowledged by those researching the authenticity of teachers. Perhaps, Moustakas' (1966) framework has not been perceived as applicable to the context of higher education, where most of the studies were conducted. For this reason, an overview of theories and philosophies regarding authenticity will concentrate on those utilised by other researchers, and the work of Moustakas (1966) in will be discussed later.

2.4.4 Moustakas' authentic teacher framework

In 1966, Moustakas presented a pedagogical framework for teachers working in the context of preschool, primary and secondary education; he emphasised the gravity of the role of a teacher in a child's healthy development of the self, here offering a two-dimensional model aiming to identify the sources of health that enable the development of genuine selfhood and authentic relatedness (Moustakas, 1966). The model considers the self (child) and context (home, school). Moustakas' work was grounded in a person-centred approach, it remains radical and revolutionary. Moustakas' (1966) framework outlines three means of contributing to the child's development of their healthy self:

1. Confirming that the child is a being of immeasurable and noncomparable worth.

2. Being authentically present and open to genuine encounters with children while inhabiting the role of a resource for learning and growth.

3. Providing authentic resources based on children's interests, wishes and directions.

The framework remains radical as its implementation is non fixable in the contemporary context of SFE. The system where 'ability grouping' is normalised as a 'natural order' (see, e.g., Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2017; Francis et al., 2016; Gripton, 2020; Marks, 2013) and pupil behaviour is meant to be controlled by punitive strategies and extrinsic rewards (DfE, 2020). The obsessive-compulsive approach to assessment and standardised testing provides a foundation for measuring oneself against the other and a fuel for

unhealthy competitiveness that diminishes one's worth, regardless of the results.

Furthermore, the existing pressures placed on the teachers and the accompanying blame cultures do not leave the space for genuine encounters, where teachers can be present as persons rather than 'imparters of knowledge' (Cornelius-White, 2020). Moustakas' (1966) views of education reflected those of Rogers, where the freedom to learn and become a fully functioning person is its ultimate purpose (Rogers, 1994). However, Rogers (1986; 1994) confirmed the importance of instructional teaching as appropriate only for a hostile and 'unchanging environment', where the goal of education is the survival of the species. Therefore, the role of a teacher as an instructor does not seem to be relevant when the only constant in the environment is its everchanging nature:

The only person who is educated is the person who has learned how to learn; the person who has learned how to adapt to change; the person who has realised that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security. Changingness, a reliance on process rather than on static knowledge, is the only thing that makes sense as a goal for education in the modern world. (Rogers, 1994, p. 152)

Moustakas' (1966) contributions are more appreciative of the role of a teacher, perhaps because he wrote about working with young children.

However, the essence of his reflections of what it means to be an authentic teacher resonates with the Rogerian (1986; 1994) idea of becoming a facilitator. The themes that relate to unconditional positive regard, openness and empathy are present in the conceptualisations of teachers' authenticity in the contemporary research. For instance, Wright (2013) implied that teachers can gain credibility when they are empathic, here considering the use of their own struggles to relate to students when appropriate. Haynes' (2010) personal account provided rich descriptions of how she reflected on the relationships with her students, challenging her own assumptions and remaining open to learning.

Her narrative concentrated on the challenges of forming multicultural identities, and her understanding was informed by the perspective of Sue and Sue (2008), in which 'all individuals, in many respects, are (a) like no other individuals, (b) like some individuals, and (c) like all other individuals' (p. 37). This tripartite framework could be equally applied to reflecting on the relationships with students because it provides the focus for investigating how we facilitate those connections and disconnections. The importance of being open and receptive to the changing, more diverse, and pluralistic classrooms is also advocated by Cornelius-White et al. (2020) when striving to develop a positive teacher-student relationships.

Moustakas (1966) findings from working with teachers also offer an inside perspective into how teachers communicate care for the students and subject and—although perhaps not explicitly acknowledged in the findings

from the research presented in the current paper—how the teacher cares for themself. This less-discussed phenomenon is present in the simple expression, 'I love my students, myself and our class' (Ramezanzadeh et al., 2016b, p. 11), suggesting that some teachers are conscious of the inseparability and holistic nature of care and love that extends from caring for oneself to others and the world. Providing or becoming an authentic resource for the learners is in itself an active way of caring for the individual person because it involves being curious about the learners and what is meaningful to them.

2.4.5 On pedagogical approaches

The conceptualisation of pedagogies emerged from the spectrum between control and freedom, and what constitutes a pedagogy also continues to be contested. However, although the theories of learning continue to change and evolve, the actual pedagogies employed in schools and universities appear to be resistant to a genuine transformation. This is curious because the pedagogies continue to emerge, some examples include: pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 2006), hope (Freire, 2007), love (Darder, 2002), freedom (Freire, 1998), suffering (Chen, 2016), queer pedagogy (Neto, 2018;), border pedagogy (Garza, 2007; Kazanjian, 2011), feminist pedagogy (Hoffmann & Stake, 1998; Manicom, 1992), positive pedagogy (O'Brien & Blue, 2018) multicultural pedagogy (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2012), engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994), and person-centred social pedagogy (Joseph et al., 2020, Murphy et al., 2018;). What all those pedagogical approaches seem to have in common, is a search for education that liberates minds and bodies

and challenges the injustices and the status quo. However, while the ontological positioning regarding human nature has a direct implication on the nature and purposes of learning, only some studies have been explicit in building on that.

If the drive for learning is to be considered as a naturally occurring human tendency driven by authentic/intrinsic motivation, it seems important to consider the concept of learning in the context of education. The nature of learning can be viewed as progressive, where learning as a way of being leads to fulfilment, enlightenment and optimal functioning of actualising the tendency of the whole organism. Also compatible with actualising tendency, there is a maintaining function for learning, where our ability to process and utilise available information enables us to stay safe, learn from mistakes, preserve and pass on existing knowledge.

I assert that the explicit and implicit purposes of schooling across history are considerably more congruent with the function of maintenance. This can be observed in the context of 'traditional' pedagogies that have been permeating formal education for the past 200 years. Traditional pedagogies have their roots in behaviourist approaches to learning, where learning leads to observable behavioural change through the process of conditioning. Such conditioning can be 'classical', where learning occurs as a reaction to a repetitive external stimulus (Pavlov, 1955; Watson, 1913), or 'operant', where the learning is conditioned by external rewards and punishment (Skinner, 1938; Thorndike, 1911). The behaviorist approach is often characterized as

'teacher centered', where the teacher holds a central position in the classroom and has control and authority over the learners and their expected learning. The behaviorist approach is based on the principles that the causes of learning (observable behavior) are outside of the person; therefore, it seems a logical conclusion that the teacher should control the environment in a way that reinforces learning/behavioral changes (Skinner, 1969). However, there are many other pedagogical approaches that explicitly or implicitly place the teachers at the center and in control of students' education, which will be briefly touched upon in the next sections of this chapter.

Furthermore, the existing systems successfully utilise the fear and uncertainty to maintain control over learning. In other words, the process of conditioning is required when maintaining existing societal structures, preserving subjective histories and national identities, projecting safety in ordered structures and creating the illusion of assured life trajectory if one complies and fulfils the educational expectations.

It is important to consider the concept of learning itself. Rogerian learning theory distinguishes two types of learning: cognitive learning, which applies to purely instructional learning led by a teacher/mentor/instructor, and affective, significant learning, which led by the learner, where the individual follows their own curiosity and interests (Rogers, 1951; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Rogers et al., 2014). In other words, the learner is led by their own intrinsic motivation, and by doing so, the learning is experienced as relevant, rewarding and meaningful. Furthermore, Rogers and Freiberg (1994) and

Moustakas (1966) argued that valuing, respecting and having an unconditional positive regard for each learner as a person contributes to the development of a trusting relationship that can facilitate the authenticity of both learners and teachers, thus promoting authentic motivation.

Moustakas (1966) contended that an authentic teacher is a trustworthy teacher that understands manipulation, judgement, exploitation or deceit as behaviors that betray the trust of the learners. For example, encouraging a learner to give something a go despite the reluctance and then displaying disappointment with the outcomes or encouraging learners to follow their direction but then being directive at every smaller stage of the project, having own goal in mind. This betrayal can be contextualised in the discussion of the negative or harmful teacher-student relationships that are often linked to boundary violations, inappropriate over-friendliness or overdominance and strictness (Cornelius-White et al., 2020).

The evidence supporting the benefits of person-centred learning has been growing (see, e.g., Cornwall, 2013; Cornelius-White, 2007; Cornelius-White et al., 2020; Hart et al., 2004; Linklater, 2013; McCombs, 2008; McCombs, 2001a; McCombs, Swan et al., 2012;) and other concepts promoting democratic learning spaces compatible with the person-centred approach have also gained popularity in education (Amsler, 2014; 2015; 2016; Hannam, 2021).

2.5 Educational 'Reality' in the UK

This subchapter introduces the realities of state-funded and higher education in the UK, with a particular focus on the explicit and implicit values that underpin these systems. To achieve this, first, an overview of the state-funded education system in the UK is presented, followed by a brief outline of higher education, here with a particular focus on teacher training. This is followed by discussion of current issues in education, especially the concerns around teachers retention in connection to wellbeing and job satisfaction. The last section offers an insight from the past, where UK education was moving towards learner-centred systems.

2.5.1 State-funded education

In its current form in the UK, the state-funded education (SFE) sector covers compulsory schooling, which consists of seven years of primary schooling, ages 4 to 11, followed by five years of secondary schooling, ages 11 to 16 (DfE, 2017b). All government-funded schools in the UK 'must teach the national curriculum for 5–16 year-olds' (DfE, 2017b, p. 5). Primary school curricula primarily focus on attaining literacy and numeracy skills, and there is an expectation of providing the foundations of other subjects like science or languages (DfE, 2017b).

However, the schools that struggle with achieving satisfactory results in math and English seem to be 'underperforming' schools that often offer a narrower curriculum. In 2017, the UK government was considering introducing a formalised and standardised baseline assessment for preschool children (age

5) aimed at improving the monitoring of the progress of the pupils, as well as the accountability of the schools (DfE, 2017c).

With the school numbers dropping and number of pupils continuing to increase, schools are often oversubscribed, and class sizes are too large, contributing to overwhelming teachers' workloads. Children's educational needs vary depending on the support of the family, cultural background, proficiency in the English language, learning difficulties or disabilities, developmental stage, and social capital. Yet, all these factors do not seem to be relevant enough in the discourse of educational policies because all of the children aged 5–16 are expected to achieve the requirements of the national curriculum at the same rate. Teachers are expected to inhabit a role of 'knowledge dispensers' and are held accountable for those pupils who struggle with meeting the national standards individually and collectively through the school's performance management system (Wilson et al., 2006). To enhance the understanding of the current conditions of SFE in the UK, it is important to consider the impact of the Education Reform Act 1988 introduced by the first female British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

2.5.2 The Education Reform Act 1988

Education Reform Act 1988, driven by Margaret Thatcher, created a rigid systemic structure aligned with the ideology of capitalism, driven by market values and under the control of the central government. The conditioning of the schools was facilitated by the provision of financial assistance with the aim of increasing desirable standards through the

marketisation of schools, making them compete with each other for the 'customers/pupils'. Although on the superficial level this system appears to promote the agency of individual schools in having control over operational decisions and how they spend their budget (OECD, 1995), the close monitoring and grading by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), as well as prescriptive curriculum, took away the schools' agency. Ball (2003) explained that the function of state reforms is not to deregulate or resign their power over education but to reregulate and establish a new form of control where:

> *Within this ensemble, teachers are represented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals who calculate about themselves, 'add value' to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live an existence of calculation (Ball, 2003, p. 217).*

This is also emphasised in the shift from the ethics of professional judgement and cooperation to performativity and competition (Ball, 2003). Consequently, Ball (2003) argued that reform technologies change not only the structures within which teachers exist, but also the meaning and identity of the teachers themselves:

> *A kind of value schizophrenia is experienced by individual teachers where commitment, judgement and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance. Here there is a potential*

'splitting' between the teachers' own judgements about 'good practice'

and student 'needs' and the rigours of performance'.

The above quote captures the conditioning nature of reforms of teacher education that promote/reward competitive performativity, which is incongruent with following intrinsic motivation, staying true to one's own values and responding to the pupils' individual learning needs. In 1992, the UK government circulated a summary of the 'attainment' and 'progress' achieved in GCSE examinations for each secondary school, which continued to promote the values of competitiveness and accountability (Leckie & Goldstein, 2017). This regime of punitive accountability has been closely monitored by the OFSTED ever since:

> *Schools judged underperforming face various sanctions including*
> *increased scrutiny, potential takeover by neighboring schools and even*
> *closure. The tables also play a role in facilitating the quasi-market in*
> *education by informing parental school choice. (Leckie & Goldstein,*
> *2017).*

In a longitudinal case study of schools placed in 'special measures' by OFSTED, Perryman (2006) reported on the perceived superficiality of the 'improvement' that occurs under constant surveillance, where something is being done *to* the learning community rather than *by* the learning community, which facilitates dependency rather agency. In another study, Perryman (2007) concentrated on collecting evidence to reveal the devastating impacts

of OFSTED inspections on the well-being of school staff, which resulted in disempowerment, fear, anger and disaffection.

2.5.3 Higher education in the UK

Being educated can open up opportunities and minds and is usually associated with having a higher education degree(s) or having studied at university. However, what it means to be educated has changed over time, and higher education today is more about 'having a degree' than 'being educated' or striving to be an 'educated being'. I argue that this is not only a loss but that there is a potential harm to individuals and society in this change. A number of researchers have begun questioning the notion of 'good' in the public good of education (Amsler, 2011; McCombs, 2010; Thompson, 2010).

Around the world, higher education in the UK is seen as desirable, consequently attracting many international students. The access to higher education in the UK has expanded, but so has the costs, which have been increasing over the past 10–15 years for both home and international students, and this has influenced the way students interact with universities and the way universities interact with staff. This shift can be understood as a result of the marketisation of higher education, where academics morphed into service providers and students into customers (Collini, 2010; Amsler, 2011).

Amsler (2011) reported that UK universities have been progressively moving towards privatisation for decades, but it was the 2010 radical policy reform

that affirmed higher education as a 'lightly regulated market' (Collini, 2010).

This occurred when an additional layer was added to higher education: a

business approach seeking to profit from purchasing and selling education as

a service (Ball, 2012). Jessop (2018) argued that privatisation of universities

is incongruent with the very idea of education as public good; this is much like

Munch (2016), who pointed out that knowledge produced at universities is no

longer a public but 'private good'. Amsler (2011, pp.63) also illustrated the

underlying costs of competitive strategies in HE:

> *Universities now must privatise and compete against one another for*
>
> *extremely scarce resources in a deregulated market or elect to perish*
>
> *in what promises to be a wasteland of structural and cultural*
>
> *irrelevance.*

Again, the educational choices for many, especially for those from

'nonstrategic fields', are limited to a spectrum between survive and perish,

whereas flourishing seems like some utopian concept accessible only to elites

(Amsler, 2011).

In the marketised system of higher education, the concept of the

'knowledge economy' has been integrated into discourse as part of the new

normal and academic capitalism, and though critiqued by many (see Jessop,

2018; Munch, 2020; Sigahi & Saltorato, 2019; Slaughter & Leslie, 2001), it

reaffirms itself in daily practices. Slaughter and Leslie (2001:154) explained

the following:

Academic capitalism deals with market and market-like behaviours on the part of universities and the faculty. Market-like behaviours refer to institutional and faculty competition for monies, whether these are from external grants and contracts, endowment funds, university-industry partnerships, institutional investment in professors' spin-off companies, student tuition and fees or some other revenue-generating activity. What makes these activities market-like is that they involve competition for funds from external resource providers.

2.6 Values underpinning UK education

SFE continues to be recognised as a 'public good'; one might say it is 'common knowledge' that public education is good for a child's development and that it is meant to positively contribute to their future. However, that positive contribution is framed within the goals of the nation state rather than authentic self-direction or human flourishing because education in the UK is known to pursue the social, cultural and economic goals of the state (Conroy, 2010). Sending a child to school is seen as a social norm or a 'right thing to do'; it is also the lawful thing to do because it is illegal for children not to be in school; while children can be home-schooled, it used to be seen as a radical choice (Olsen, 2008). Here, one might note a steady and significant increase in the number of children withdrawn from schools to be home-schooled, with a 40% increase in the years 2014–2017 (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2018). This appears to have continued during the global pandemic; the

Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) projected that 75,668 children are being home-educated, which signifies a further 38% increase within the 2019–2020 schoolyear (House of Commons Education Committee, 2021). This is concerning given that the reasons behind withdrawing children from schools are primarily and continuously rooted in dissatisfaction with educational provisions or the avoidance of possible exclusion (BBC, 2018; Hopwood et al., 2007). The fact remains that going to school is the social norm; therefore, although we have normalised schooling as the accepted shape of education, it is the concept of education as a 'public good' that I would like to deconstruct.

I would like to deepen the understanding of what it means in the current context of higher education to 'be educated' and then to explore why or how it is a 'good' or positive choice. To summarise, this section sets up the question of whether education aligns itself more with the perceptions of a 'public good' or a '(un)necessary evil'. To do so, this section outlines and explores the values of compliancy, competitiveness, self-interest and dehumanisation that underpin contemporary education.

2.6.1 Compliancy and standardisation

The contemporary educational system in the UK is driven by the principles of standardisation (Ball, 2003, 2012, 2018; Gripton, 2020; Perryman et al., 2011; Wilkins et al., 2021). The values that underpin standardised systems are those of compliancy and conformity and, therefore, submission to

the external locus of evaluation. The advocates for standardised systems

argue that it is the fairness of such systems that is to be valued (references)—

but that would only be true if every child in the system was having exactly the

same psycho-socio-economic conditions; even then, this type of system fails

to account for individuality.

Standardised practices were first introduced as a solution meant to

ensure equal opportunities for capable learners. Standardised tests replaced

oral exams and contributed to regulating pedagogical practices. Although

standardised testing was initially meant to assess the ability rather than

knowledge so that resources could be spread accordingly, testing mutated

into an apparatus that ensured that teachers delivered specific knowledge and

learners received it and were capable of retrieving it. Increased emphasis on

testing and standardisation has been underpinned by the conceptual

approaches implying that 'what gets measured gets done' (Wilson et al.,

2006).

Moustakas (1966) and Akoury (2013) argued that it is the

standardisation of educational processes that contributes to the fragmentation

of knowledge and practices. In an attempt to assist learners in achieving the

desired standards, teachers find themselves in the position of fragmented

knowledge dispensers or, as it is now widely accepted, service providers.

Akoury (2013) implied that, as a result, students do not intimately connect with

the 'world of subject matter' but reinforce the attitude of alienation and

disconnection that accompanies individualisation. Akoury (2013) also

observed that this tendency can diminish the potential for deep change. In light of this, what might be perceived as a controversial views from Gatto (2005) and Gatto and Slayback (2017) reflecting on the role of a contemporary teacher as being employed to diminish the potential of his pupils by limiting spaces for creativity and critical thinking, which seems to resonate with Akoury's (2013) analysis.

2.6.2 Competitiveness, Self-Interest and Dehumanisation

In the 'knowledge economy', individuals enter the educational arena, where, regardless of their own orientation, they are being forced to be in competition with others, where only winners can experience being valued (Hallam, 2021). This is often discussed in context of HE where knowledge becomes the commodity to be accumulated (Jessop, 2018); here the purpose of knowing is transmuted from pursuing the enlightenment to pursuing profit. Furthermore, one could argue that, for this 'commodity' to hold value it cannot be easily accessible.

It is widely acknowledged that UK education embraces the principles of meritocratic education (May, 2016; Owens & de St Croix, 2020), which are often presented as fair just because they are grounded in individual merit rather than privilege and existing connections. The hierarchical structure of English classrooms, that continue to manifest in ability groupingm where attainment is stratified by social class (Francis et al, 2015) can be viewed as a way of ensuring that knowledge can be purchased for the right price. It is those underpinning values that influence the very possibility of valuing each

learner as a person, rather than as a potential 'earner'. There is a significant difference between valuing every individual contribution and valuing those contributions that are outstanding or excellent compared with others.

Systems built on the performance of the individual in competition with others promote individualisation as opposed to cooperation and increase inequality (Hamman, 2021; Jessop, 2018; Munch, 2020). Furthermore, those that set the targets are in control of the direction that the individual take. Another function of competition is the maintenance of hierarchies in education, which then contribute to inequality that used to be presented as a factor increasing innovation (Acemoglu et al., 2012; Hamman, 2021). However, the work of Hopkin at al. (2014) and Semler (1988, 2003) challenges that view, as their findings suggest that equality has a direct positive impact on the innovation. Notably, while the capitalist and neoliberal agendas might be irrelevant to actual meaningful learning, they do have significant impact on both students, and the schools that are pitted against each other when competing for their position in lead tables (Perryman et al., 2011).

To understand how the education system values dehumanising practices, it might be useful to contemplate what being human means. Is our actualizing tendency driving humanity to compete against other human beings, or does it motivate us to personal growth where the only measure we might strive to surpass is our own. If our baseline is the person-centred approach, human nature is socially constructive, proactive and orientated

towards enhancing the whole organism and how it emerges in response to positive relations with others. Such relationships can be characterised by the presence of UPR, empathy and congruence (Rogers, 1959, Cornelius-White, 2007; 2020).

In the neoliberal system, the importance of well-being itself is motivated not by concern for human flourishment, but by the performativity and efficiency of the person in a system that values economic growth and human capital (Simons & Boldwin, 2021). This means that individuals need to be steered and manipulated towards the activities and behaviours that contribute to economic growth, rather than self-directed goals. By offering the p-c approach as a challenge to neolibralism, Joseph (2019) made it explicit how the strategies meant to direct and control people disguised as positive attempts towards human flourishing actually prevent it.

Caring belongs to those prosocial behaviors that can be viewed in light of the Rogerian concept of human nature. Ball (2003, 2012) argued that there is no space for relational care in the practices of performativity. This contrasts with the arguments made by educators like Barrow (2015), Bergmark (2019), Noddings (2005) and Rabin (2013), who advocated for the possibility of caring relationships between teachers and learners in the current system. Although it is our purpose to care for learners—both their academic progress as well as their personal growth and development—I agree with Ball (2003, 2012) that educational environments systematically eradicate spaces where such relational caring can occur Joseph (2019).

If it is our individual extrinsic desires that we perceive as the outcome of a good education, we open ourselves to deep conditioning, where those desires are used to manipulate us in ways that alienate us from ourselves. If justice, truth and human flourishment are perceived as the good of education, we will not easily be deceived because we will stay close to our human nature, which is socially constructed. If humans are conditioned by the world around us, and that is our society, then are we not the most true to ourselves when conforming to that society and, here, what they state is a good education? Is there a self that lies outside of these conditions? [

2.6.3 Contemporary issues in UK education

In the absence of certainty, we are seeking a new order that aligns with our human need for safety, growth and development. We have accepted the capitalist system as the new organising force that promises not only maintenance, but unlimited potential growth for those who perform within its parameters. A number of researchers began to deconstruct the impacts of the capitalist reality on the system of education that fragments pedagogies and stifles the intrinsic motivation of both teachers and learners (Akoury, 2017;).

In this new order, human flourishing equates to economic growth and the expansion of 'having' rather than 'being' (Fromm). The concern is that this external tendency towards transmuting human beings into 'human havings'; a species orientated towards expanding external assets as oppose to seeking greater depth within themselves and their relationships, and the negative

impact of that on wellbeing has already been evidenced in studies by (Kasser, 2016).

This section focuses on the impact of such tendencies on those functioning in the context of current education in the UK. As discussed in the previous section, educational reality in the UK, while signaling some innovations and progressiveness, continues to reproduce social inequalities, and although the purposes of education might be changing, the traditional teacher-centred pedagogies remain being favored. Contemporary challenges in education, including increased scrutiny over teachers' performance and external pressures on school results, all have an increasing impact on teachers' well-being and retention.

2.6.4 Teacher Recruitment, Job Satisfaction and Well-being concerns

Although the awareness of well-being in the context of education can be observed as gradually increasing, I argue that there is still much more focus on the deficit model, where the concentration is on the manifesting psychopathology rather than optimal functioning. To frame the discussion on well-being in the context of education, it is important to offer a conceptual structure of the phenomenon of well-being.

Although there might be different reasons for why people enter the profession, it seems plausible to assume that teachers do not go into education because they think they want to harm their learners or thwart their actualising tendency. Teachers mostly operate under the assumption that education is a public good and that it contributes to improving lives.

The issues concerning teachers' retention are ongoing and spread worldwide (See et al., 2020; Shanks et al., 2020). The challenges in retaining teachers can vary in nature, depending on the contextual factors; some examples include a lack of adequate preparation and support for new teachers (den Brok et al., 2017), poor working conditions (Bettini & Park, 2021), leadership behaviour (Semarco & Cho, 2018), racial discrimination (Frank et al., 2021) and effects on well-being (Liu, 2020).

The findings from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) suggest that teachers in the UK are among the least satisfied with their job among all OECD countries (OECD, 2018), with 30% of teachers leaving within the first five years (House of Commons, 2019). Despite government strategies aimed at promoting the teaching profession (DfE, 2019), concern over teachers' retention remains (House of Commons, 2019; House of Commons Library, 2021). Research has found a variety of reasons for teachers' decisions to leave, most notably concerns over workload and its impact on work–life balance, accountability (House of Commons Library, 2021) and the performativity culture (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). Therefore, teachers' retention must be viewed in the context of these reasons and how the performativity culture shapes the contemporary reality in UK schooling (Ball, 2018; Perryman & Calvert, 2019; Wilkins et al., 2021).

The concerns over teacher recruitment and retention have been a subject of discourse in the SFE sector for a number of years. Kelchtermans (2017) explained that 'as an educational issue, teacher attrition and retention

refers to the need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons' (p. 861). Simultaneously, the initial teacher training (ITT) figures for 2016 and 2017 show a decrease in the overall number of recruits compared with 2015 and 2016, with only 93% of the vacancies being filled. The overall contribution to the secondary target was 89%, meaning that nearly 2,000 places went unfilled. Furthermore, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL, 2016) stated that less than half of teachers working in the profession had more than 10 years of experience and expressed the following concerns:

> *Our analysis of earnings data showed that the relative position of teachers' earnings has deteriorated further this year and they continue to trail those of other professional occupations in most regions. We are concerned about this further deterioration in the recruitment and retention position when set against strong demand in the graduate labour market and continuing concerns in the profession about workload. (ATL, 2016, p. 11)*

The intention to leave the profession is also driven by the lack of overall job satisfaction, which leads to teachers' burnout (Gluschkoff et al., 2016; Hansen et al., 2015; HoCEC, 2017). Findings by NUT stated that teachers work on average 60 hours per week (Wiggins, 2015). Krishnamurthy (2015) implied that some teachers work over 75 hours a week planning, marking and demonstrating progress but do so in potentially losing the true spirit of being an educator. A report by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), titled 'Work-related Stress, Depression or Anxiety Statistics in Great

Britain 2017', reported teaching as the second most stressful profession in the UK.

2.6.5 Lessons from the past: Plowden Report

The document that might be considered transformational even today is the 'Plowden Report', which discussed the state of education in the UK. This report explicitly promoted progressive and child-centred approaches to teaching and learning. Its promise was in an approach to learning aligned with the children's interests, hence following their intrinsic motivation and in its emphasis on active cooperation and learning through discovery and the broad idea of children being at the centre of education (DfES, 1967). The report accentuated learning as an intrinsically rewarding experience that could move schooling systems away from the idea of conditioning by external rewards and punishment:

> *One of the main educational tasks of the primary school is to build on and strengthen children's intrinsic interest in learning and lead them to learn for themselves rather than from fear of disapproval or desire for praise. (DfES, 1967)*

The implementation of the child-centred curriculum varied greatly across the UK, and while some schools functioned optimally, others with less successful transitions underwent decline in standards and discipline, which provided a justification for the Education Report Act 1988. Plowden (1987, p. 120) herself reflected that this report 'could not have come out at a worse

time', where the rapid increase in the birth rate created oversubscribed schools and significant teacher shortages, resulting in chaos and misinterpretations. Plowden (1987) continued to insist that the purpose of primary teaching is to foster every child's confidence in learning and to have the courage to explore the unfamiliar while seeking excellence. She presented a set of questions that appear to remain relevant and unanswered today:

> *Finally, ours was the last Report done by a Central Advisory Council. Were we so ineffective that it was right to abolish the creation of Councils such as those which produced Hadow, Crowther and Newsom? Is there not a place for knowledgeable people, not only politicians and those from the educational world, to look at intervals at what the educational world and the politicians are doing for the nation's children, who belong to all of us? (Plowden, 1987, p. 124)*

Caring for children that belongs to us all sounds very different to competing for best students in the context of knowledge economy introduced in Education Reform Act 1988. School become competitive because of students-achievement, hence, competing with other schools depends on the academic outcomes of the students. This can be elaborated further, where promoting social justice and equality in the schools does not align with priority placed on academic achievement.

2.7 Summary: Contextualising Authenticity

This literature review examines both the conceptualization of what it means to be an authentic teacher and the internal conditions that influence the possibility of becoming authentic and then it explores the educational reality in UK as external conditions that teachers are impacted by. In many ways it reveals the incongruence between the characteristics and values known to underpin authenticity and the values driving the educational apparatus in UK. This is evident in the debates such as children's academic achievement and wellbeing tradeoff (Clarke, 2020), or 'good' ideas that policymakers should help NQT to avoid 'recruit-burnout-replace' schools as a way of improving retention (Sims & Allen, 2018). An authentic teacher, a teacher that cares, that respects autonomy of their learners, that promotes atmosphere of freedom to learn and moves away from passing judgements and external evaluations, a teacher that welcomes collaboration, diversity and values relationships is not a good fit to UK educational apparatus.

CHAPTER 3

3 Methodology

3.1 Methodological Assemblage

The methodological choices in this thesis are informed in equal proportion by philosophical and theoretical foundations of person centred approach as well as instinctively traced curiosity and the direction of intrinsic motivation. Becoming a researcher, while initially exciting, soon presented as unchartered and potentially risky territory and choosing the methodology for the first study was engaging with what was facilitative to answering the questions posed but also what was experienced as familiar. Since the focus was on exploring teachers' authenticity in connection to wellbeing, qualitative approach of IPA seemed fitting. Familiarity with conducting an IPA facilitated the process of deepening of the existing understanding of this methodology and focusing on evaluation of its effectiveness in generating data needed by the researcher.

The outcomes of IPA study brought forth several issues that needed further exploration and informed the consecutive research steps. These included a need for a systematic form of critical reflection over the influence that researcher's values, experiences and beliefs might be impacting on research processes. Following the first study there was also both a need and an opportunity to recruit a teacher-participant that might be signalling an incongruence between their values and the SFE systems to better understand their experience. Given that it is only one teacher, fitting it with the idea of

purposeful sample might not be appropriate; perhaps proposing it as an intentional choice is more accurate. Another outcome of the first study was the strengthening of the position that the visual research methods had in the study. The creative forms of interpreting and analysing data presented as unexpected but valuable component that needed to be integrated into IPA which was developed into IPCA. The inconsistencies in how teachers interpreted their wellbeing at work in connection to authenticity led to the pursuit of a deeper understanding of teacher authenticity and a choice of qualitative metasynthesis of existing empirical studies on teachers' authenticity. The autoethnographic study emerged spontaneously alongside the IPCA and metasynthesis; initially it served as a space for explicit exploration of own subjective understanding around the topics of authenticity in connection to relationships, intrinsic motivation, psychological safety and oppressive systems. Autoethnography also became a liberating space for creativity that could exist there as part of academic work without the prior need for justification. Perhaps most importantly it became a record of how the theories and new learning enhanced the reflective practice and self-understanding of the researcher's own authenticity.

Developing a more cohesive understanding of the internal and external conditions that influence authenticity informed the selection of the RLR case study methodology that brought together the context of contemporary SFE and the subjective experiences of one teacher. This form of phenomenological methodology was identified as appropriate for single participant study, and it accommodated the use of creativity as a method for encapsulating the experiences.

3.2 Positioning

There are contrasting views on ontological and epistemological paradigms most appropriate to educational research, which seems, by default, located within the realm of social sciences. The debate between positivist and relativist stances intensifies when entering the field of educational psychology, with tensions between social and medical sciences. The positivist paradigm informed by naturalistic philosophies asserts the existence of external objective reality of any given phenomenon that can be observed and measured with validity and reliability regardless of the researchers' individual perspectives. Positivist researchers seek objectivity by remaining detached from participants and their own emotions and differentiating between facts and value judgements, grounding science in confirmed sources of knowledge (Hicks, 2018). Positivist scientific methods rely on statistical and numerical data to produce time- and context-free generalisable laws that contribute to scientific knowledge. Methodologies such as randomised control trials (RCTs), often referred to as methodological "golden standard" in both psychology (Reid, 2012) and education (Styles & Torgerson, 2018), attempt to eliminate human error variance by establishing diagnostic categories for sample selection. Although the paradigm of relativism with constructivist and interpretivist approaches is strongly associated with educational research (Panhwar, Ansari, Shah, 2017), positivist scientific methods dominate this research field in terms of informing and evaluating policies and practices.

3.3 Educational Research: Persons or Science

Researchers committed to human sciences often "do their science under conditions that physical scientists find intolerable" (Berliner, 2002: p.18). Berliner (2002) argues that the variance of contextual differences, ongoing changes to networks and social interactions, calls for knowledge of the particular or local just as much as general knowledge. He reports challenges of replication in the context of education and difficulties in producing consistent results. There are also concerns over the researcher's detachment and the exclusion of the "human error variance" that disconnects the researcher from the complex realities of the participants' lifeworlds (Reid, 2012). Therefore, while the positivist humanist researcher's intention might be to reveal the general structure of the given phenomenon, it seems illogical and counterintuitive to study it from an artificially created distance that might inhibit the possibility of observing the changing and complex conditions present in a social world.

Furthermore, in social sciences, some of the objective knowledge might be based on warranted assertions resulting from intersubjective agreements that converge the beliefs of agents involved in an inquiry (Hicks, 2018). Scientific claims that arise from such inquiries might present concerns over bias rather than subjectivity because the agents might "arrive at conclusions that support a vested interest," neglecting evidence incongruent with such interests (Hicks, 2018:2). Rogers, a psychologist and educator, also

struggled with this perceived dissonance between persons and science or subjectivity and objectivity, and his writing suggests that, by default, a researcher is a subjective person:

> *To put it more briefly, it appears to me that though there may be such a thing as objective truth, I can never know it; all I can know is that some statements appear to me subjectively to have the qualifications of objective truth. Thus, there is no such thing as Scientific Knowledge; there are only individual perceptions of what appears to each person to be such knowledge (Rogers, 1959:192).*

There seems to be a difference between measuring the physical reality of the world we are part of and the psychological realities that exist within us. The positivist perspective asserts that everything that exists can be measured and that one of the researcher's tasks is to find the appropriate measuring tool to test the hypothesis. Nevertheless, humans are subjective beings and, therefore, cannot measure or be measured objectively; the results extracted by humans or from humans are fallible by default. Such fallibility of the sources contradicts the strict positivist standards that rely on incorrigible truths and self-justifying beliefs (Hicks, 2018). This acceptance of human limitations in the form of subjectivity in the perception of objective truths can be observed in postpositivist paradigms that are gaining popularity in educational research. The postpositivist paradigm seems to accommodate human subjectivity and the pursuit of what might qualify as objective truth, offering reconciliation to the concepts of the fallibility of sources and warranted truth (Hicks, 2018).

3.4 Person-Centric Research Framework for Education

The person-centric approach to social sciences research rejects the assumption of human behaviour as passive and, in doing so, differs from other positivist stances that attempt to portray human beings as puppets in a controlled environment (Cohen et al., 2011). Although the person-centric research framework can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative research designs, the methodology should follow the research question and its objectives while focusing on the most efficient and effective ways of answering it (Raid, 2012). As the subject of teachers' authenticity remains underexplored and the aim is to encapsulate the complex phenomena within a specific context, the research process can be viewed as unfolding or sequential such that each study follows from and examines the gaps identified in the previous study. This explorative approach nurtures the idea of capturing complexity (Reid, 2012), which is intrinsic to human existence and learning processes. Reid's (2012) framework was initially developed in the field of person-centred medicine, but it has a multidimensional nature rooted in reflective practice and is enhanced through relational orientation (see Figure 1).
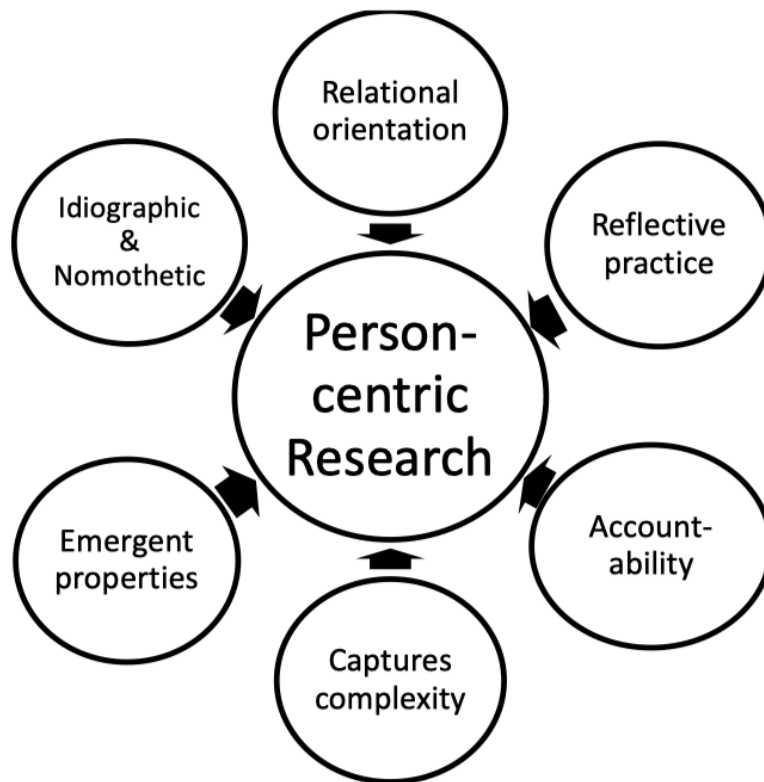
Figure 4. *Person-Centric Research Framework Developed by Reid (2012)*

What this means is that, contrary to rigid positivist approaches, both the researcher and researched have the opportunity to experience each other as fellow human beings and, when appropriate, to develop meaningful relationships. The emergent properties of this framework also facilitate the capturing of complexity (Reid, 2012). This is because the researchers place value on complexity in their participants' data instead of attempting to eliminate what others might describe as 'human error' (Reid, 2012).

The commitment to capturing complexity when using a person-centric framework 'lies in considering the optimal level of explanation and exploration

in an investigation such that the person is kept clearly in view' (Reid, 2012, p. 340). This guiding principle of keeping the person 'clearly in view' directly impacts research ethics. Ethical matters pertaining to research with human subjects should be considered with regard to accountability, which translates into methodological choices, namely the type of data that will be collected and the methodology and rigour of analysis. Reid's position on reporting findings from therapeutic interventions is contextualised below:

> *Publishing conversations about treatments that did not work is critical, as is reporting what happened to treatment drop-outs or at the very least sharing these conversations openly with other practitioners. In doing so, we remain keenly focussed on the faces of our clients when interpreting research data. (Reid, 2012, pp. 338–339)*

This is relevant to the field of educational research, in which researchers are responsible for interpreting and presenting data as accurately and transparently as possible for all learners and teachers.

A person-centric research framework aligns with a postpositivist paradigm, with equal value placed on both idiographic and nomothetic approaches. The approaches are, furthermore, presented as complementary. Educational research that favours an idiographic approach, which focuses on the individual and their experiential lifeworld, can be dismissed as being:

> *(…) too soft, squishy, unreliable, and imprecise to rely on as a basis for practice in the same way that other sciences are involved in the design*

of bridges and electronic circuits, sending rockets to the moon, or

developing new drugs. (Berliner, 2002, p. 18)

Reid (2012, p. 340) argues that combining the approaches makes it possible for the 'process of active theoretical evolution' to occur. This is because nomothetic methodologies provide insight into the differences between groups, while idiographic approaches focus on individual differences.

3.4.1 A Nomothetic Approach: Metasynthesis of Qualitative Research

The researcher commenced this study by gathering existing qualitative research on teacher authenticity, to explore similarities and differences between philosophical orientations and contextually different groups (that is, cultures and settings). The aim in doing so was to gain a clearer understanding of the concept of teacher authenticity. The researcher then identified 'metasynthesis' as a promising method for finding possible themes and contradictions in the existing empirical studies. Furthermore, qualitative studies are used when researcher seeks in-depth data with rich descriptions, when there is no solid theoretical foundation or when exploring subjective experiences (Cohen at al, 2011). Qualitative studies are critiqued for lacking the function of generalizability of findings as the small sample sizes do not offer statistical significance that quantitative studies can provide (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012), therefore, synthesising data from a number of smaller studies can strengthen the validity of the findings.

Moreover, qualitative metasynthesis was chosen because it offers a structured and systematic means of studying a seemingly elusive and unattainable phenomenon. Reid (2012) notes that a 'nomothetic level of explanation' is a means of uncovering group-level differences between quantitative methods. This insinuates that qualitative metasynthesis can be viewed as a nomothetic approach and that the most important components of the phenomenon can be abstracted and clarified (Reid, 2012; Spotts & Schontz, 1984).

3.4.2 An Idiographic Approach: Phenomenological Research

The aim of this research is to provide a phenomenological understanding of the 'lived' personal experiences and meaning-making of teachers and researchers in relation to the phenomenon of authenticity. A qualitative design was, therefore, adopted. Reid (2012) and Spotts and Schontz (1984) argue that idiographic approaches may elucidate the individual differences that are crucial to understanding the phenomena and which may get lost during nomothetic approaches, when determining averages.

Phenomenological research makes it possible to understand not only the individuals who are being studied but also the social systems in which they function. Dahlberg (2006) puts forward a convincing argument, grounded in Merleau-Ponty's ontological philosophy, that individuals cannot be separated from the world and that studying the individual's experience *in* the world offers the opportunity to study the world *through* the individual. This

appears to correspond with a person-centred philosophy that acknowledges

that one's becoming or the formation of one's self-concept is conditioned by

the structures and systems of the world, while, at the same time, the world is

cocreated by people (who are active agents in the creation process) (Rogers,

1959).

The idea of being created *in* the world while creating more *of* the world

suggests that to gain a clearer understanding of the occurring phenomena,

one must study the 'inbetweenness' – the relationship between the structures

of self and the structures of the world. Arriving at a greater understanding of

the experiences that occur in this 'inbetweenness' reveals the *how* of the

becoming. Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2019) reflect on this:

> *As phenomenology and hermeneutics are not naturalistic philosophies*
>
> *that take the world as it is for granted but rather aim at discovering how*
>
> *it comes to be the way that it is, they are concerned with unearthing the*
>
> *structures or conditions of possibility that constitute the world as we*
>
> *know it. (p. 5)*

This, in turn, suggests that phenomenological researchers seek objective

'meaning structures' in the subjective experiences of individuals. This fosters

the problematic concept of 'objectivity' in qualitative research in the human

sciences. Because of the interpretive nature of phenomenology, the approach

is categorised as an interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretivist research

paradigms have been critiqued for their limitations with regard to

generalisability and validity (Merriam, 2009; Stewart, 2014). The author of this

study does not intend to dispute these limitations. She acknowledges that phenomenological research did not emerge in opposition to a positivist paradigm but as an alternative approach to human sciences, which addresses the limitations of traditional quantitative methods. It is intentional in its direction to reveal the essence of the human experience by means of exploring its variation (Dahlberg & Drew, 1997; Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2019). While Dahlberg and Drew (1997) distinguish lifeworld research from a positivist paradigm, the positionality of the author of this study aligns with that of Rogers, who accommodates a positivist stance of a qualitative phenomenological researcher.

3.4.3 Relational Products: Illustrations

Reid's (2012) relational orientation of the person-centric research framework expands here to the importance of the illustrations included in this doctoral work; as they themselves are a *relational product* integral to the research. Rogers (1954:251) wrote a paper titled 'towards a theory of creativity' where he defined creativity as:

> *'The emergence of the action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other'.*

The relationality of the product can be understood as the desire to share that new discovery or creation with others; this does not mean it has been created with others with mind, but it does mean that the desire to share is present once the 'product' is completed (Rogers, 1954). The illustrations presented can be viewed as invitations to engage with the research in a playful, non-

intimidating and relational way where new meanings can emerge and surpass or transform the meanings of the researcher. They are an invitation to a dialogue of psychologically equal individuals; whether they are researchers, teachers, parents or pupils.

3.5 *Interpretive Phenomenological Creative Analysis*

Various images were utilised in this study to encourage participants to access their thoughts and feelings in a non-threatening way. The aim behind incorporating the images was to assist the participants in exploring their 'lifeworld' (Smith at al., 2009).

3.5.1 *An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis*

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative method that researchers employ to understand the subjective perspectives of their research participants, that is, their 'lived experiences' of a specific phenomenon (Smith, 2004). The IPA method is widely employed in psychology studies (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The 'participant-oriented' approach is equally applicable in education and other social sciences (Alase, 2017).

While IPA is concerned with understanding subjective experiences, individual perspectives and meaning-making processes, it differs from other phenomenological approaches in the way that datasets are analysed (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The focus is on the individual's experiences of

phenomena rather than on themes that are common in the collective

experience (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). Therefore, IPA is characterised as

idiographic – the method that the researcher employs is centred around their

individual experience (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The idiographic nature of

the IPA approach resembles a person-centric framework. The researcher is

afforded the opportunity to form a meaningful connection with the research

participants (Alase, 2017). (This relational factor is *unique* to the IPA method

[Alase, 2017)]. Following this, the validity of the research is determined by the

depth of the researcher's reflections on their dialogue with their participants.

This is provided that the researcher does not rush to introduce their own

interpretations.

Intrinsic to the IPA method is the implementation of relevant theories

(VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The researcher's positionality, and its impact on

the interpretation of data, is also imbedded in the analysis. While IPA can be

characterised as creative, participant-centred, explorative and as offering a

degree of flexibility, it is also rigorous, as it involves structured methods of

data analysis (Alase, 2017; VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015).

When exploring a participant's lived experiences and attempting to

understand how they make sense of their world, the researcher is expected to

demonstrate empathy. This means exploring the participant's frame of

reference or, as suggested by Alase (2017), stepping into their shoes.

Interviews are, therefore, the preferred means of carrying out an IPA, as they

offer the opportunity to engage with participants and to learn how they create

meaning from the phenomena in their lives (Smith et al., 2009). In the context of this research, the phenomenon is how teachers experience wellbeing and authenticity in their work.

IPA interviews are often semi-structured and consist of explorative, open-ended questions. The recommended time for this type of interview is 60 – 90 minutes. This allows for an in-depth exploration of the topic. Semi-structured interviews afford the researcher a level of control over the data generated during the research. The interviewer may introduce sub-questions to 'support' his or her main questions when a participant feels stuck or when the researcher is needs clarity on a specific topic. Smith et al. (2009) suggest that researchers may benefit from using an interview schedule, which prepares them for what they may encounter during the interview. This interview schedule might include the main questions as well as helpful sub-questions to prompt the participant, the notes on how much time can be spent on each questions etc.

Participants of IPA interviews are generally not introduced to theories that are informing the researchers, in order to reduce social desirability bias (Fisher, as cited in De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016). Interview questions may, therefore, be generalised to represent a broader theme. For example, the researcher may avoid using keywords that are directly related to his or her enquiry so as not to influence the participant. Some of the literature and research from other disciplines (like psychology) suggests that authenticity and wellbeing are interconnected. Therefore, when enquiring about the

research participants' wellbeing, it is plausible to expect the phenomenon of authenticity to emerge spontaneously in the dialogue. Should this *not* be the case, it the researcher will still obtain valuable data.

One of the challenges with a traditional semi-structured interview is that it may be difficult for the researcher to remain 'in' the participant's frame of reference when the participant responds to a question. The author of this research believes that it is not possible for the researcher to do so. According to person-centred theory, in order to honour the participant's experience and their concerns, researchers must refrain from evaluating the content of their interview responses. They must also refrain from thinking of questions that would aid *their* understanding instead of the participant's.

This challenge is reinforced by the fact that, in IPA, empathic hermeneutics is combined with questioning hermeneutics, which means that the researcher distances themselves from the data to critically analyse the content (Smith et al., 2009). These two opposing frames of reference must be managed effectively by the researcher to ensure research validity.

Unstructured interviews can be considered the 'golden mean' of approaches, given the unfolding nature of an IPA's inductive epistemology. In an unstructured interview, the interviewer asks one core question and allows the participant to lead the conversation for the remainder of the interview. Unstructured interviews will be utilised in this study, with one question being asked of interviewees.

Rogers explored unstructured or non-directive methods of interviewing in social research and offers valuable insight into the applicability thereof. The author's insights are relevant to this research project, which involves approaching teachers:

The attitudes of acceptance and permissiveness upon which the interviewer bases his work are enriched by specific techniques which avoid making the client defensive and eliminate the personal bias which the worker might otherwise impose on the interview. (Rogers, 1945, p. 5)

According to Rogers (1945), the interviewer should provide a non-judgmental and open-minded space for participants to fully engage in their own processing of the phenomena in question. The interviewer should also significantly reduce or eliminate personal bias during the interview. This is in alignment with a person-centric research framework.

Reid (2012, p. 338) highlights the 'synergies' between therapeutic practice and phenomenological interview techniques; for example, in studies requiring interviewing, there are closer synergies between therapeutic practice and hermeneutic or phenomenological interviewing techniques as opposed to the more reductionistic structured or semi-structured interview formats. Both Rogers and Reid's suggested methods will be used in this research, as the potential benefits of each outweigh the challenges. The most significant challenge during the research process will be to proactively transition between the participant, researcher and 'self as a participant' frames of reference.

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3.5.2   *Creative Elements*

Creative research methods and methodologies are gaining popularity in education. Their application stretches as far as far as researchers and participants imagination. The meaning of creative methods is also very broad including but not inclusive of art based methods, music, drama, movie making, photography, poetry, creative writing, play etc. In my own understanding creative methods can take me behind the words and beyond the limitation of language.

Academics like Sousanis (2017) argue for the inclusion of visual and creative representations as meaningful academic practices that, on their own merits, contribute to the construction of knowledge. In the same vein, Bagnoli contends that visual data can contribute to the meaning-making process at different stages of analysis '*generating new ways of interrogating and understanding the social'* (2009, p. 548). Posser (2008) notes the traditional use of images in the social sciences that can be used to illustrate or reinforce what the words already captured, therefore serving only as an 'add-on'. He also observes the reluctance of academics to engage with non-linguistic methods and the tendency to 'hurriedly translate' qualitative and quantitative research into words and numbers, here with a focus on efficiency at the potential cost of effectiveness.

Although creative and visual methods seem to have a lot to offer, as with any other methodological choices, they come with challenges and potential pitfalls. Perhaps the strongest critiques of arts-based methods are the difficulties with establishing sufficient rigour in the design, application of

the methods and analysis and dissemination (Posser, 2008). Rigour and creativity might be viewed as two opposites to the spectrum of scientific knowledge production. It is the reflectivity of the researcher that documents the movement across this spectrum, justifying the decisions that contribute to the trustworthiness or reliability and validity of the research.

Another critique is that the polysemic nature of images is problematic in evoking multiple meanings depending on different audiences (Posser, 2008). Although this appears to be a valid argument, the implication is that text-based material is somehow flattened and that it reads precisely as intended by the writer. This contradicts what is known about the vast field of linguistics (scientific study of language), where language is considered a semiotic system (Eco, 1986).

De Saussure conceptualises language as an autonomous social institution and, therefore, as unrestrained by anything prior or extrinsic (Holdcroft, 1991). De Saussure's semiotics analyse signs and symbols and their connection to the meaning and objects they represent. This is conceptualised as a relationship between the given concept described as a *signifier,* where *signified* is the representation of that concept (de Saussure, 1966). Although we might feel more competent and, therefore, comfortable in word-based knowledge production, our spoken or written thoughts are interwoven and saturated with values, assumptions, biases and (subjective) truths. Barthes partially explores this tendency with a focus on the relationship between the text/signs and culture with his theory of *connotation* and

denotation (Moriarthy, 2004). Then, with the ideas of Sanders Pierce, studies of semiotics have expanded to the cooperation between signs, objects and their *interpretants*.

The *'truths'* of individuals and those shared by academic communities often remain unexamined because we believe we share their understanding. Yet when reading journals, experiences of frustration in response to inconsistencies between the academics' accounts of understanding of theories or philosophies and their practical applications seem to be a common experience. Rereading previously studied text after the passage of time can also result in changes in the reader's understanding. The words previously superficially understood become familiar and expand their meaning and function; the initially intimidating word clusters can be exposed as fancy façades shielding undeveloped ideas. The meaning of text and individual words used to define concepts might also be altered as our perception of the writer changes.

The nature of perception is fluid and indefinite—any attempt to frame it and index it disturbs its flow and distorts the understanding. Categorising the perceptions in search of patterns that can organise our experiences is natural to humans and cannot nor should it be avoided (Kriz, 2008). This is enabled by the means of reduction that strips away the meanings until the core of the phenomenon is identified and symbolised as a word. The same word is then infused with meaning by the reader. I argue, then, that the onlooker's perception of both text and image is subjective and polysemic:

…visual methods can: provide an alternative to the hegemony of a word-and-number–based academy, slow down observation and encourage deeper and more effective reflection on all things visual and visualisable, and with it enhance our understanding of sensory embodiment and communication, and hence reflect more fully the diversity of human experiences. (Posser, 2008)

Posser (2008) outlines the potential difficulties with establishing universal codes of visual ethics adaptable to the complexity of the visual researchers' practices contextualised in a variety of socio-political realities. In that he seems to be implying that the applied researchers are often unprepared for encounters with ethical dilemmas as they are difficult to predict prior to being in the field. Without the initial focus on potential pitfalls, the researchers might neglect the need to justify their decisions, which can have an impact on the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings.

3.6 Reflective Lifeworld Research

As my interest is in the elusive phenomena of teacher's authenticity in the context of educational system, the system that I am also part of as a teacher and learner I needed an approach that accommodates the existing contradictions of being close and distant, open and rigorous, creative and

systematic (Dahlberg, 2006). The methodology that offered me such space is the reflective lifeworld research where:

> *'A characteristic of a lifeworld research is that its researchers are comfortable with paradoxes such as simultaneous sameness and uniqueness and the continuous negotiation between the stance of immediate immersion in experience and the distance of objectivity (Dahlberg and Drew, 1997:31)'*

Walking towards a greater understanding of lived experience is anchored in the concept of phenomenological intentionality; where researcher begins from the preposition that our being in the world is intentional (Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom, 2008). In other words that we do/act/behave in certain ways for a reason and its understanding of those underlying motivations that can offer us a more holistic view of occurring phenomena.

Lifeworld research is not concerned with the concept of data saturation as that implies that there is some point of finality; instead it acknowledges the infinite nature of meaning making (Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom, 2008). At the same it does seek to reveal the structural construct of the phenomena with its variations; to achieve that reflective lifeworld methodology encourages a differentiation in data collection in regards to participants, research methods/tools, contexts etc. To foster the conditions of openness the research plan evolves in stages and while guided by the broader research question next steps are informed by the interpretations from the first set of data.

As it is also my intention to dissect the methodological processes that seem relevant to integrating the subjectivity of the person and objectivity of the scientific inquiries a case study seems more appropriate. The most convincing argument about the substance of 'accessible knowledge' (commonly known as Scientific Knowledge); the assertion I can accept as true to me is encapsulated here:

> *Science exists only in people. Each scientific project has its creative inception, its process, and its tentative conclusion, in a person or persons. Knowledge—even scientific knowledge—is that which is subjectively acceptable (Rogers, 1953:274).*

3.7 Autoethnography

The qualitative nature of autoethnography is congruent with a person-centric research framework. This form of research could be described as phenomenological enquiry into the self, which is deeply reflective in nature and which embraces the connectivity of self with others while viewing it through social, cultural and political lenses (Adams, et al., 2015). As the name suggests, auto-ethno-graphers are concerned with the two-dimensional structure of the study, which means that their attention is on systematic means of describing one's perceived reality while alternating the focus between the self and its socio-cultural environment (Ellis & Bochner, 2005, 2011). Ellis and Bochner (2011) argue that autoethnography is a fusion of autobiography and ethnography, the aim of which is to 'produce aesthetic and

evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience' that contribute to a better understanding of the culture that one exists within and to expand researchers' sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2002).

This type of research also has a sensitising function that may 'deepen the capacity to empathise' with others who differ from us (Ellis & Bochner, 2011). It can be considered a process of distilling the self from one's culture, with the function of autoethnography being to understand the formation of the self-structure and its various possibilities within (a) particular social system(s). To accomplish this, the researcher must be committed to exploring their own experience more deeply while simultaneously broadening their understanding by engaging with existing research and theories.

In addition to using their methodological tools and research literature to analyse other's experiences, autoethnographers must consider how others experience similar epiphanies. They must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, familiarise both insiders and outsiders with the characteristics of a culture.

3.7.1 Personal Histories: Memories and Perceptions

One of the methodological choices in the autoethnographic spectrum is personal history, which entails the researcher travelling back and forth on the spectrum between the past and present (Hayler, 2011). In the context of teacher development and education, personal history self-studies are considered beneficial for connecting the theory with practice, understanding

identity formation and becoming critically conscious of one's pedagogical choices (Samaras et al., 2004).

Presenting the information as factual implies that it is reliable, supported by existing evidence and somehow representative of the truth. This approach might prove problematic because personal history can be considered subjective, as it relies on memory. While memories may be 'clustered' around factual events, they are pliable, emotionally charged and distant from the 'reality' shared with others. When attempting to provide insight into a 'collective reality', autoethnographers may utilise various sources, including feedback from others, factual evidence in the form of official documents, time-stamped online reflections/interactions/emails, and existing historical records from a period of enquiry (Piner, 2018). Bullough and Gitlin (1995) suggest that to know the past is to know oneself, not only as an individual but also as a representative of a collective formed during a particular socio-historical period. In autoethnography, there is a clear connection between investigating personal history and uncovering the role of societal influences on the formation of an individual's identity and self-structure within a society.

The purpose of this type of study is not to generalise or provide absolute truths but rather to seek patterns in subjective experiences that may provide a deeper understanding of a given phenomenological field. While Vagle (2014) considers phenomenology and autoethnography as two distinct methodologies, the author of this research shares Pitard's (2019) perspective

that autoethnography can be integrated into phenomenological studies; however, she is uncomfortable with presenting autoethnography as a phenomenological research tool. Autoethnography belongs to the phenomenological family only in that its primary concern is the exploration of the lived experiences of a participant/researcher.

3.7.2 Liberating Potential

All people in a society embody a three-dimensional potentiality of being a victim, vehicle or solution of/to the problems faced by their society (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995). This concept is related to Freire's (2006) bolder classification of functioning as the oppressed, oppressor or liberator within one's society. Autoethnographic studies in the form of personal historical accounts allow us to turn our attention inwards and to recognise the manifestations of the above three potentialities within ourselves. Autoethnography affords researchers the opportunity to investigate topics that are difficult to study in-depth (because of time constraints and ethical considerations) and that require a complex analysis.

Colonialism has led to a rise in autoethnography (Adams et al., 2015), with a number of the published research papers in education relating to identity, gender and deeply imbedded, complex racial issues (see Cortes Santiago, Karimi & Arvelo Alicea, 2017; Ohito, 2017). This methodology has the potential to facilitate liberation during the teacher formation process, as it provides teachers with the opportunity to recognise, question and challenge their own prejudices and racial positionings (Pennington, 2007).

3.7.3 Memories

During their lifetimes, human beings accumulate memories, which are 'extracts' from their past perceptions that they store or discard, depending on relevance (Eichenbaum, 2000) or emotional charge (Anderson et al., 2006; Canli et al., 2000; Dolcos et al., 2004). Those memories can be retrieved momentarily in response to the situation with precision and accuracy, flowing through the circuitry system between two brain structures (Eichenbaum, 2000). The existing research reveals that memories can be pliable and that they can be suppressed or enhanced within a person's mind Eichenbaum, 2000). Some researchers assert that memories can also be false (Reyna & Lloyd, 1997) or artificially implanted (Pama, 2019). In view of the above, memories cannot be evaluated or validated in the same way that facts can be examined.

Because of the fluid and inconstant nature of memories, they appear to be unreliable. However, when considering the formation of one's self-concept, memories are considered a trustworthy source, as they can provide a better understanding of the person in question. For this reason, the researcher believes that the approach of 'walking back in time' is particularly relevant to autoethnographic studies. In this context, it is her intention to recall her experiential responses to events, incidents and encounters.

3.7.4 Perceptions

Memories appear to be weaved from the fibre of one's perceptions. In other words, in order to form a memory, one's consciousness must be

stimulated by something in one's environment or experience. Many theories of perception originate from the field of psychology and can be categorised into 'top down' processing theories, based on the idea of perceptual hypothesis, (Gregory, 1970) or 'bottom up' process theories, in which the nature of perception is believed to be direct and sensation is explained merely in terms of one's environment (Gibson, 1972).

Neuroscience explores the complex mechanisms of organisms that facilitate perception. A growing body of neurological evidence reveals that previous experiences influence the perception of one's 'current reality', thus confirming the interpretative function of perceiving (Goldstain & Brockmole, 2016). This study is aligned with a constructist theory of perception and with the definition of perception provided by Rogers (1959):

> *"For our own definition we might say that a perception is a hypothesis or prognosis for action which comes into being in awareness when stimuli impinge on the organism. When we perceive "this is a triangle," "that is a tree," "this person is my mother," it means that we are making a prediction that the objects from which the stimuli are received would, if checked in other ways, exhibit properties we have come to regard, from our past experience, as being characteristic of triangles, trees, mother."*

The above extract is particularly relevant, as it illustrates the potentially fluid relationship between perceptions and memories. Perceptions are based on past experiences that can be 'checked in other ways' (Rogers, 1959). This

appears essential when writing and interpreting autoethnographic material. During the writing or interpreting process, one deconstructs and analyses what is perceived. That which is perceived is also 'lived forward in another way'. 'Living forward in another way', in this sense, is similar to systematic enquiry in action research, whereby reflective cycles lead to changes in perception, which manifest in certain actions or behaviours (Townsend, 2013). However, for the autoethnographer, the primary purpose of 'checking out' one's own perceptions is to expand understanding of the 'ethno' of the environment that can impact on either confirm or disproving initial hypothesis.

3.7.5 Creative and Visual Possibilities

Autoethnography also accommodates creative means of employing methods and methodologies. It encapsulates the artistic potential of the researcher:

Autoethnographic stories are artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experience. (Adams, et al., 2015, p. 1)

While autoethnographic stories encourage individuals to articulate their experiences creatively, the analysis of these stories is systematic and rigorous in an autoethnographic approach (Ellis et al., 2010). Recognising the benefits of this approach to handling data, the researcher of this thesis shared Willis's (2018) expectations of locating a broad spectrum of existing studies utilising a creative composite technique but only few published papers were located.

One, was of particular relevance; in this paper, the composites of teacher-characters, their attitudes and their stories were encapsulated in the illustrated comic grid (Dell'Angelo & DeGenova, 2018). While Dell'Angelo and DeGenova (2018) presented the comic as the outcome of the study, leaving the analysis to the reader/viewer, the author of this paper will utilise the visual representations of data as a starting point for its discussion and interpretations.

To emphasise its relation to the research subject, researchers who employ this methodology while exploring other phenomena refer to the potential of autoethnography to provide them with a space for their 'authentic voice' to be heard (Brooks & Dinan-Thompson, 2015) and their 'authentic selves' to be witnessed and explored (Cortes Santiago, Karimi & Arvelo Alicea, 2017). Autoethnography is perceived as an approach that supports the achievement of 'autobiographical authenticity' (Meerwald, 2013). The autoethnographic method is, therefore, the inevitable choice for addressing the research question in this study. Furthermore, autoethnography can incorporate poetry, creative writing and other forms of art. While this was not the researcher's intention when commencing her PhD studies, illustrating thoughts, feelings and instincts through monochrome ink drawings facilitated deeper reflections and also sustained the motivation at times.

3.8 Researcher's Trust and Ethics

As a PhD Research student at University of Nottingham my research is guided by the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics of the University of Nottingham. Because of the unfolding nature of my research, I needed to seek the approval of the Ethics Committee every time when planning a study. This approach of being in engaged with on ongoing discourse concerning ethical considerations when working with human participants is advocated by Cohen et al (2011). As a professional teacher and counsellor, I am aware of the importance of Data Protection Act (1998) and transparency in regards to how the data will be used and stored ensuring the participants confidentiality. All of the participants in my studies declared that they are participating voluntarily and I obtained informed consent before any collection of data. In the IPCA study I also obtained the permission from the headteacher before approaching the teachers, providing them with all of the relevant information about my research questions as well as the procedures. All of my participants were informed that they will have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3.8.1 Researcher's Authenticity

This research is concerned with teacher's authenticity as it focuses on what it means to be an authentic teacher. However, in person centred theory the professional role distinctions are of less importance as authenticity is not a set of profession specific behaviours, but a way of being. Therefore, it applies

equally to becoming a researcher and that has implication for the practice that are considered in this section.

While it is widely acknowledged that the researcher is an 'integral element in each aspect of the research process' (Brown Buchanan, 2012), the exploration of how these processes impact on the researcher's authenticity, or how researcher authenticity impacts on those processes, remains under-explored. Person-centred concept of authenticity is rooted in the principles of non-directivity as a path towards deconstructing oppressive practices and restoring non-dominant power dynamics (Schmid,). This is where through recognising and valuing the importance of self-direction and self-discipline, authentic person is only concerned with retaining power over oneself (Rogers, 1980). Power dynamics are often emergent in the discourse concerning ethics, where the researchers are obligated to examine their role power (Karnieli-Miller, 2009). To facilitate trust in the interactions with the participants, all of the data collection for the studies included in this thesis was obtained in a non-directive interviews; this is where researcher follows the direction of the participant (Rogers, 1945).

Perhaps the relevance of striving towards becoming or remaining an authentic researcher is even more explicit when considering the power dynamics between the researchers and institutions. Monagham et al (2013, pp. 42) warns: *"[W]e need to actively resist ethics creep or we may as well give up on the idea of researching the experiences of others altogether"*. Considering phenomenological approach to research with human participants,

there is always an element of unpredictability, and it is crucial to assess the degree of the possible risks as way of ensuring safety from harm. However, the lack of trust in the researchers communicated through the increasingly intimidating and detailed REC processes does not make them trustworthy, it actually the 'institutionalisation of distrust' takes the responsibility away from the researcher. Monagham (2013) argues that the exceeding scrutiny of RECs' processes is evidence of the expansion of bureaucratic control. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) notes that 'too many obstacles in the way of risk and exploration' can quickly deplete the motivational resources. FurthermoreThat in itself is alarming, as it might imply that compulsory and undergraduate education means very little when comes to becoming a trustworthy member of academic communities.

Monagham et al (2013) opens up the discussion about the emotional costs of seeking research ethics committee approval and the 'emotional labour' that may be associated with that process. Gaining the ethical approval and access to schools can be difficult especially for novice PhD researchers without existing contacts. Bergman (2015) also highlights the possible pressures attached to the notion of performativity, that can be examined under the construct of incongruence:

> *"The acute self-awareness raised by being a newcomer, in a context to which access is pivotal for the success of a research project, evokes discomfort at stepping out of one's normal self-presentation and into one that is designated to please (2:695)."*

These often-unacknowledged challenges and compromises need to be examined further as they can 'decalibrate' the researcher-as-instrument; consequently, diminishing the trustworthiness of the data collected (Pezalia et al., 2012).

3.9 Summary

This methodological assemblage can be viewed as a journey of an early career researcher experimenting with methods that align with questions; equally it can be seen as part of Rogerian conditions for creativity, an openness to toying with concepts and ideas. Understanding and justifying the methods employed seems more comfortable in retrospective; this is because crafting phenomenological research while supported with theoretical understanding, it is also highly intuitive process (Vagle, 2016).

CHAPTER 4

A systematic review and meta-synthesis of

qualitative research into teacher's authenticity

4 Qualitative Metasynthesis

4.1 The purpose of this study

This study was conducted after the IPCA study to further clarify the concept of teacher's authenticity as offered by other academics in the field in attempt to locate the points of convergence that bring forth a greater understanding. Since the concept of teachers' authenticity itself was not grounded in person centred theory in any of the found empirical studies, my purpose was to synthesise existing research on authenticity of teachers to provide a solid base for capturing the core meanings of the existing concepts and explore the similarities and differences between them to see if it is possible to 'build bridges' with the person-centred theory in response to Joseph's & Murphy's (202) invitation.

The publication is extracted from this PhD dissertation.

• As the published works thesis includes copies or offprints of journal articles, book chapters etc. which already have page numbers, the pages of the publications themselves will not be included in the pagination sequence of the dissertation.

• The font Calibri (Body) in this manuscript was set to differentiate itself from the dissertation.

• The tables, figures and page numbers are re-labelled and re-numbered for the systematic presentation in this PhD dissertation. Please refer to the published journal paper for the citations.

• The reference of this manuscript is collected in References (p.117).

• The word count of the manuscript is not included in the PhD dissertation.

(Please find the published version in Appendix)

A systematic review and metasynthesis of qualitative research into teacher's authenticity

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Abstract

Teacher authenticity is a topic of emerging interest in the field of education. This paper systematically reviews existing qualitative research on the subject of teachers' authenticity from the perspective of teachers and students. The findings from twelve studies are subject to a metasynthesis. Results show that the authentic teacher is conceptualised as congruent, caring, open to encounters and critically conscious. The conditions that foster teacher authenticity are social belonging, self-organising school systems, intentional critical consciousnesses, and intrinsic (caring) motivation. These are contrasted with the perceived inhibitors of authenticity: alienation, systemic control, and Kafkaesque approach. Implications and recommendations for further research are proposed.

Keywords: authentic teacher; systemic control; qualitative metasynthesis.

4.2 Introduction

In recent years there has been growing interest in the topic of authenticity in the teaching profession. Authenticity is generally conceptualised as a desirable state of a person, organisation, or institution, in which there is a striving for truth, genuineness, and transparency. Alongside the development of research interest in authenticity many changes have taken place in the teaching profession. Broadly speaking, the purpose of education seems to have progressively moved towards greater alignment with capitalist ideologies promoting the belief that economic freedom ensures human flourishment. Such freedom then is achieved through education and subsequent work where the 'human capital' increases with the skills acquired while economic status signifies the person's growth

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(Burgess, 2016). As such, the main focus is on the product of education rather than education as a process. Consequently, education then manifests itself in the fixation on measures, outcomes and standardised testing. Understanding the profession of teaching in this way it is perhaps not surprising that the topic of authenticity has become of interest as it seems to offer a counter narrative and vision of what the purpose of education can be.

For the individual teacher the standardisation-accountability-outcome culture might increase stress, in the way they are held accountable for students' achievement. Holding teachers accountable appears logical given that 'teacher' is a major factor in relation to students' motivation (Hattie, 2009). Such thinking has led some to argue that what is needed is 'resilience' and 'quality' teachers to cope with increases of occupational stressors, systemic pressures, reforms and regulations (e.g., Day & Smethem, 2009; Flores, 2019). But the methods might thwart teacher's innate creativity and expressiveness or their willingness for originality and novelty in methods. Teaching is a profession which haemorrhages its workers.

The latest Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report published by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), based on data from 15,000 schools in 48 countries, validates the concerns over teachers' recruitment and retention (OECD, 2018). TALIS recommended policy pointers towards improvement of financial incentives and working conditions for teachers as means of sustaining and increasing teachers' motivation (OECD, 2018). Consequently, 'harvesting' teachers' motivation manifests itself in the governmental strategies in countries like the United Kingdom (DfE, 2019) where novice teacher attrition rates reach up to 50% in the first 5 years (den Brok, Wubbels & van Tartwijk, 2017). Such strategies include financial incentives in the

form of training bursaries and retention payments aligned with the ideology of economic growth as a pathway to higher levels of motivation and wellbeing (DfE, 2019).

While the capitalist tendencies have been largely accepted, a growing body of researchers strive to expose the contradictions between the surface appearance of education as 'public good' and its underlying processes that reproduce existing and contribute to new problems in society (e.g., Blum & Ullman, 2012; Baltodano, 2012; Castrellon, Rivarola & Lopez, 2017; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Nieto, 2005). This seems to be reflected in the dissonance between teacher training content, personal values and the contemporary educational realities where the formation of teachers' identity occurs in the space of contradictions (Anspal, Leijen & Löfström, 2018). It is our understanding that the discourse of teachers' authenticity that emerged in the last 20 years can be viewed as an implicit resistance towards existing incongruities that contribute to diminishing intrinsic motivation of teachers. Although the theoretical foundations underpinning the existing research on teacher authenticity lack consistency the research reported on in this metasynthesis seem to broadly agree that: (a) being an authentic teacher contributes positively to teachers' motivation; and (b) that the socio-environmental conditions play an important part in the development of teacher authenticity.

In this review of published qualitative studies, we are interested in understanding how teachers' authenticity is conceptualized, and how the development of teachers' authenticity is facilitated or inhibited in the context of psycho-socio-environmental conditions. The only previous review of the literature on conceptions of authenticity in teaching was conducted by Kreber et al (2007) and it concentrated broadly on the existing

theories and philosophies, rather than empirical research which at that stage was sparse. The first peer reviewed empirical studies on this specific subject was only conducted a few years prior (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a, b). Since then, the majority of studies have been conducted in the context of adult/higher education and they were concerned with the teachers' perceptions (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a, b; Cranton, 2010; Kreber et al, 2010; Rabin, 2015; Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016a, b; Ramezanzadeh 2017; Rappel, 2015) with the exception of studies by Kreber, McCune and Klampfleitner (2010) Kreber and Klampfleitner (2013) where data came from both teachers and students. While the qualitative study by De Bruyckere and Kirshner (2016) and quantitative studies of De Bruyckere and Kirshner (2017) and Johnson and LaBelle (2017) in the context of secondary education focused purely on the students' perspective. The only found study in the context of primary school was a qualitative dissertation by Akoury (2013).

4.3 Method

Qualitative research metasynthesis, involves 'rigorous qualitative methods to synthesize existing qualitative studies to construct greater meaning through an interpretative process' (Erwin et al, 201, p. 186). It is recognised as a positivist approach in its endeavour to identify overlapping themes and offer tentative generalisations (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010; Finlayson & Dixon, 2008). Metasynthesis is also considered a beneficial method for 'maximising knowledge production' as well as evaluative strategy in identifying reliable and valid studies (Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2013). Sainin and Shlonsky (2012) suggest that another function of systematic reviews is to reduce the bias of traditional

literature reviews by offering a transparent synthesis of the existing studies relevant to a specific question(s).

This study analyzed the findings of peer-reviewed published qualitative research carried out by multiple researchers on the topic of (a) *implicit* conceptualisations on teachers' authenticity and (b) conditions that contribute or inhibit authentic teacher's development. The aggregative approach was implemented with the aim of facilitating the process of creating the common themes across the studies by means of using predetermined research questions (Sainin & Shlonsky, 2012). The literature covers the articles from compulsory to tertiary education because the concept of teacher's authenticity is expected to share similar characteristics across the educational realities.

4.4 Selecting the studies

As this is a first systematic review of empirical research on the subject of teachers' authenticity the studies from all years have been included. We have searched EBSCO (and ERIC), PROQUEST, SAGE journals and Taylor & Francis databases. The search was set to search the abstract and title of the journals. The search terms were identified following an initial much broader literature search and the final version included following terms and Boolean operators: ('Authentic Teacher' OR 'Teacher Authenticity' OR 'Authenticity in Teaching') AND ('qualitative OR interview OR autoethnography'). As we were concerned with the emerging conceptualisations of the phenomena of teachers' authenticity in qualitative studies the possible alternatives like 'congruence' or 'genuineness' or other descriptions of identity/characteristics were not considered.

The initial search identified 86 studies and the process of selection is described below. Following the search of each database, a list of identified journals has been sent to reference management software, EndNote. After removing the duplicates 52 journals were left for the abstracts to be read to determine the studies relevance. This resulted in 13 studies to be read in full including the investigation of the reference lists. The reference lists brought to attention further 21 studies of which 5 studies were to be read in full. At this stage 8 articles known prior to the search were also to be read in full.

Table 1. The process of selection articles relevant to the project.
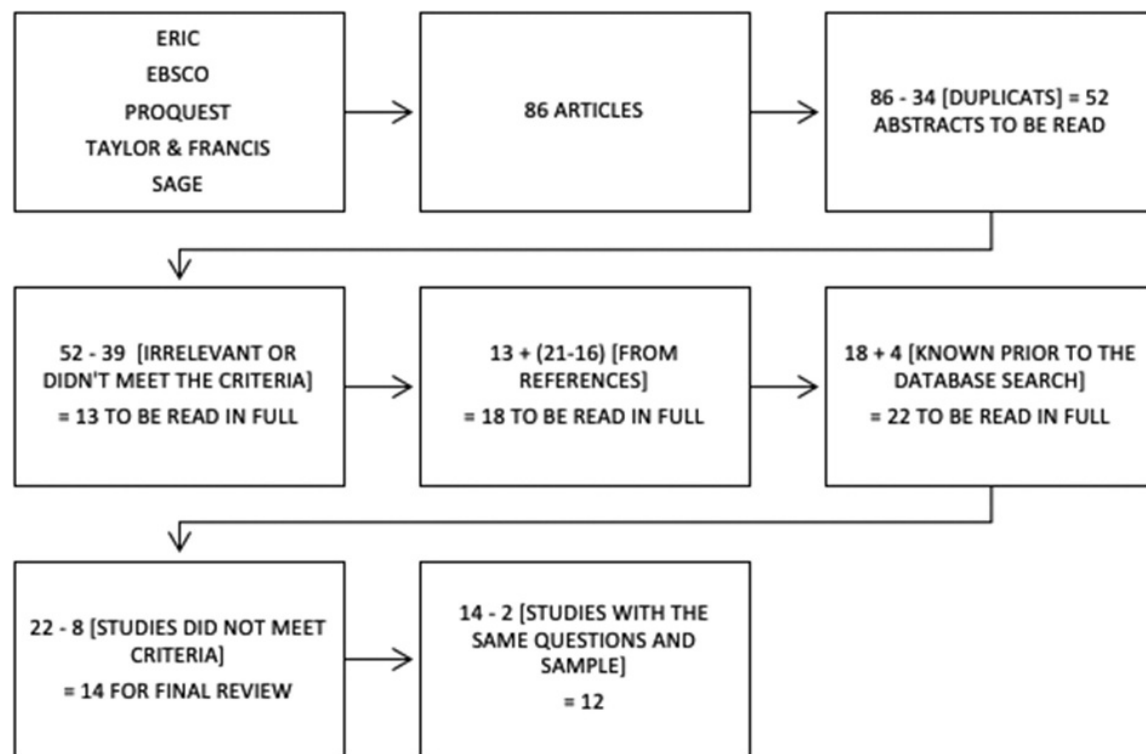
Following the examination of 22 articles, 8 articles did not meet criteria and 2 further articles were excluded as they were applicable to the same sample as a study already included and both the research questions and findings did not present significant

differences to warrant inclusion as distinct studies. Figure 1 represents the process which resulted in the final N=12 articles to be included in the review. The criteria used to determine which articles were to be included /excluded was adapted from Wimpenny and Savin-Baden (2013):

Include	Exclude
'Authentic teacher', 'Teacher's authenticity', 'Authenticity in teaching' (in regards to identity/character)	Authentic teaching (in regards to teaching methods/activities)
All-time publications	-
All contexts (primary, secondary, college, higher education, community education)	Non-educational context, studies on the subject of authentic leadership of teachers
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Grey literature, reports
International literature in the English language	Literature not in the English language
Qualitative studies	Quantitative studies
Empirical studies	Conceptual/theoretical studies; papers that duplicate the same findings.

Table 2. Inclusion/exclusion criteria.

4.5 Quality rating

The studies included implemented a range of qualitative research methods. The most popular methodological choice appeared to be grounded theory (n=4) followed by studies of phenomenological nature (n=3), narrative inquiry (n=2) and one life history project. There were also n=3 studies that did not specify their methodological orientation and in turn their focus was to methods used including in-depth interviews (n=2) and repertory grids interviews (n=1). All of the studies in this review implemented interviews as their primary research instrument. Other methods included focus groups, observations, field notes and general meetings.

Table 2. Qualitative Research Quality Checklist adapted from Saini and Shlonsky (2012).

	Addressed	Review comments
STUDY:		
Reviewed by:		
Likert scale for the addressed criteria: 2 – YES; 1 – UNCLEAR; 0 – NO		
Qualitative framework Is the purpose & research questions [RQ] clearly stated Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the RQ Study theoretically situated	2 – YES 1 – UNCLEAR 0 – NO	
Study design Is a method appropriate to the research question?		
Sampling procedures The process of sample selection clearly described and consistent with the research design Is the sample size justified and appropriate for the research design/RQ?		
Data collection Clarity of how the researcher(s) is situated in relation to participants Data triangulation Info about who collects data, when it was collected and who analysed it included		
Ethical issues Is there adequate consideration for ethical issues		
Reflexivity of the researcher The researcher identified potential and actual biases Did the researcher integrate the use of a reflexive journal in the data analysis and interpretation? Mistakes/challenges noted		
Data analysis Is the procedure/method of data analysis clearly described? Is the process of data analysis presented with enough depth and detail to convey the meanings and perceptions of the sample		
Findings Thick descriptions of the sample and results provided Findings emerged from the experiences of the sample The researcher takes a critical stance towards research findings		

Table 3. Quality checklist.

For each study that has met the inclusion criteria, the Quality Checklist has been completed. This was informed by the approach to evaluation of qualitative evidence in metasynthesis in the field of psychotherapy (Murphy et al, 2018). The quality checklist used is the adapted version of Saini & Shlonsky (2012) 'Qualitative Research Quality Checklist'.

The adapted checklist comprised of 19 items in the following sections: qualitative framework (3 items), study design (1 item), sampling procedures (2 items), data collection (3 items), ethical issues (1 item), reflexivity of the researcher (3 items) data analysis (2 items) , findings (3 items). Using a three-point system for each item addressed yes=2, unclear=1 and no=0; with the range of quality scoring between 0 to 38. A completed Quality Checklist has been submitted to the journal in a supplementary file for the review.

5.6 Data analysis

One of the researchers initially reviewed all 12 papers and collected detailed information about the findings as reported by the original researchers into the table (see Table 3). Qualitative analysis software MAXQDA was used as all the papers could be uploaded and coded in one place. The initial coding involved locating themes/subthemes as reported in the original studies and then grouping those codes thematically. This resulted in the emergence of overarching themes and a number of subthemes in response to each question. Then each paper was read and coded again using the overarching themes and subthemes from the collective to identify any commonalities and differences and reveal the shared features and content.

The number of subthemes was reduced using the option of creative coding in MAXQDA where the similar subthemes were merged together. To enhance the knowledge production the feature of 'code cloud' was used to visualise the frequency of the codes within the overarching themes and subthemes and the connections between them.

In response to the 1st question the process of analysis led to the identification of four intertwined overarching themes and fourteen subthemes which can be viewed in the Table 6.

Table 4. Overarching themes and subthemes.

Table 3. Overarching themes and subthemes relevant to the first research question.

Overarching themes	Sub-themes
CONGRUENT	• *Being genuine* • *Self-knowing* • *Defined by oneself* • *Taking responsibility for one's actions*
CARING	• *Caring for the subject* • *Caring for the students* • *Caring for oneself?*
OPEN TO ENCOUNTERS	• *Collaboration* • *Meaningful dialogic encounters* • *Taking risks*
BECOMING CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS	• *Reflective self-awareness* • *Contestation* • *Searching for meaning*

To answer the 2nd research question the same process was implemented, the themes were abstracted, and subthemes grouped and when appropriate regrouped using the function of creative coding in MAXQDA. This has yielded four overarching themes and 24 subthemes (see Table 7).

Table 5. Overarching and subthemes

Table 4. Overarching themes and subthemes relevant to the second research question.

Overarching themes and their subthemes		
Facilitative conditions	Inhibiting conditions	
SOCIAL BELONGING	ALIENATION	S
• Shared values	• Veiled values	O
• Validation (acceptance & appreciation)	• De-validation	C
• Webs of support	• Competitive exclusion	I
		A
		L
SELF-ORGANISING SCHOOL SYSTEMS	SYSTEMIC CONTROL	E
• Collaborative approach	• Dominance hierarchy	N
• Systemic fluidity	• Rigidness & fragmentation	V
• Daring culture	• Fear culture	I
		R
		O
		N
		M
		E
		N
		T
		A
		L
INTENTIONAL CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESSES	KAFKAESQUE CLERK (APPROACH)	P
• Commitment to critical self-reflection	• Mechanical reflectiveness	S
• Awareness of complexities	• Reductive simplification	Y
• Acting intentionally	• Prescriptive reacting	C
INTRINSIC (CARING) MOTIVATION	• Disconnected self	H
• Invested-self	• Compliance	O
• Personal power	• Self-centredness	L
• Micro- & macro-caring approach		O
		G
		I
		C
		A
		L

4.6 Results

The reports from a total sample *N*= 221 participants included in this meta-synthesis

consisted of teachers (T*N*=133) and students (S*N*=88). The 12 published studies reported on

11 independent samples. The overview of the results can be viewed in the Table 8. Two studies by Carusetta and Cranton (2005b) and Cranton and Carusetta (2004a) were drawn from the same samples. Studies by Kreber (2009) and Kreber et al (2010) are drawn from one sample of teachers but not students. Average sample size was N=20 and ranged from 6 to 46.

The quality of the studies was in the range from 10 to 31 with the mean of 22.07 (59% out of 100%). The frameworks for quality assessments of qualitative evidence do not seem to be yet a standard in metasynthesis in the field of education. To compare the results qualitative metasynthesis by Murphy et al (2018) using framework by Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillon (2003) report range from 29 to 45 (potential range 18 to 54) and 36.62 (52% out of 100%) average mean.

4.7 Authentic Teacher

While this synthesis offers a set of overarching themes in response to the first question that are consistent across all of the discussed studies there are some differences between the conceptualisations of some of these constructs. The themes are presented in Table 4 and consist of being *congruent, caring, open to encounters and critically conscious*. These are followed by four polarised overarching themes in response to the second research question (Table 5): *'Social Belonging/Alienation', 'Self-organising School Systems/Systemic Control', 'Intentional Critical Consciousness/Kafkaesque Clerk (Approach)' and 'Intrinsic (Caring) Motivation/ Kafkaesque Clerk (Approach) w*hich are discussed below.

These are closely intertwined, and the process of synthesis aims to encapsulate those relationships.

4.7.1 Congruent

The next first theme in the conceptualisations of teachers' authenticity, *'congruence'* constitutes of four subthemes: *self-knowing, being genuine, defined by one-self* and *taking responsibility for one's actions*. This was the most prominent theme in all of the examined papers. All of the presented teachers' accounts suggest that *self-knowing* is an essential step towards becoming authentic as it fosters the genuine way of being. It could be viewed as paradoxical to be genuinely oneself when not pursuing the knowledge of who the self is. However, the conceptualisation of what it means to be oneself as a teacher has been viewed from different theoretical orientations, including existentialism (Cranton 2010; Carusetta & Cranton; Kreber; Ramazenzedah et al; Rappel, 2015), humanism (Rabin, 2013), and communitarianism (Kreber, Ramezanzadeh et al; Rappel, 2015).

4.7.2 Caring

The next theme that characterises an authentic teacher is *'Caring'*; consisting of three subthemes: *caring for the subject*, *caring for students* and *caring for oneself*. Caring appears to be a perceptible manifestation of authenticity. Care for the subject reflects not only the passion and individual interests and pursuits of a teacher (DeBruycker & Kirshner; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b; Kreber, 2009) but their commitment to inspire others and deliver the subject in a way that is meaningful to students (DeBruycker & Kirshner; Rabin, 2013). In fact, this multifaceted subtheme also refers to caring for the subjects that reflect

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the passions and interest of students. Being authentic as a teacher involved sharing sometimes personal connection to subject matter and being explicit about how it can be integrated in the wider context (Kreber, 2010; Rabin; 2013). While *caring for the subject* appears to be often simultaneous with *caring for the students* the distinction has been made as it appears possible not to experience the connection with the students while being passionate about the subject and vice versa.

4.7.3 Open to encounters

The nature of relationship between a teacher and a student was explored to various degrees by the all of the researchers in attempt to conceptualise its connection to being an authentic teacher. *Meaningful dialogic encounters* were presented as representative of authentic relationship, having a transformative potential for both teachers and students. The meaningful dialogue was characterised as open, where the teachers could simultaneously reveal the subject and relevant parts of themselves (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Cranton & Carustta, 2004b; De Bruycker & Kirshner; Kreber, 2009; Kreber et al, 2010; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015; Ramazenzedah, 2016a). This form of encounter, where the teacher was received as genuine was seen as an invitation to a dialogue for students who could also freely debate their own ideas, experiences and meaning making processes.

However, there were some discrepancies around the concept of openness and sharing and the 'appropriateness' was debated. Studies involving student participants were explicitly reinforcing the idea that sharing oneself as a teacher is not equivalent to full disclosure, but has to be framed in the subtheme of caring for the subject and the student

(De Bruycker & Kirshner; Kreber et al, 2010). For some, the openness to encounters

extended to relationships with colleagues and other staff members (Carusetta & Cranton,

2005) and this overlaps with the subtheme of *'collaboration'.* Authentic teachers seem to be

orientated towards *collaboration,* creating communities of practice where the teachers can

share and 'strengthen bonds' between one another (Rappel, 2015), and create non-

judgemental networks of support and spaces for reflection (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004;

Carusetta & Cranton, 2005).

4.7.4 Social belonging/ alienation

'Social belonging' contrasted with *'Alienation'* captures the essence of feeling

accepted and valued by the learning community and has been most evident in the findings

of Cranton and Carusetta (2005a,b), Rabin (2013), Rappel (2015) and Ramezanzadeh. This

theme splits into three polarised subthemes: *shared values/ vailed values, validation/de-*

validation, webs of support/competitive exclusion. While 'social belonging' is perceived as

facilitative for the development of authenticity, '*alienation*' is seen as contributing to

psychological distress and inauthenticity. Experiencing *'alienation'* offers justification for

self-centred approaches discussed earlier.

Cranton and Carusetta (2004b), Carusetta and Cranton (2005a,b) and Cranton (2010)

suggest that the sense of belonging to a learning community develops when teachers and

students can recognise themselves as valuable members and feel accepted as individuals.

Validation from the learning community is expressed through recognition of teacher's

actions, opinions, thoughts or feelings as valuable: Kreber (2009) expands that openness

from students might be also a facilitative factor. Authenticity appears to be nourished

where teacher's efforts as well as struggles are recognized and appreciated. The experience of *de-validation* occurs when teachers report feeling discriminated, judged, unappreciated or when their voices are neglected (Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016a; Rappel, 2015).

Once the teachers feel recognised as persons they are more likely to debate their values and beliefs about education; only then the *'shared values'* might be identified and differences acknowledged (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a,b). When the existing social/school system does not accommodate the time and space for such encounters the values are likely to remain veiled and unexamined. *Veiled values* signify the separation of individuals within the community, where the assumptions and common truths might prevent the teachers from experiencing themselves and each other as authentic. For instance, wanting quality education might be a common truth that underpins motivations of teachers and students, but without learning what it might mean to an individual there is a potential for contradictions or resentment.

The *web of support* is a subtheme describing a space where teachers are feeling connected to the community that offers a safe but stimulating space for voicing ideas, challenges or dilemmas. The need for spaces characterised by informal and supportive atmosphere can facilitate collective growth (Rappel, 2015) as well as individual flourishing (Cranton, 2010).

The polarising subtheme is expressed as a *competitive exclusion,* this term is lifted from natural sciences; it describes condition where the two sympatric species compete for exactly the same resources and for that reason cannot exist in a stable equilibrium

(Amir,1981). This seems to depict the relationships in the educational environments where teachers feel pressured to compete for resources and recognition (Rappel, 2015). *Competitive exclusion* might contribute to fragmented or hostile relations between the staff as well as students and prevents collaborative practice (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rabin, 2013).

4.7.5 Critically conscious

This leads to the next theme of becoming *critically conscious*; a binding theme that fuses the conceptualisations of teachers' authenticity together. Regardless of theoretical orientation all the researchers appear to have come to the conclusion that being a critically reflective practitioner is at the core of becoming an authentic teacher. This theme will be discussed in light of three subthemes: *reflective self-awareness, search for meaning and contestation*.

Reflective self-awareness should not be considered in isolation to awareness of others and the context – but as we process the experiential world through the medium of oneself the perception of everyone/everything happens in the space for self-awareness. While *reflective self-awareness* was addressed by all of the researchers that worked with teachers as participants, its significance and depth appears to be varied. Examining one's methods of teaching, negotiating the subjects, being aware of one's own passions, defining one's identity as a teacher seemed to all be related to being self-aware and authentic. For some it reaches to the depth of the human core within the individual, where the person examines their own values, beliefs and experiences while intentionally contrasting them

with those of others with openness for change (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rabin, 2013). *Reflective self-awareness* can be considered as a method of gaining self-knowledge and knowing yourself was strongly associated by all of the teachers in the studies with being authentic.

There was a clear emphasis on teaching as a meaningful occupation, where one's purpose is somehow linked to being a teacher (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b). Researchers referred to meaningful: relationships (Carusetta & Cranton 2005a; Cranton, 2010) learning (Rabin, 2013), communication (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b), encounters (Rabin, 2013) subject matter (De Bruycker & Kirchner, 2016), horizons of significance (Kreber, 2009). In addition Ramezanzedah et al (2016b) suggests that s*earch for meaning* extends beyond one's role of a teacher and reflects on our purpose of human life and our place in the world.

Contestation in this synthesis is a subtheme that describes not only the ability to challenge the system or oneself as explored by Kreber et al (2010) and Ramezanzadeh et al (2016a;b) but also inhabitation of a state 'in disagreement'. As recognised by many of the teachers and researchers challenging the system is not always a viable option for the fear of losing their job (Rappel, 2015) or the efforts to do so might be perceived as futile. In such cases *contestation* refers to a choice of staying 'in disagreement' rather than intrinsically accepting what is and becoming compliant (Ramezanzadeh, 2017). As discussed in the response to the second question the compliance inhibits teacher's ability to recognise potentialities when they do appear. Contestation can be viewed in the light of exercising of the personal power – realising and accepting one's drive for change and finding their own direction which in turn can facilitate the process of becoming *critically conscious*.

4.7.6 Intentional critical consciousness's/ Kafkaesque clerk approach

'Intentional critical consciousness' was among the personal conditions fostering authenticity and all of the researchers have found that *awareness of complexities* enables teachers to *act intentionally* in response to ever changing realities. Being critical of the contextual influences (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Ramezazedah, 2017), institutional norms and expectations (Cranton & Carustta, 2004b), uniqueness of the students (De Bruyckere & Kirshner, 2016; Ramezazedah, 2016a) or power dynamics (Cranton & Carustta, 2004b; Kreber, 2009; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015) has to be considered collectively to consequentially act with intention. Teachers are *acting intentionally* when they adapt and develop pedagogies for complexity, where the learning is situated in a context relevant to students as individuals as well as a collective. It seems that to understand what is relevant to students authentic teachers remain *open to encounters,* where the authentic motivations of students can be recognised; those beyond the traditional motives like certification.

Commitment to critical self-reflection received less attention as a condition to becoming authentic. Rappel (2015) concentrated her critical attention on the issue that appears external to the teachers; this implies that if the context was to change teachers would be able to be more authentic. Perhaps the context plays a role in assigning value to such reflection; for instance, the communitarian cultural atmosphere acknowledged by researchers in the studies by Ramezanzadeh might somehow inhibit the tendency for self-reflection; conceptualising it as a self-indulgent act or self-centredness. Studies by Kreber (2009) and Kreber et al (2010), while referring to knowing and being oneself do not expand

beyond the 'identity as it is' and while integrating self-identity with a teacher-identity there is no observable attempt of deconstruction and questioning of 'identity as it is'.

Commitment to critical-self reflection encapsulates the process of intentional deconstruction of a person's becoming and recognizing other pathways that while not travelled, are considered as just as viable. Understanding of how our identity, values, beliefs, fears and hopes are constructed is a source of self-knowledge. This form of self-reflection begins to be explored in papers by Cranton & Carusatta (2004b), Carusetta & Cranton (2005) and Rabin (2013).

The polarized theme *'Kafkaesque Clerk Approach'* is a continuation of the theme discussed earlier and encapsulates personal conditions perceived as inhibiting the development of authenticity. The subthemes include *reductive simplification* that refers to the process of fragmentation of self (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b), knowledge (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005) or labour (Kreber, 2009) in order to arrive at prescriptive pedagogy that relieves the individual from responsibility of self-direction (Rabin, 2013). Where *'compulsory reflectiveness'* compliments the process of fragmentation by considering only some aspects of teaching practice that either further withdraw the responsibility from the teacher or reassure his self-concept (Cranmer, 2010). For instance, teachers might be reflecting on the 'disengaged learners' as an issue rather than their own repetitive or teacher-centred practices as noted by students in DeBruckere and Kirshner (2016).

The outcome of engaging with the processes of fragmentation and what might be considered as a superficial reflectiveness leads to the third subtheme of *prescriptive*

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reacting. This appears to be evident in the case of inexperienced teachers that struggle to trust in their own becoming and might initially rely on authoritarian approaches (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Cranton, 2010).

4.7.7 Self-organising systems/ Systemic control

The 'Self-Organising Systems/Systemic Control' is the theme harvested in response to the second research question of environmental factors facilitating or inhibiting teacher's authenticity. This theme splits into fours subthemes: *collaborative approach/ dominance hierarchy, systemic fluidity/ rigidness & fragmentation, daring culture/fear culture.* Environment seems to play an important role in exercising personal power and being authentic, with collaborative and flexible systems being recognised as conducive and rigid and hierarchical as preventive (Carusetta & Cranton; Cranton, 2010; Cranton & Carusetta; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015).

Collaborative approach

While not explicitly defined as collaboration all of the researchers seem to agree that dialogic encounters facilitate the development of authenticity and promote the transformative learning environments. Carusetta and Cranton's (2005a) study evidenced the potential of collaborative learning and organising in creating a self-organising educational system that evolves together with its individual members. This view appears to be supported by Rappel (2015) that advocates for the opportunities for teachers to work together; including peer mentoring, formation of communities of practice and forums where the experiences and knowledge can be shared. Both Cranton (2010) and Rappel

(2015) suggest that creating collaborations and staff-unions might be a step towards challenging the educational systems that inhibit authentic pedagogies.

This subtheme overlaps with the previously discussed sub-theme of *meaningful dialogic encounters* identified as characteristic of authentic teachers. Therefore, open channels of communication might be viewed as the core of collaborative practice, where the ideas and knowledge claims can be questioned and deliberated (Kreber, 2009). For Cranton and Carusetta (2004) and Carusetta and Cranton (2005) this approach requires the intentional relinquishing of the power from the one that is recognised as authority and inhabiting the role of a facilitator and a learner within the community.

Sub-theme of *collaborative approach* is contrasted with *dominance hierarchy* where persons within the learning community are subjected to the mechanisms of control that distribute power (Rappel, 2015). Such environments promote authoritarian approaches and competition over the positions within the educational structure and over the resources (Cranton, 2010; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). *Dominance hierarchy* can be applied to microstructure of the teacher-learner relationship where teacher has the *'single voice authority'* (Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016b), to the other end of the trajectory where educational system is being controlled by the political powers (Cranton, 2010).

Systemic fluidity captures the flexible, adaptable and interconnected structure of the educational system that organises itself in response to changing conditions and situations. This has a direct impact on the perception of safety; when recognising change as a part of

the process towards growth and facilitating *webs of support,* taking risks might be perceived as constructive action rather than a threat (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a). Rappel (2015) also identified the flexibility and a degree of freedom as conditions that foster authenticity. The process of experiencing context as either fluid or rigid, seem to be also connected to critically reflective practice. It appears possible not to recognize the existing possibility for some movement within the existing setting if one has a compliant approach (Kreber, 2009).

The fluidity or flexibility of the existing system can be observed in the utilization of time. Working with rigid and tight timetables and schemes of work that do not allow for movement or do not allocate the space for interaction, exploration and collaboration can inhibit the strive towards authenticity and caring (Rabin, 2015).

Rigidness & fragmentation is on the opposite side of the spectrum to the *systemic fluidity,* this is when the systems are perceived as fixed and hierarchical and the persons within the system are compartmentalized and alienated by design (Cranton, 2010; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). These types of systems seem to foster the conditions for *competitive exclusion* and prevent the formation of *social belonging* (Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). Authoritarian nature of such environment offers teachers limited choices and promotes compliancy to maintain the existing order (Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). Rabin (2013) critiques environments where the existing structures impose central focus on testing rather that fragmentises the learning process and obfuscates responsibility of teachers and learners in becoming self-directed.

Self-organising systems of education can be also viewed through the lens of the collective courage encapsulated in the subtheme of *daring culture* tightly interlaced with *systemic fluidity* and discussed earlier subtheme, *webs of support*. *Daring culture* of the learning community appears to facilitate the authenticity of individual persons, promoting their growth and development (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a). In their studies teachers began to co-construct a new learning programme; daring to accept the uncomfortable uncertainty while collectively trusting in their ability to create more intuitive structures (Cranton & Carusetta; Carusetta & Cranton). Emerging alternative or new systems or pedagogic approaches presents the element of risk and consequently fears of failure that can expose vulnerability (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rappel, 2015). Welcoming failure as part of the process of learning and growth can promote the *daring culture* and authenticity.

Carusetta and Cranton (2005a) refers to university teaching as a secretive profession where the fear of judgement by others prevents teachers from sharing their challenges, successes or failures. This authenticity inhibiting atmosphere is captured under the subtheme of *fear culture.* Rappel (2015) boldly discusses the perceived fear of losing the position as a consequence of voicing concerns or seeking change. *Fear culture* might be viewed in relation to *dominance hierarchies* where punitive mechanisms are implemented in attempt to maintain control (Rabin, 2015).

4.8 Discussion

The synthesis of the secondary data from the above studies in response to the first question drew attention to four themes: *congruent, caring, open to encounters, becoming critically conscious.* While acknowledging that teachers' behaviours need to be congruent

with the words or values, none of the research characterised an authentic teacher specifically as congruent. The use of the term congruent is informed by the person-centred theory of Carl Rogers (1959). Rogers defined congruence as being when the self-concept of a person is congruent with their experiences. Being honest, genuine, knowing yourself, being yourself, true to oneself, owning yourself, taking responsibility for your actions are just some of the constructs mentioned by the researchers that can be conceptualised as manifestations of inner congruence.

Congruent teachers continuously reflect and re-adjust their self-concept or self-knowledge in the light of new experiences. Carusetta and Cranton (2005a) encapsulated this transformative process where teachers move from inner control to freedom, from anxiety/fear to trust, from teaching to facilitating. Rabin (2013) also indicates that knowing who you are is not a final destination for an authentic teacher but a starting point where a teacher becomes aware of their own assumptions and value judgements so they can be examined and diffused when appropriate.

Broadly discussed by all the researchers *caring* seems to be a choice that characterises authentic teachers and it is driven by valuing the students' flourishment. The *congruence* of the teacher might enable the students to perceive teacher's caring attitude as genuine (De Bruycker & Kirshner, 2016). *Caring* for the student needs to be relevant to what is meaningful to the student. This point is explicit in the work of Rabin (2013) where in order to care for what matters to the student teachers must know the student. This wasn't so apparent in the work of Kreber (2009), Kreber et al (2010) where caring was fragmented to caring for the subject and students learning and extended to academic progression of the students. While in the studies by Ramezanzadeh caring for the fellow human being was

intertwined with the religious obligation. All of the researchers to various degrees implied that what they perceive as caring for students might be in conflict with the educational establishments' expectations of professionalism, performance and efficiency.

While all the researchers appear to agree that critical reflection has to accompany the development of teachers' authenticity the explanation of why this process is necessary, seems somehow flattened. Teachers seemed comfortable to critique the hierarchical systems, curriculum content, pedagogies, management, bureaucracy, cultural differences, disengagement of students, competitive environments etc. And even then, the reflections are often fragmented, failing to identify implicit function of education that suppresses human potential and silently carries forward the dominant ideologies of capitalism (Rabin, 2013) or neoliberalism (Kreber, 2009).

Only some teachers spent time exploring the importance of becoming critically conscious of self to identify, understand and unlearn the introjected values and unexamined common truths (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b, Rabin, 2013). To contemplate the deeper experience of having to constantly prove one's worth that somehow can be translated into measurable outcomes and success rates (Rabin, 2013). Kreber et al (2010) and Rappel (2015) both observed the tendency towards a 'client-centred approach' within education where learners are the consumers and where teachers are in the position of having to respond to their educational demands rather than consciously care for the whole persons. It must be noted that here the use of 'client-centred approach' originates from business principles and not person-centred theory.

This same avoidance tendency of exploring and deconstructing self-concept is present when searching for the answers to the second question on the conditions that facilitate or inhibit the development of authenticity. All of the researchers to various degrees explored the environmental and social conditions, the importance of *social belonging, self-organisation of the school systems* as well as their counterparts of *alienation* and *systemic control*.

But only few examined the facilitative psychological conditions within the person of *intentional critical consciousness*; or *intrinsic (caring) motivation* where inhibiting conditions encapsulated under the theme of *Kafkaesque clerk* received even less attention. To maintain the current construct of self, a teacher is obliged to defend the existing structure and resist engaging with critical reflection that threatens the self-concept. Self-concept that is carefully constructed against existing traditions and professional requirements that once passively absorbed might contribute to self-perception as an authentic or a quality teacher. Becoming critically conscious might lead to a realisation that an employed pedagogy is incompatible with what is in the best interest of students. It must be noted that all of the researchers in this study reported that the external requirements, pressures and time constrains prevent the space for the development of *intentional critical consciousness.*

All the above is necessary to contemplate and understand teacher's designed function in maintaining the status quo. Only then, one might authentically engage with ideas that matter or the 'horizons of significance' as suggested by Kreber (2009) and Ramezanzadeh et al (2016a, b).

Perhaps the work of Cranton and Carusetta (2004b) and Carusetta and Cranton (2005a,b) offers a strongest argument that to provide conditions that facilitate the development of authenticity the new learning environments must emerge. Humanistic education that facilitates the development of authenticity in teachers and learners is incompatible with a system conditioned by capitalist realism where standardization and testing are the main focus (Rabin, 2013).

The contrasting example that further emphasizes the need for the new learning environments is a study by Rappel (2015), where adult language teachers experience feeling unappreciated, taken for granted and even exploited. While teachers in her study appear intrinsically motivated and appreciative of their freedom, many do not have a sense of *social belonging'* within their institutions. In the attempt of protecting the profession and the associated educational values and purposes Rappel (2015) proposes regulation of the profession and setting of the unified standards for adult language educators. One might note how this approach might actually limit the freedom and agency of the individual. This is an example of how in seeking resolution that addresses perceived lack of security might occur at the expense of authenticity.

There is a number of limitations to this study. As with all research all the choices are made subjectively by the scientist (Rogers, 1953). This study has been informed by the existing knowledge of the person-centred orientated research team. While our theoretical orientation influenced the process of synthesis, we are confident that the findings presented are congruent with the original sources. It must be noted that the number of studies on the of teacher's authenticity is still relevantly small limiting opportunities for a

more focused inclusion criterion. Perhaps, it would be beneficial to include studies that do not use the same terminology but explore similar terms like 'congruent teacher' or 'good teacher'.

4.9 Conclusion

Further research is needed in the development of theory on authentic teachers that offers a consistent, philosophically sound conceptual structure that can be applied in practice. Once the theoretical framework makes dependable hypothesis possible, further quantitative studies might shed a light on the both facilitative conditions and barriers that inhibit the development of teachers' authenticity. There is also a need for qualitative research focusing specifically on the role of critical reflection in the construction and deconstruction of a teachers' self-construct. In light of the existing findings it appears apparent that teachers' authenticity is a worthy pursuit. However, it is not reflected in the existing teacher training programs. It is our recommendation that the university and school-based programs should be reviewed in light of promoting the development of authenticity for Newly Qualified and Qualified Teachers.

It is also worth noting that the quality rating of the included journals reveals the significant variance in the rigour of qualitative scientific research on this topic. While some of it might be due to inconsistent requirements from the publishing journals perhaps using the quality rating scales when writing the article would improve the overall scores.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

CHAPTER 5

Burning Teachers Out. Teachers' Well-Being and Authenticity: A Qualitative Study

5 IPCA Study

Abstract

This study explored the experiences related to the well-being and authenticity of three teachers at different stages of their careers who were working in a state-funded primary school in the rural part of England. For the purposes of the current study, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was enriched with creative methods, resulting in interpretive phenomenological creative analysis (IPCA). Using IPCA, one polarised superordinate theme emerged: 'Meaningful profession/state of exhaustion'. Meaningful profession was related to a state of relatedness, love for children and the degree of perceived freedom in both teaching and learning. A state of exhaustion was characterised by the experiences of alienation, control and demoralising practices. The results suggest that striving to be authentic as a teacher contributes to teachers' well-being and their experiences of teaching as a meaningful profession. However, the findings also suggest that developing authenticity is often inhibited on an organisational level by dehumanising practices and systemic control. 'Relatedness' is also identified as a necessary condition for fostering a conducive atmosphere for establishing authenticity and

a sense of well-being. In addition, alienation—both relational and individual—appears to have a negative connotation with well-being and authenticity.

5.1 Introduction

The existing discourse concerning teachers' recruitment and retention raises many questions, including those surrounding teachers' motivation, well-being and authenticity. There are a number of empirical studies on the authenticity of teachers who are working in higher education or colleges, but only two studies in secondary school and one peer-reviewed study in primary school settings. With the view that '*authenticity is one of the strongest predictors of well-being'* (Wood et al., 2008, p. 396) the objective of the present study is to provide the opportunity for teachers working in state-funded primary settings to critically reflect on the contextual influences that either contribute to or inhibit their well-being, here with a particular focus on authenticity.

A recently published strategy for teachers' recruitment and retention (DfE, 2019) emphasises the importance of *'harnessing the motivation'* of teachers by offering sustainable, attractive and rewarding careers in education. There is also an ongoing intention to attract more male teachers, as currently only 15.5% teachers working in UK primary schools are male (UK Parliament, 2021). The recruitment strategies do not seem to prioritise the ethnic diversity with the same level of commitment despite of the fact that 33% of pupils in primary schools are from ethnic minority groups but only 8% of teachers are from ethnic minority groups (Gov.uk, 2018). The choice of the

word *'harness'* encapsulates the nature of a relationship between the government and teachers today. Harnessing implies control, in this context, over teachers' motivation. The role of governmental control also expands to the National Curriculum and Standards, where Ofsted monitors and influences the learning and teaching practices across the country. Despite the ongoing changes within the system of schooling, the concerns for the well-being of teachers are on the rise.

Furthermore, a report by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE; 2017), titled 'Work-Related Stress, Depression or Anxiety Statistics in Great Britain 2017', reveals that teaching is the second most stressful profession in the UK. The latest statistics measured against industry group have found that education received the highest score (2100 cases per 100,000 workers) in work-related stress, depression or anxiety (HSE, 2018). '*Workload'* has been identified as the predominant cause of workplace-related stress, anxiety or depression, followed by the '*lack of support'*. Study by Peryman and Calvert (2020) founds that 51% of teachers in their sample, left the profession as teaching was making them ill; whereas 58% of those still working did not feel valued.

The theoretical approach of the current study is rooted in person-centred philosophy developed by Carl Rogers and expanded on by Moustakas (1966); this has been conceptualised in teachers' authenticity and Kiriz's (2008) person-centred system theory. Building on Rogerian (1958) theory of a *fully functioning person* and concept of congruence, Moustakas

defines (1966) an authentic teacher as a trusting and trustworthy person who recognises every child as a person and values and accepts them unconditionally. The trustworthiness of the teachers is reflected in the transparency of their values. Although Rogerian philosophy asserts that human nature is constructive and prosocial, it also acknowledges the impact of the environment on the development of a person (Rogers, 1958; Joseph, 2020). In recognising how the environment can have a positive impact, this theory also explores the negative aspects that can result in human psychopathology. The view of a human organism as a trustworthy self-organising system has informed Kriz's (2008) studies of social sciences and his view of society as an expansion of an organismic system that self-organises. Therefore, the current study proposes that, as social systems, schools can be examined in light of organismic/person-centred system theory where the malfunctioning of the system can be explored through the concept of incongruence.

5.2 Authenticity in the Context of Education

Existing empirical studies by Carussetta and Cranton (2005a, 2005b), Cranton and Carussetta (2004a, 2004b), Kreber and Klampfleitner (2013) and Ramazanzadeh et al. (2016a, 2016b, 2017) have identified the contribution of socioenvironmental factors to the development of authenticity. These include the quality of the relationships with students and colleagues and the importance of collaboration in a welcoming and accepting atmosphere.

Another contributing factor present across these studies is an openness to changes on both the individual and organisational levels.

Wood et al.'s (2008) and Robinsons et al.'s (2012) findings provide empirical evidence for the significance of authenticity in the individual's psychological well-being, shedding light on the correlation between authenticity and self-worth. Importantly, these findings have been replicated in another study by Stevens and Constantinescu (2014), confirming the relationship of authenticity and both components of an individual's well-being: eudaimonia (living according to one's nature) and hedonia (happiness). This confirms the proposition that '*living in accordance with one's organismic self is not only related, but also possibly conducive to adaptive and healthy functioning* (i.e., vitality)' (Stevens & Constantinescu, 2014, p. 12).

The literature discussed teachers' authenticity nearly fifty years ago (Moustakas, 1967; Grimmett & Neufeld, 1994), here applying to the context of schools rather than universities. Yet the first known published peer-reviewed empirical study was not conducted until 2002, and the vast majority of the research projects since then have applied to higher education. The teacher's authenticity in a primary school setting has been approached through the lens of spirituality by Akoury (2013). Although the theoretical approach rests on the concept of God, faith and natural hierarchical order, Akoury (2013) also stands counter to the influence of neoliberalism and explicitly advocates for the importance of being trustworthy as a teacher and having love and care for

the learners. In line with Rogers and Moustakas, his work also stands against the fragmentation of education and diminishment of human encounters.

In the same context, the accounts by Grimmett and Neufeld (1994) and Moustakas offer two fundamentally different alternatives of grounding authenticity in an existing philosophy. Moustakas refers to person-centred philosophy and the Rogerian approach based on personal power and individual values (intrinsic to a person); while Grimmett and Neufeld (1994) anchor it in Taylor's (1991) ethics of morality that need external guidance and direction.

Considering teachers' motivations in light of authenticity has been addressed by Grimmet and Neufeld (1994), here distinguishing three types of motivation: *traditional* (do what is rewarded), *alternative* (do what is rewarding) and *authentic* (do what is right). In this model, authentic motivation refers to a teacher's morality, where the teacher prioritises the student's needs in the given context, rather than government-driven policies or personal interests. Here, morality is guided by prescribed ethics. Approaching motivation from a person-centred paradigm implies that authentic teachers are self-directed and driven by their organismically identified values that are independent (but possibly congruent with) of external regulations (Moustakas, 1966; Rogers, 1994). When the teacher is an '*author of their own life'* and consequently their own practice and pedagogy, they are also more likely to become a fully functioning person (Joseph, 2016).

5.2.1 Authenticity vs. Betrayal

Moustakas (1966) emphasises the gravity of the role of a teacher in a child's healthy development of the self. His book contains examples selected from the practices of ninety-two primary and secondary school teachers following the person-centred approach developed by Carl Rogers. Moustakas (1966) identifies *betrayal* as the source of the *'sickness'* within the individual and, consequently, humanity itself. Moustakas (1966) distinguishes three forms of *betrayal*: first, the '*betrayal of universal values'*, or those values that represent health and life, including freedom, love, beauty, justice and truth. Second, the '*betrayal of self-values'*, including individual meanings, interests and desires, which results in alienation and inauthenticity. Finally, the '*betrayal of unity and wholeness*' in our compartmentalised world. For example, it points to situations where societal fixation on intellectual values in the forms of scores and academic achievements controls or represses creativity, imagination and critical perspectives (Moustakas, 1966; Rogers, 1994).

Perhaps the statement on the dehumanising force of betrayal is best encapsulated in the following quote:

When people reject, humiliate, hurt, belittle, control, dominate and brutalise others, without any awareness of what they are doing , when there is no concern on the part of others for what is being done to them, there is an extreme danger that man will cease to be a man, that whatever is distinctly human will be impaired or so significantly reduced that the life of a man will be as automatic as a self-moving machine

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and as mechanical as counting beads on an abacus. (Moustakas,

1966, p. 4)

Although his criticism of schooling realities might be perceived as counter to humane values, he also offers an antidote to alienation through education—in the form of authentic teachers guided by love, truth and intrinsic values, that is, teachers who believe in the inner power and sources of health within every individual. In Moustakas' conceptualisation, the authentic teacher is a teacher who trusts the '*being and becoming*' of every child and is trustworthy of the child's trust first and foremost; everything and everyone else comes after considering the child. This is a reflection of the nature of a person (learner)-centred approach developed by Carl Rogers. In his book *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers (1969, 1994) sets one precondition to a person-centred mode of education:

A leader or a person who is perceived as an authority figure in the

situation is sufficiently secure within herself and in relationships with

others to experience an essential trust in the capacity of others to think

for themselves. She regards human beings as trustworthy organisms.

(Rogers, 1994)

This single statement can be used for an evaluation of the current UK state-funded educational system, where the emphasis on regulation and standardisation, as well as increased and centralised pressure on the

intellectual achievements of students in the areas of English, math and the

sciences, prevent authentic learning and person-centred practices.

Consequently, it can be argued that the current system that is fixated on

results, achievement and monitoring (Ball, 2003; Perryman, 2006; Perryman

and Calvert, 2020) creates conditions that inhibit the authenticity of teachers

and learners.

Trustworthy teachers that exist in a state of openness are not only

open to positive encounters, but also can accept the possibility of conflict with

students or staff (Moustakas, 1966). Trusting oneself to engage in conflict

productively and being congruent and connected to oneself and others

(Rogers, 1994)—or being trustworthy, as defined by Moustakas (1966)—has

been one of the prominent themes in the empirical research on teachers'

authenticity.

5.2.2 Self-Concept and Organismic Being

Rogers (1995) writes about becoming a person as being a journey of

learning to trust oneself; that process can be enabled by staying aware of

oneself; the goal is not to be conscious of one's thoughts, feelings and

impulses or strain to control or suppress them; rather, the objective is to

understand them. He refers to an individual's fear of the unknown,

unpredictable, unconscious and possibly unwanted feelings, reactions and

responses, identifying fear as a trigger for an introjected authoritarian control

of oneself (1995). This resonates with Kriz's (2008) concept of self-inflicted

control, whether that control is informed by introjected values or own defensive mechanisms, it does not eliminate the fear.

Rogers (1995, p. 268). argues that once the individual becomes the 'comfortable inhabitant of a richly varied society of impulses and feelings and thoughts', that person recognises themself as a 'free agent' with a number of personal choices Rogerian person-centred philosophy is perhaps best captured as follows:

> *My experience is that he is a basically trustworthy member of the human species, whose deepest characteristics tend towards development, differentiation, cooperative relationships; whose life tends fundamentally to move from dependence to independence; whose impulses tend naturally to harmonise into a complex and changing pattern of self-regulation; whose total character is such as to tend to preserve and enhance himself and his species, and perhaps to move it towards its further evolution. (Rogers, 1957, p. 201)*

5.2.3 *Valuing the Processes and Conditions for Growth*

Rogers' (1994) auxological position offers an alternative approach to values, focusing on *operative* and *conceived values.* Rogers (1994) proposes that newly born human beings positively value the experiences that contribute to their growth and offer them a sense of safety, hence ensuring their survival. Every experience is weighted in a given context; therefore, the child values the food positively until the child's body is satisfied or, for instance, until the

satisfaction of curiosity might be valued more. The experiences are evaluated from within; therefore, the process is intrinsic to the child. This process of organismic valuing is integral to self-actualisation and psychological well-being as it enables the integration of the organismic self and self-concept and the achievement of a state of congruence (Sanders & Joseph, 2016).

Rogers (1994) explains that this changes once the child begins to override their own valuing process with the values of others to maintain affection. For instance, the little girl might find messy play satisfying, but when repetitively scolded as 'naughty' by her mother, she learns that this behaviour cuts her off from mother's affection. In an attempt to regain a mother's love, the child subsumes the mother's value as her own and the experiences of playing messily become conflicted. Here, trusting oneself that is at the core of organismic valuing conflicts with trusting the mother, therefore the process of valuing is no longer free from the influence of others (Sanders & Joseph, 2016). If left unchallenged, 'messy play' might remain being valued negatively.

Rodgers (1980) clarifies that because the introjected values are not based on the intrinsic locus of evaluation, they lack fluidity and flexibility. He argues that these rigid and fixed values form the introjected valuing systems of many adults. Rogers (1980) does not necessarily negatively value '*introjected values'* because these might be well in line with the intrinsic/organismic valuing, but he invites teachers to question and re-evaluate their own values.

The need for love and affection is present in every human and in the ideal world, children receive that love unconditionally. If their worth is confirmed by unconditional acceptance, a healthy self develops (Joseph,2016, 2020). A much more likely scenario involves a series of explicit or implicit conditions that must be met to receive acceptance. Using the example above, if the girl chooses to give up the messy play to stay in her mother's favour, she would have fulfilled the 'condition' set by her mother. She would have learned that some behaviours would make her feel worthy in her mother's eyes and others not. Her actualising tendency would continually orientate her towards the behaviours that meet the *'conditions of worth'*. In this process, she would also learn that her own valuing and self-organising system cannot be trusted in keeping her safe from disapproval of others (Kriz, 2008; Moustakas, 1966). This can be viewed in the light of Moustakas (1966) *'betrayal',* where the implicit learning for this girl would be that if she wants to act authentically, she would not be accepted.

5.2.4 Authenticity and Person-Centred System Theory

The definition of what it means to be authentic in the context of the current study is firmly grounded in person-centred philosophy. Based on Rogers' (1967) conception of congruence, which has been developed into an authenticity formula by Joseph (2016), authenticity is a process of striving towards self-actualisation as a trustworthy and constructive social being. Becoming authentic involves a threefold process of knowing, being and owning oneself (Joseph, 2016). Consequently, knowing and valuing the

importance of self-direction and self-discipline, an authentic person relinquishes the power they might hold over others, retaining control just over themself (Rogers, 1986).

The person-centred concept of authenticity is also interlinked with the Rogerian theory of a fully functioning person. The process of becoming authentic and fully functioning depends on the natural tendency to actualise (Joseph, 2016; Murphy & Joseph, 2016). Goldstein coins the term *self-actualising tenden*cy, encapsulating the evident biological tendency of every living organism to self-actualise (Whitehead, 2017). Kriz (2008; 2013) builds on the work of Rogers and Goldstain and applies the actualising tendency principles not only to a singular system of a human organism, but also to complex social systems. This approach offers an alternative to existing rigid and fixed social system theories, offering a person-centred social system theory that continuously adapts to ongoing changes within persons and societies (Kriz, 2008; 2013).

While advocating for person-centred social theory, Bowring states that *'theoretical approach centred exclusively on the person cannot make sense of structural forces and constraints'* (2000, p.) that are traditionally the focus of sociological studies. Kriz's (2008) work diffuses this concern, offering a concept of society as a system of a living organism orientated towards self-actualisation or, as he calls it, *self-organising* in response to external factors. Bowring (2000) argues for a social theory that takes the perspective of a subject as a *'purposeful and reflective agent'* and *'a feeling and perceiving*

body' as its ultimate point of reference, here implicitly highlighting the organismic nature of society.

Kriz (2008) asserts that complex systems like society or culture have emerged as a means of banishing chaos, which is perceived as a threat to living organisms. He argues that experiential existence in the everchanging world without being able to identify regularities would be unbearable. The only way of establishing order is by means of reduction, categorisation and simplification. This process leaves us with '*simple truths'* that, once accepted as the only truth, organise the perceptual reality of individuals. Kriz (2008) notes that individuals who accept their position as the 'correct one' have no need to engage in a critical reflection or to examine their stance.

Although the 'simple truths' approach is still endorsed in various societies, it is unsustainable in light of the complexities of current times, where preparation for active global citizenship is called for (Leduc, 2013). Rogers (1980) was right to be concerned about our ability to adapt quickly enough to these progressing changes. The increase in nationalistic movements, radicalised religious outbursts and the need for building fences, walls and defences could be viewed in light of chaos theory and the willingness to give up personal power to external control that offers (the illusion of) safety. In context of education, Barret (2010) points out that it is given that schools are not a safe spaces as they are a reflection of the larger world; the laws and regulations exist but none of them guarantees safety. It seems to be implied here that we can only strive for civility and hope that the punitive

consequences will be enough to prevent harmful behaviours. Cornelius-White (2020) also acknowledged concerns over harmful or dangerous teacher-student relationships where various abuses of power occurred and yet he remains adamant that it is the trusting relationships that facilitate enhancement of individuals and systems that they are part of. Similarly, person-centred system theory offers an alternative pathway where instead of submitting ourselves to controlling structures, we trust our intrinsic evolutionary programming of 'chaos avoidance' and the wisdom of 'being and becoming' (Kriz, 2008).

Becoming authentic as a person and, consequently, as a teacher is a process that requires ongoing critical reflection upon being and becoming in relation to others and in response to the context. Bolton and Delderfield (2018) imply that reflection is a state of mind that can be compared with a *'pearl grit in the oyster of practice and education'* and not a fragmented technique that forms a separate part of the curriculum. Reflective and reflexive practice has a liberating potential because the need for control can be challenged and diminished, leading to transformation not only of the individual, but of the entire system (Bolton, 2010, p. 7).

5.2.5 Teacher's wellbeing

Considering teachers' authenticity as a viable pedagogical approach seems relevant to take on in places where the evidence of a positive relationship between authenticity, intrinsic motivation and well-being are growing (Chen & Murphy, 2019; Murphy et al., 2020; Woods et al., 2008; van den Bosh, 2014). This seems relevant in relation to burnout, which is a state

of 'emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment' (Seferoglu et al., 2014), which can be understood as an outcome of depleting teachers' intrinsic motivation by inhibiting the possibility of relatedness, competence and agency that also negatively impacts on teachers' wellbeing (Ryan & Deci,2020b; Tremblay et al., 2009).

Understanding what sustains teachers' motivation through outcomes from surveys on teachers' job satisfaction seems to lack depth because it neglects to consider meeting psychological needs that are known to maintain intrinsic motivation. Satisfying the teacher–student relationships are, instead ranking teachers' satisfaction with students' behaviour or (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; TALIS, 2018; Zakariya et al., 2020).

5.3 Methods

To develop a better understanding of the impact of the contributing/inhibiting contextual influences on primary school teachers' well-being—especially authenticity—the phenomenological approach was identified as suitable. The initial design was based on the methodological structure of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which enables the study of participants' lived experiences. This was then adapted to include the emerging creative aspects, which offered another dimension to the study, leading to the use of IPCA. The process of interpretation and analysis and its creative components, as well as justification of the researcher's decision, is provided in the analytic strategy section.

5.3.1 Justification

The concept of authenticity can be interpreted in a number of ways; therefore, asking about how authenticity is experienced at work might generate a number of assumptions and, potentially, defence mechanisms. The current pilot study aimed to determine whether framing the interviews as *'experiences of well-being at work'* would generate data on authenticity.

There were a number of reasons that supported the decision to conduct person-centred interviews: (a) minimising the occurring bias, (b) exploring if the connection between well-being and authenticity would emerge naturally and (c) providing a safe space for the participants where there would be no need for engaging their defences. Influenced by Rogers' (1945, p. 280) approach a non-directive stance towards collecting the data was adopted:

> *From a research point of view there are also important elements; the problems which she discusses, their sequence from superficial to deep, the attitudes expressed are all of her own selection. The counsellor has done nothing to bias the material. There have been no questions to guide the interview. There are no evaluations that arouse defence or shut off expression. The material gained is a 'chemically pure' expression of the client's attitudes.*

Before engaging with this pilot study, I was concerned with some of the unofficial encounters I had with other teachers, where bringing forward a

subject of authenticity or even the importance of the relational components in the process of teaching and learning resulted in the spontaneous activation of defence mechanisms. I encountered guilt and blame intertwined in an anxious dance instead of freedom of expression. In the search for an approach that could potentially dissolve some of those defences I was determined to implement a nondirective approach.

5.3.2 Access to the Field and Participants

The current pilot study was conducted in a small village-based Church of England primary school. Although the initial aim was for all the teachers working in the school to receive the invitation to participate, it was the head teacher who suggested teachers who would be 'good for the research'. Following ethical clearance from the university, the relevant information and consent forms were sent via email to the headteacher.

I received emails from the teachers directly expressing their interest in participation. This included a newly qualified teacher (NQT), a qualified teacher (QT) near retirement and a QT teacher midcareer leaving the school. The selection was accepted based on the headteacher's assurance that participation would be presented as voluntary. The participants were all female, white, British and working with children in reception up to year 2 (ages 5–7). The sample is too small to be representative of teacher's diversity, since white British female teachers are in majority with only 15% of male teachers and 8% of teachers from ethnic minorities (Gov.uk, 2018).

5.3.3 Procedure

The links to the online questionnaires on authenticity and well-being were sent out to the participants, together with the information pack and consent forms. None of the teachers participating in the pilot completed the online questionnaire prior to the interviews. The teachers reported that they did not notice the link or forget it.

Following the initial contact over email, the date and time for the interview was set at the convenience of each individual teacher. Before the start of each interview, written consent was obtained. The first interview took place at the primary school premises in the teacher's classroom, which was an open space, and second in a 'free classroom' behind closed doors. In the last interview, the teacher seemed to have great difficulty organising a suitable space. All the participants appeared eager to participate. The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and lasted between 30 and 40 minutes.

At the start, it was explained that the interview was nondirective, so there was no set questions but an exploration of participant's perception of their well-being in the context of working as teachers. The interviews followed the lead of the participants.

The aim of the current research was twofold. First, the aim was to 'hear' and understand the participants' perspectives on what contributes to or inhibits their occupational well-being, here with a focus on their authenticity.

This correlated with the utilisation of a person-centric research framework where, as a researcher, I intended to minimise the power imbalance between myself and the participants.

Second, the goal was to locate the emerging accounts within existing theories and the wider context. IPA covered both dimensions. Larkin et al. (2006) imply that IPA requires a corresponding commitment to both '*giving voice*' to the participant through the process of emphatic understanding and '*making sense*' of the participant's world through interpretations and analysis. Recognising the role of the researcher as the interpreter of participant's lived experiences (Smith, 2006) emphasises the importance of both reflectiveness and reflexivity of the researcher. Smith (2006) explains the double hermeneutic nature of IPA, where the participants interpret their reality while the researcher interprets the participants' interpretation. IPA is often described as an iconographic method concerned with the individual in their uniqueness and subjectivity of experiencing (Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2009).

Phenomenological analysis can be characterised as creative, participant-centred, explorative and offering a degree of flexibility. They are also rigorous, having structured methods of data analysis (Alase, 2017; VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). The opportunity to utilise the creative potential of IPA led to incorporating the visual thinking methods into the process of representing the participants' experiences, as well as identifying the most prominent themes, hence the injection of 'creative' into IPA resulted in IPCA (I haven't found any existing reference to 'IPCA' so far).

5.3.4 Visual and creative methods

Creative methodologies are on the rise within the social sciences, and although still in the minority in the field of education, the discourse is no longer a whisper (Kara, 2020; Savin-Badem & Wimpenny, 2014; Sousanis,2017). Visual sociology and anthropology began to emerge as a subdiscipline after the mid-1960s, and following the technological advances, researcher-created visual data presented itself in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Posser, 2008). This contemporary tendency has been supported by convincing arguments that start with the claim that creative and visual research methods can enable access to experiences where linguistic methods might be ineffective or problematic (Bagnoli, 2009). Creative methods can offer a representation of data that facilitate empathic responses (Vaart et al., 2018), as well as opportunities to reach diverse audiences, including nonacademic communities (Mannay, 2016; Posser, 2008).

Preserving meaning in the researcher-created data, while ensuring anonymity and avoiding harm to the participants when drawing their personal experiences was a source of ethical dilemmas. Although preserving some of the physical characteristics related to the fitness or age of my participants might have enriched the depth of the illustration, it could lead to them being identifiable or upset. As a result, I had to negotiate the level of detail and change the elements that would not affect the intended meaning of the illustration while disguising identifiable information (e.g., visible health condition).

For instance, if the participant talked about an incident involving their pet, I would replace the kind of animal to preserve the story. Others like Dell'Angelo and DeGenova (2018) create composite characters representing distinct approaches of new teachers coping with complex realities. Although they have justified their decision as 'for the sake of the comic', it could be seen as advantageous in preserving teachers' anonymity. This had to be done carefully as, for example, changing the sex of the participant would significantly alter the meaning of the illustration, while changing the sex of their child would not matter as much. This might be more difficult when using respondent-created data, as in Posser's (2008) example of a child drawing their family with some distinctive characteristics that could be identified.

Although the decision making initially relies on the researcher, it is a good practice to seek feedback from a supervisor or a sounding board. Another way of examining ethically problematic decisions is to seek the feedback of the participants when possible. Finally, visual methods are difficult and complex and, as with any other methods, require a critical, reflexive and rigorous approach to be useful to social scientists. Becoming a more 'seeing' researcher is not an easy option.

'C' in IPCA

As discussed earlier, the commitment of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is twofold; first, a researcher is concerned with 'giving voice' to the participant(s) or 'providing space' where participants can unfold their

experiences. This is followed by the 'making sense' of the participant's experiences. The researcher inhabits the participants 'provided space' to gain the participant's (insider) subjective perspective.

My initial drawings were used to signify the voice of the participants, serving as a way of 'seeing' through the participants' eyes. My intention was to isolate my interpretations from the initial data and draw what I had heard rather than what I thought. Through empathic listening of my participants, I imagined myself in their position/role—some of those images transcended into my initial sketches. I did not consider them as interpretive but as a pre-stage to my interpretations and later analysis.

However, when reflecting, the interpretive process began as soon as my participants began to engage. The commitment of staying within the participant's frame of reference cannot be equivalent to *being the participant*—meaning that the researcher carries their own frame of reference at all times. I analyse another person's lived experiences through my own. If someone tells me they did not feel *'good enough',* I automatically switch into a *'(not) good enough'* channel. This approach, while potentially effective, can just as easily obstruct the researcher from understanding the meaning-making of the participant because it opens up the floodgate of assumptions.

I struggled with the concept of 'switching myself off' and staying fully present with the other person. It did not feel natural at all. If I, for example, sought with intention, I believed I could locate every encountered person living

inside of me. If, based on the input from the other person, I can reconfigure and calibrate required inner channels, I would most likely *see* the emerging pathways of the participant. This could enable me to run these patterns through my own organised system and share similar experiences.

The input included the spoken and unspoken words, language used, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language of the participant. This approach may be flawed because my interpretations were not necessarily vocalised in the form of the clarifying questions. Without those questions, my knowledge production served merely as idle talk, and although I might have perceived it as trustworthy based on my inner instincts and experiencing, this might not have been the case for my designated audience.

This was another justification for the use of the drawings of the accounts presented by the teachers—they functioned as a clarifying question. They were an account or evidence of my presence in the participant's world and an invitation for the participant to clarify, add or redact anything they saw as suitable. This was achieved in two stages: first, collecting the data in the initial interview and, second, going back to the participant to discuss the images created.

VanScoy and Evenstad (2015) imply that IPA differs from other phenomenological approaches in the way it analyses the data sets, focusing on the individual's experiences of the phenomena rather than themes emerging from the group.

Table 1. Stages of IPCA process.

1	**Transcribing the first interview**
2	**Reading and rereading (while listening) + initial sketches**
3	**Beginning to write exploratory comments (descriptive, linguistic and conceptual) on printed transcripts**
4	**Visual thinking process: drawing the participant's lifeworld as I experienced it**
5	**Identifying emergent themes related to subjective experiences of teacher's well-being and authenticity from transcripts and exploratory comments**
6	**Coding of the interview with the emergent themes using the qualitative software MAXQDA**
7	**Creating a table with superordinate themes**
8	**Repeating the same process for the second and third interview**
9	**Identifying patterns across themes and polarising themes**
10	**Creating a master table of all superordinate themes**
11	**Interpretative analysis of the findings**

Although the analytic process began with the exploring and coding of each individual interview to identify the emerging themes and evidence the meaning-making of the participants, the final interpretation of the findings was based on the polarised superordinate themes across all three interviews (Smith et al., 2009).

5.4 Results and Analysis

5.4.1 Ann

Overview: Ann

The first participant is critically evaluating the system, considering herself as 'lucky' because she is working in the younger children, where they are still free to explore the world and themselves not burdened by constant assessments and evaluations as much as the older children. Her responses are consistent with the critical approach of the system, which inhibits authenticity for both children and teachers. She acknowledges the uncomfortable reality of neoliberal schooling and disagrees with standardisation, which diminishes the possibility of more wholistic learning and teaching. Her perception of the government message that trickles down to the teachers is 'not good enough, not good enough, not good enough'.

It seems important to note that most of the time, Ann refers to 'all teachers', speaking in third person as if she is advocating for others who share her perceptions. Other times, she refers to herself in a second person, and speaking in first person appears only sporadically. The themes that

emerged from the interview were: Negotiating needs, rewarding occupation, exhaustion, deficiency culture.

Negotiating needs

This theme highlights the ongoing aim to find the balance between the needs of the children, the expectations of management and government while meeting the needs of self. This concludes by drawing attention to the conflicting realities between those needs and the impossibilities of maintaining the satisfying balance that would ensure a state of well-being.

Ann is very clear in expressing the difficulty of balancing work and life '*outside of a job'*. Reporting the difficulty in finding time and space for her own and her family's needs, she concludes that the job can deplete one's life force to the point where all she has energy for is to '*just exist'*. The thoughts of doing something pleasurable for herself seem '*alien*' to Ann. This theme seems to be closely interwoven with sources of distress. Although she shares that the encounters with pupils motivate her, she also acknowledges the depth of the relationship as an additional layer of difficulty in balancing life and work:

> *I do love these children, and you don't, not as much as you love your children. But you do have a really strong emotional bond to them. And I think because of that, everything matters more, and it's that much harder to switch off from it.*

Describing the problematic realities of some of her pupils, she identifies herself as '*their everyday stability'.* In her experience, it is the routine and her trustworthy presence that enables the children '*to grow and blossom'.* She sees her role as a teacher as an important factor in the lives of the children, especially those who might have unstable households. She finds it personally rewarding when she feels she has contributed positively. However, she comments that her intrinsic experiencing does not seem to be congruent with the messages from the external bodies. Although she might feel pleased with the results and growth of her pupils, she does not feel that the evidence she is asked for reflects that:

> *Because in the classroom, you get so much back from the children;*
>
> *that's the reward in itself, but the paperwork tends to make you feel like*
>
> *you've not done enough.*

Ann seems aware of the conflicting 'needs' of her pupils and management and expectations of the government. She describes herself as compliant but mature and experienced enough to develop resilience to external pressures:

> *Not that I am going to kill myself doing that part of the job that nobody's*
>
> *never going to look at it again or it means nothing because it will be*
>
> *superseded by something else in two months' time.*

Making a difference

Ann is close to her retirement; she has worked as a teacher for over twenty years and is very clear in identifying her intrinsic motivation that comes from being with and for children. Her face is lighting up when talking about her pupils. She is very expressive when talking about the '*amazing feeling*' of being part of the growth and development of a child; she says it is incomparable with any other reward. Ann describes experiencing joy that is almost impossible to contain when co-experiencing the individual growth of her pupils. These rewards seem to be more meaningful to Ann than the financial benefits of being a teacher:

> *And they can read independently, and they get themselves dressed for P.E., and they don't cry anymore when they have to go to toilet. These kinds of things are actually a reward for the job. You know, they say they wouldn't pay you anymore, that might be a big disconcerting, but you still get so much!*

Ann distinguishes her practice as a reception class teacher from teaching older children—her comparison is strengthened by her previous experiences:

> *In the foundation stage, I'm privileged, but I have taught years 1 and 2 mostly over the last 18 years, so I know I know what it feels like in those other classes. So there is a freedom in my class that other people don't have in the same way.*

Initially, she is referring to the freedom of teachers facilitated by the holistic curriculum for the foundation year. Consequently, the pupils at this stage are also experiencing meaningful learning opportunities:

And when I measure my children at the end of the year, which I'm doing now, it's across everything including their imagination and their social skills, but that stops when they go into year one and it becomes academic.

Although Ann describes her role as a teacher as rewarding and worthwhile, she remains critical of some of the occupational requirements placed upon the teachers. She questions the necessity of constantly proving that she is doing a 'good enough job'. She reflects that she feels that '*I'm going through this exercise for someone else's benefit, not for the children'.* At the same time, Ann acknowledges her role as a public servant and does not object to being accountable for her practice.

Exhausting

Ann shares that she has entered the profession later in life, when her own children were grown. She has had other jobs previously that she could compare and contrast with her role as a teacher. She describes herself as mature and experienced, and though not immune to some of the demoralising factors, she notes her resilience to the systemic stressors. Regardless of what appears to be a positive attitude towards her occupation, she still reports that '*you do feel it weighing very heavily on yourself'.* She describes the relationship with each child as meaningful. This deeply personal investment of self and openness to experiencing when working with children can lead her to feel exhausted:

You're exhausted when you go home. But you can't switch off because you worry about that little boy or girl [...] You worry about the fact that you know somebody hasn't done something that you felt they should have done. Is it your fault? Can you try a different way. What else could you try. Those kinds of things just really never let you go, you know.

Questioning her own practice as she *'… lay in bed at night thinking'* how she can support the children who might need a little more. Although it might impact Ann's psychological well-being, it is in addition to the actual workload that can also drain physical energy:

Most time-consuming and also most draining in a sense because once you've already had a full six and a half hours with children in a classroom to then start doing all that kind of work—the admin side can, you know, seem sometimes a little overwhelming.

When Ann expands on what she means by 'admin' work, it reflects evidencing the progress of pupils as measured against the national standards, as well as identifying the areas for improvement.

Deficiency culture

Ann expresses that fixation on identifying gaps rather than achievements can feel negative and demotivating:

So you are always looking for gaps, looking for the children that haven't made it. You are. Always look for what could be done to improve things

for these children. And so it's rare that anyone says: 'that's' amazing! Look how many children you got to this level!' What they tend to say is, 'Look at all these children who haven't made it. What have you done about it?' So it can be a quiet demoralising aspect of the job as well.

She acknowledges the external pressures and the power dynamics that 'forces' teachers to resign their personal power and adapt to the existing system. She observes that there are external priorities imposed on the schooling system as a whole:

That's not driven by teachers. We want to teach art, music, dance and all those things. That is what the governments want: math and English have got to be good, and then, it trickles down, so then you know your executive head picks it up and your deputy head and picks it up and then you pick it up and then the pressure goes on to the little children.

Ann communicates her understanding of the contextual factors that impact the realities of individual schools and the unhelpful nature of comparisons to schooling systems developed in different countries. She voices her doubts about the fairness of the existing system, which leaves teachers feeling devalued:

They do a brilliant job in that country. We need to do that system. It doesn't always work. You can't just transfer things like that around and to be constantly told by the government not good enough not good enough not good enough. That is not a good way to treat human beings generally.
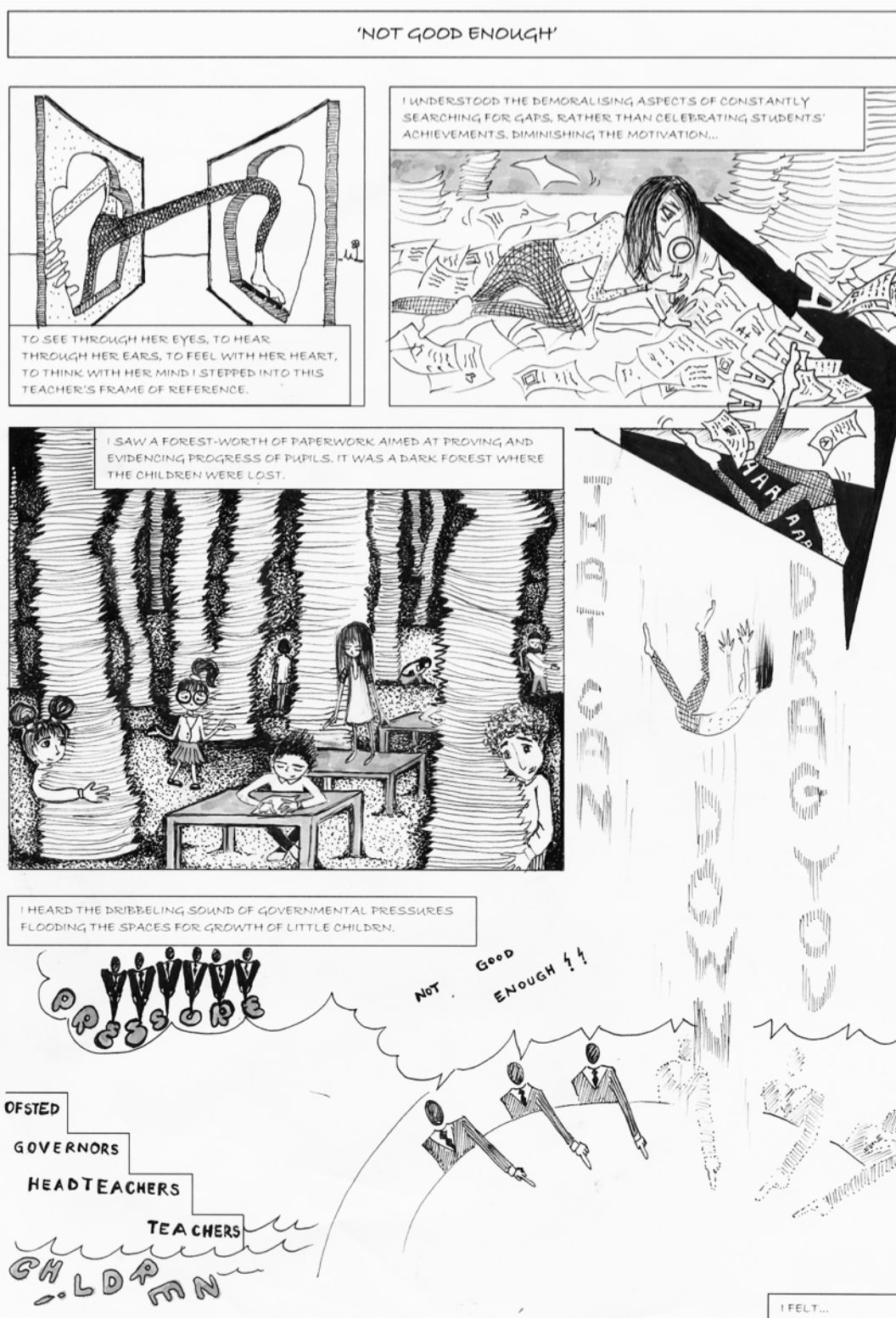
Figure 5. Not good enough

Overview: Bella

My second participant is a novice teacher. She seems to be compliant with the existing school system. She is enthusiastic about being a teacher and about the positive difference she can make in the children's lives. She introduces herself as an 'A student', justifying her choice of being a teacher as a humanitarian act that would be more meaningful than some other career choices. She presents herself as self-aware and conscious of her decisions. She perceives her value in being useful and finds meaning in contributing to what she considers to be a positive change in children's lives. Much like the third teacher, she admits the need for being in control of what is happening in her life, defining herself as '*a bit of a control freak*'. The themes identified in the interview with Bella: need for connection, safety un control, and making a difference.

Need for connection

Bella openly talks about her own needs and how she is balancing them with her work. Her statement also reflects being responsive to her environment and having the flexibility to change when she perceives it as beneficial to her growth or progress:

> *And I think if Mum hadn't given up childminding, I don't think that I would have been where I would be now. Because I wouldn't have recognised that need.*
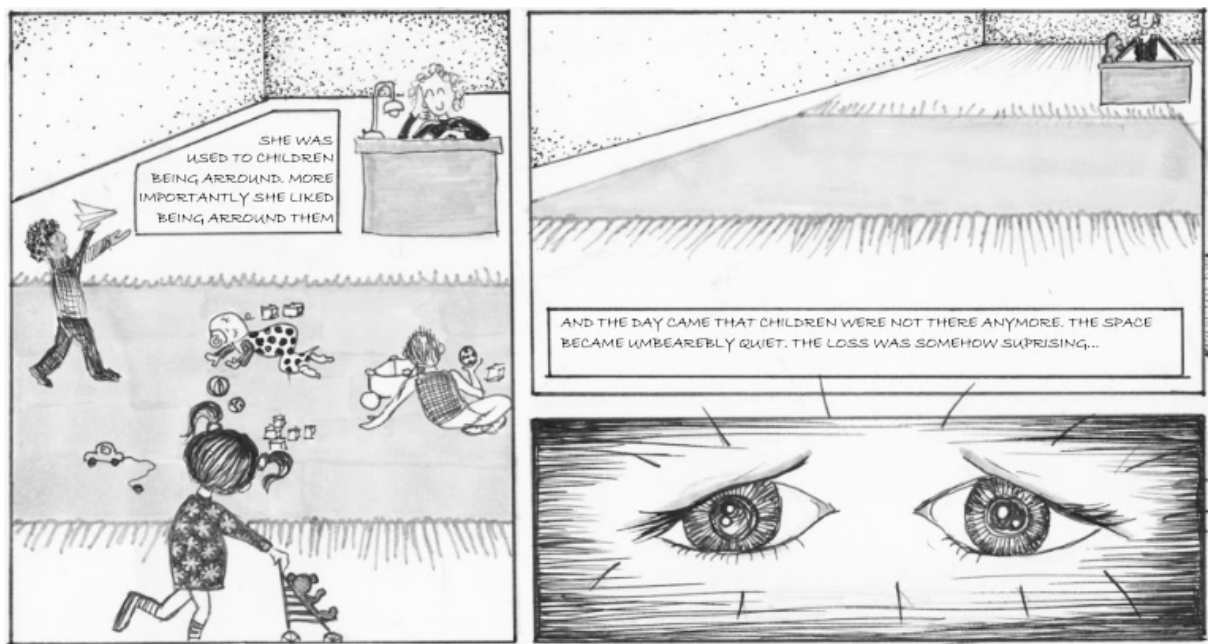
Figure 6. Unbearably quiet.
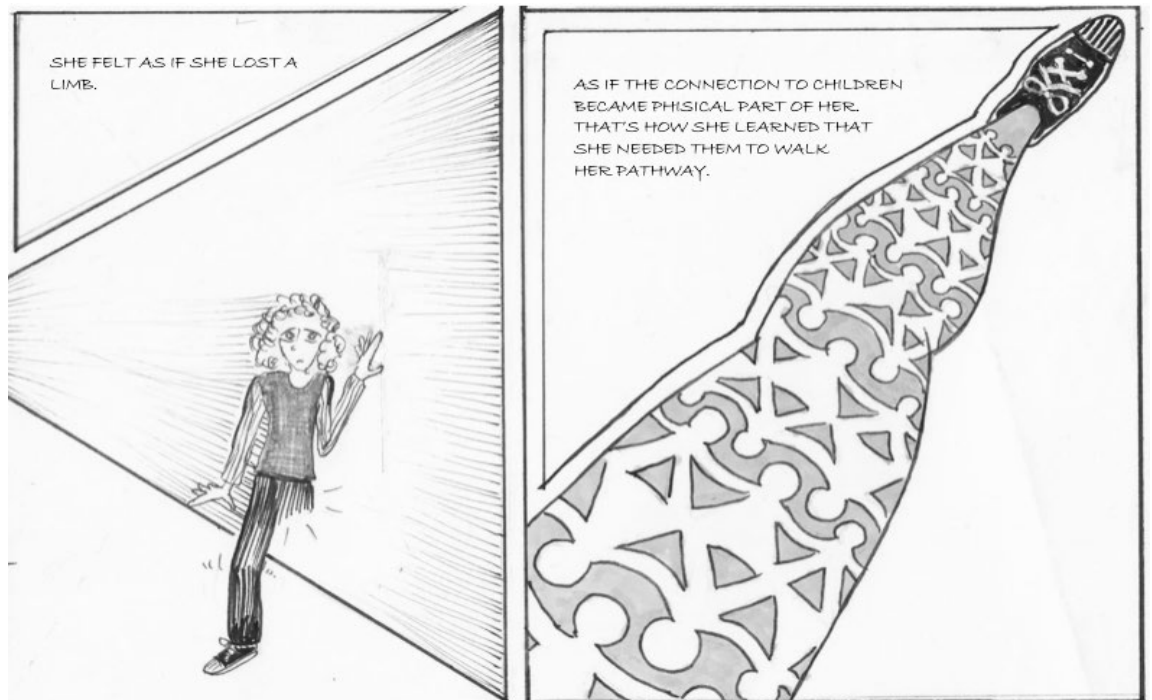
Figure 7. Like a lost limb.

Bella reports that she was on her pathway to following her natural interest in a specific discipline. However, when her mother gave up childminding, she realised the importance of the relationship that she had with children and decided to become a teacher. Although she reports personal satisfaction from caring and spending time with her pupils, she also seems realistic about the challenges. In her reflections, she also acknowledges some difficulties that she has encountered when starting to build relationships with her pupils, where the initial experiences were somehow negative: *'I didn't think I can warm to them, but now, I wouldn't swap any of them'.* Bella shares her initial experiences when engaging in first interactions with her pupils. She acknowledges that her first impressions might be misleading. This also relates to the perceived rewards:

> *At the beginning of that placement, I could remember going home, going 'oh gosh this boy' … Thinking there's no way I'm ever going to get on with him. Won't be able to do it. But in the end, he became so amicable and so lovely.*

Safety in control

Bella perceives herself as an organised person who needs some level of control over her own life for her own well-being. Initially, she laughs, describing herself as a *'control freak',* but as the discussion unfolds, she clarifies that it is the importance of setting up her own routines. She also communicates that she experiences *'a bit of phobia of being ill',* which strengthens her commitment to taking care of her health:

I also I hate to have a day off. When I am feeling like I stepped out. So I try to make sure that that's I am keeping me healthy as much as I can't possibly do. Because … like they say about burning the candle at both ends. It's not some ... I just think it's not going to be worth it.

When reflecting on the possibility of having her own children, she shares her worries about balancing the role of a teacher and a mum and the fear of chaos that comes with unpredictability that comes with children. She reports that she would 'definitely put her work first', which reflects her strong work ethics as integral to her self-concept. This need for doing something is also present when reflecting on the situations in which she notes a difference in her approach to life and that of her friends:

I don't like I can't sit and do anything. I can't just watch the telly. My friends at uni want to sit around and talk about the telly, and I would sit there like, 'Hmm? I have no idea what you're talking about' (laughter) because I wouldn't do it.

On a few occasions, Bella describes the process of adapting to changes, reflecting that adaptability is necessary in the profession of being a teacher. She reports *'working out what works'* and finding her own rhythm of daily routines. Once the routine is set, it causes her some level of distress when she must deviate from it. Bella shares an incident where her new pet had an accident and she was torn between concern for him and being late to work. This need for organised reality is also present when she describes the

ease of managing the behaviour of pupils as a new teacher or taking care of friends' babies. With laughter, she characterises her eight-year-old self as the '*little mommy*' that takes care and organises. She shares that she always liked spending time with children.

Making a difference

Bella finds her pupils' achievements as personally rewarding, as if they were extensions of herself through which she receives her validation:

And I quite like that reward of the fact that I've challenged myself and also that you are making a difference to the children rather than them being successful with thanks to me for small part of it, than me just be successful.

Bella explains her process of seeking challenges. She explains that she was on a pathway of becoming an artist, because that's where her strength is, and changed the trajectory only when her mother stopped childminding. She comments, *'I left behind something that I was naturally good at to do for something I didn't really know that much about'*. Bella explicates that it was a conscious decision:

But it's I have to sort of challenge myself a little bit more to be able to get the results I want. Whereas with art, it was just felt more like a natural thing. And I quite like the reward of the fact that I've challenged myself and that you are making a difference with the children.

In Bella's descriptions of her engagement with art-related activities, she encapsulates a state of 'flow'. She explains that when she was in school, all she did was art. She reports that being creative came naturally to her and that she *'wouldn't think I was doing any work because I enjoyed it'*.
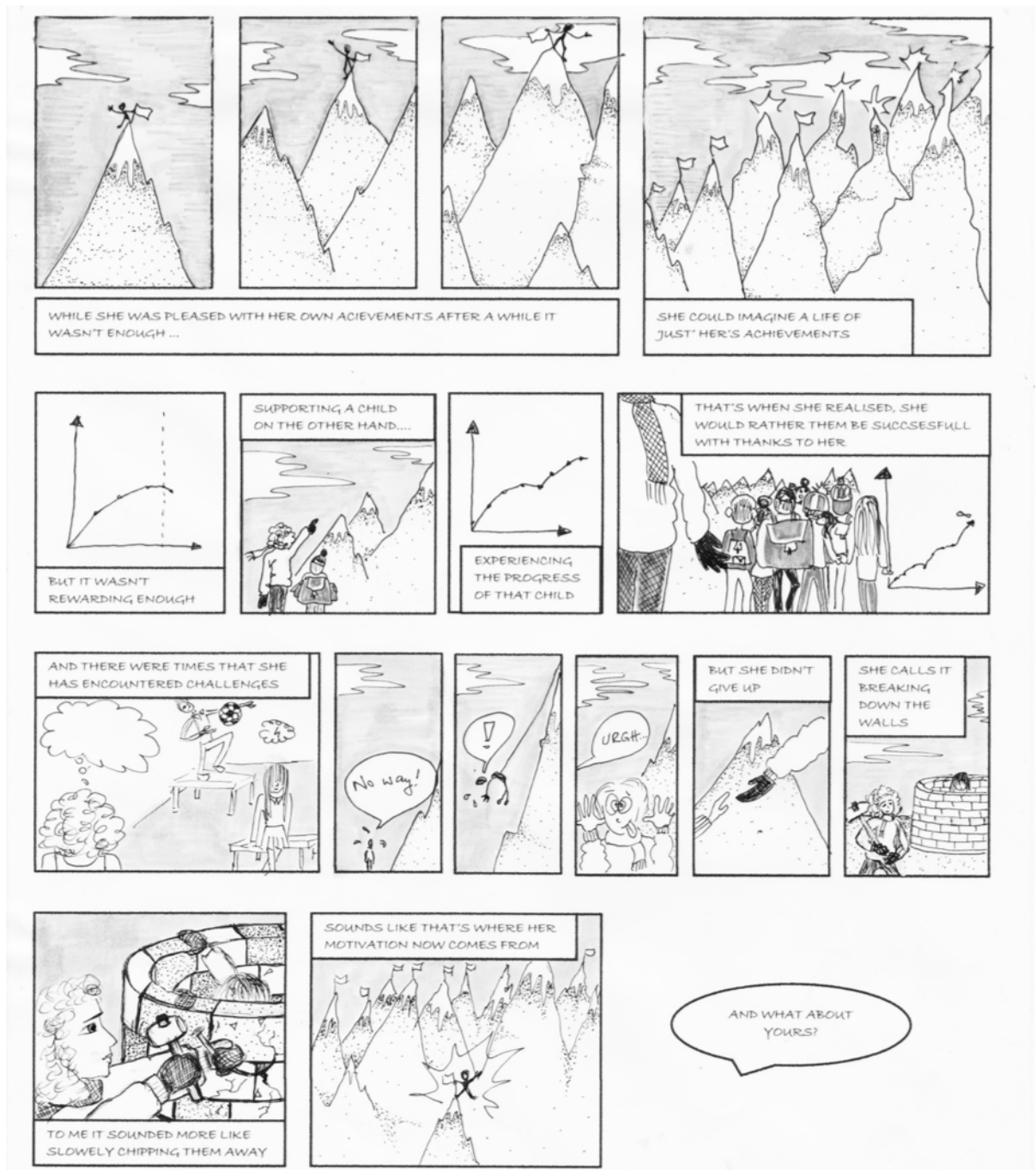
Figure 8. Making a difference

She shares similar perceptions when she loses herself in doing teaching-related activities at home: *'It was far too easy for me to just get bogged down and do nothing but work until somebody said to me, "What are you doing?".'* In her account, she refers to both art activities and being with children as natural to her. It seems that she perceives teaching as a worthwhile pursuit, where her gratification comes from making a quantifiable difference to the life of children:

> *'... and I just think sometimes think, you know, I've got I can make a difference to twenty-three children plus a year …'.*

In her statements, she does not seem to value 'just being' without doing something, nor does she value an ease of being or doing; it seems that work must feel like a challenge and be difficult for it to be of value. She is streaming her thoughts, experiences and stories, straining her forehead in search of more, as if even now, during this interview, she has to work hard.

Bella compares herself to others on a few occasions; this tendency is threaded throughout the interview data. In her social comparison, she judges her choice of becoming a teacher compared with some of her friends who have followed different pathways:

> *And I think that's just so much a nicer way of a thing to see in it. Because I've got friends who I think, like yourself doing the PhD or they're doing they're still at university do whatever or … and I just think*

sometimes think you know I can make a difference to twenty-three children plus a year ... .

When talking about her relationship, she also judges her partner's difficulty in finding his passion at work, which seems to come naturally to her:

Because he always moans that I've got … and I don't like my job just don't like this. So you know you've got a good job you should be pleased with. It's like he's just always looking for something that's a bit more rewarding.

She also talks about her achievements as a student prior to her decision to become a teacher. It seems it is important to her that I see her through those achievements as if they are measurable evidence of her worth as a person.

5.4.3 Carol

Overview: Carol

The third teacher is about to leave her job; she is critical of the demands of the teacher job and difficulties in managing her work–life balance. She shares that the career of a teacher seems to be the most challenging in fulfilling the role of a mother. At the same time, she appears compliant with the demands, and instead of critically evaluating the system, she blames herself for not being able to cope well enough. She compares herself to other teachers who appear to be much more energetic and motivated. She compares herself to Facebook friends who seem to manage life outside of being a teacher, which, she does not have much success with. She presents

as exhausted and burned out and reports being physically unwell. In her new job, she's going to fulfil a managerial role supervising and supporting other teachers. Themes from the interview with Carol: alienated-self, compliant authority, 'judgementalism', proving oneself.

Alienating self

This theme captures the experiences where she seems to neglect her own needs and experiences and keeps 'doing' things as if she is somehow trying to keep herself distracted from being and connecting to herself and others. She emphasises her struggles with finding time for herself and her relationships all throughout the interview, and she sees it as outside of her control to choose anything different, as if she has resigned herself (Figure 8). The illustration captures the faint manifestation as a dotted shape (also a voice in the box) that represents her need for being with others.

Figure 9. Not to be.

In her opening statement, Carol reflects on the difficulties in integrating back into the school system after having children of her own. In her current school, she does not report any new friendships, stating that she feels too busy to stop:

Whereas, quite often in the staffroom, they look like they are munching away, so I try really hard to have a drink. Emm ... but in my head I'm going on so I don't feel like in the middle of the day I can stop. Because I want to know that when I go home I've got less to do.

Carol's circumstances might be a contributing factor to being distant from others because she has a dual role in the school: she is a teacher and also a mother of children in the school. She talks about her relationship with pupils' parents, where the duality of her role distances her from connecting with others:

… trying to read them, trying to engage them but I might be talking to them and them being very nice when actually they might be turning around saying, 'Oh I am not happy with her'. You don't know (small laughter).

This statement also reflects her concern about how she is being perceived by others. As a result, Carol has decided to withdraw herself from interacting with parents as another 'mum'. She also describes the relationship with her husband as somewhat remote:

So things like time for us. We just don't get that time. Which I don't necessarily miss. That sounds awful, but I'm saying I'm at home and I'm enjoying the time with us as a family.

Then, when talking about her current state and the rare opportunities to spend time with her husband, she notes, *'We just want to just sort of sit and not move and not feel like you feel you're so exhausted'.* Carol reports that she finds it difficult to find energy for living a life outside of work. She shares her hesitancy of getting back into teaching after having children because of *'remembering these feelings of just being exhausted'.*

Compliant authority

The compliant authority theme reflects the expressions of having an external locus of evaluation and trusting external sources more than her own while, on the other hand, occupying a position of authority in the classroom or in relation to other teachers. For example, she shares that staying in the current school *'would be an ideal'* and that she is even willing to accept a very significant reduction of wages; yet she accepts the job that she does not think is right for her:

Because they're very keen for that to be a big shake up. Whereas people don't always do change well. So I don't want somebody that gets on my team and I become like the most hated woman in history

(hahah). But I know that I've got the job because they think I can do

that. So I don't know how it is going to turn out.

The processes that she describes as leading to the changes in the direction in her life do not seem to align with her inner experiences. She is adapting to the circumstances to suit the needs of others, her children, her partner or her employers. She wanted to stay at home as a full-time mother when they lived away from friends and family, saying: '*I loved it because it was just family all the time*' but felt pressure from her husband to work because of finances and then to move because of his job. On a few occasions, she admits that she needs to feel in control

So it's the if's and butt's I think and that whole thing about needing

control and the perfectionist side of me wanting to make sure it's right.

Comparing oneself

She also shares feeling unappreciated by the employers and judged by other teachers and parents and worries about being judged by her own children. It appears that Carol evaluates her own worth and performance through the process of social comparison. Her statements suggest that she is concerned with how she is evaluated by others, and this seems to supersede her own perceptions. Although she claims to 'know' that comparing herself to others might not be a productive idea, she does it anyway:

And I know Facebook is horrendous, isn't it—for making everyone feel

like everyone's life is better than theirs. But emm … just by sheer fact

of how often I see other mums are out. It makes me think about how

they are doing all that.

She reports wanting to 'read' the reactions of parents and staff on her performance as a teacher. At the same time, she is concerned with her own children's judgements of her as a mother, struggling to separate her roles at home:

So I'm sure lots of people are better at managing their work than I am.

But I am just trying to work it around. What didn't want to come home

and the girls see me working a school, and then, we have tea and the

laptops back on emm … So that they never really saw the mum's side

when they look back, when they're older. I don't want them to just think

of me with a laptop attached to me.

This suggests that in her social comparison with coworkers, she seems to believe that others can manage their work, lives and health better.

Unappreciated

As a result of budget cuts, the school could only afford an NQT in her role. I perceive from Carol that it has left her feeling unappreciated:

Yeah ... I think it's I think because they wanted to interview again and

observe and I felt like. Actually, I've done all this teaching here now.

You have come and observe me so many times and I'd always been

given good or outstanding. So I felt a bit like, 'or my own self-worth, I

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shouldn't have to apply and go through the same process. For what would have been fifteen thousand pounds a year, less than what I am on.

The value that emerges from her self-concept of being a 'good mother' seems to be the most important factor in Carol's evaluations. And yet it is a value that seems to challenge the most, which results in conflicting statements like, *'So really ideally I would have carried on working here',* while she goes on justifying the change imposed on her earlier genuine statement when living away from everyone. However, it appears that being a mother is not enough for Carol and that er self-actualising tendency drives her to further:

Then after 2nd daughter was born, I didn't get back at all and sort of coming to terms with my feelings really. Then, I knew it wasn't right to try to split myself and I hadn't. I'' quite perfectionist, so I didn't want to not do my best at both if you like.

This seem to be further intensified by her daughter's choice to call her Mrs X rather than a mum when at home, which, gathering from the body language and facial expressions, seems to both hurt and irritate Carol. Although this may contribute to the conflicting feelings she is experiencing, she does not seem to make explicit connections between her teaching practice and well-being:

I don't know whether this impacts on my teaching and well-being I don't know probably does somewhere in there … .

Trapped

Her responses suggest that the perception of feeling trapped might contribute to her state of exhaustion:

So I'll take them riding but when I'm there it's my escape. And although I am busy and I'm doing, it's not school and it's not at school. So although I only have an hour before we leave and then we're there all day, I enjoy it once I'm there. So in a way, I'm having a rest. It's just not—not nothing, I suppose. And generally then on Sunday, I have to get ready for the week ahead with work. So I usually spend most of Sunday working.

Carol's explanation of the need to 'escape' from the school environment might be connected to her perception of being stuck in the role of a teacher:

But in terms of like well, you hear so many teachers saying they'll never get to retirement. Whether that will happen, I don't know. You know, if I try to look into the future. I don't really know where I see myself if ... Because I don't know any other job.

Carol appears to be stuck in the profession where her *'heart wasn't really in it'* after having her own kids*:*

I found it impossible because I really resented going to work to look, to work with other people's children with my own at home.

She describes how she is managing her time, giving a lot of details about routines that do not accommodate her own space. She perceives herself as constantly 'doing', fulfilling her responsibilities as a teacher and meeting the needs of others. In this vicious cycle, she shares her worries that supersede the concerns about getting to retirement as a teacher:

So when I think things like we're asked to still be a teacher a sixty, somewhere in the back my head is like, well, will I actually still be alive at sixty which … that grates on me sometimes.

This reality of seeing teaching as the only pathway, her physical health concerns and some maladaptive stress managing strategies seem to contribute to her state of exhaustion. She seems to symbolise positive experiences as 'nice': 'nice friends', 'nice time' and 'nice environment'. She does report occupational experiences as a teacher as 'nice'. In fact, most of her statements about her life at work are reported as stressful.

5.5 Interpretations of the Overarching Themes

Meaningful Profession/State of Exhaustion

To various degrees, the teachers in the current study express the impossibility of a healthy balance between family life and full-time work as primary school teachers. This is consistent with findings by Perryman and Calvert (2020) that found that 75% of teachers who left the profession did so to improve their work-life balance, and it accounts as a reason for thinking of

living the profession for 76% of those still working. Both Ann and Carol express feelings of 'just existing', 'always exhausted' or 'surviving' outside of work. Bella notes that adrenaline plays a role in her ability to cope with the pressure, and she seems aware that it might eventually lead to a 'burn out'.

Table 6. Overarching polarised themes in the IPA study

Meaningful Profession	State of Exhaustion
Love for children	Demoralising practices
Relatedness	Alienation
Freedom to teach/learn	Complying control

Both Moustakas (1966) and Rogers (1994) critique schooling that systematically depletes the life force of individuals by means of excessive control and regulation. The practices fixated on academic achievement and performance driven by the government agenda betray Ann's trust in education as a wholistic practice. The lack of trust communicated by the excessive requirements for evidence of academic achievements seems to have a direct impact on teachers' motivation. This is evident in Ann's experiences of *'get you your head down and do that part of the job',* where the amount of administrative tasks forms a large portion of the teachers' workload.

Grimmett and Neufeld's (1994) division of sources of motivation does not seem to accommodate the complexity of teachers' lived experiences. Ann's primary motivation seems to be twofold: she finds it personally

rewarding ('*alternative motivation*') to do what is right for her learners

('*authentic motivation*'). The '*traditional motivation*' of seeking external

rewards like financial benefits or recognition seems the least important to Ann

and is not explicitly mentioned by Bella.

Bella's responses do not accommodate a critical evaluation of the

context itself, but the connection with learners is also presented as a

motivating factor. Similarly, it appears that Ann's intrinsic motivation emerges

from genuine encounters with her learners and the trust they have in this

relationship. First, this occurs when she is co-experiencing the joy of

discovery or mastery of a new skill by the child. Second, she co-experiences

the difficulties and feels intrinsically driven to support the child in bridging the

gap that is preventing them from moving forward. This is also congruent with

the findings of Akoury (2013), where high levels of authenticity equate to

altruistic actions.

Moustakas (1966) points out that, in being genuinely present and open

to experiencing others, teachers will be confronted with their own subjective

responses, such as feelings of like or dislike. This is evident in Bella's initial

difficulty in 'warming up' to some of her pupils, but her acknowledgement and

acceptance of her own feelings does not stop her from reaching out. The

process of 'breaking down the walls' to enable a meaningful encounter might

involve confrontation, where the teacher or child confronts not only each

other, but also many other fears, such as fear of rejection, change or chaos

(Kriz, 2008).

5.5.1 Love for Children/Demoralising Practices

Ann appears to have the courage to admit love for her students. She seems aware and accepting of the subsequent emotional labour. The presence of love in teaching is also voiced by Akourys' (2013) participants and teachers in Moustakas'(1966) book. Perhaps, it is the context that influences the language used. It might be perceived as more socially acceptable to talk about love for children rather than youth or adults. Some researchers refer to Freire's work when conceptualising the authenticity of teachers, yet they neglect Freire's explicit references to the pedagogy of love as a force powerful enough to diminish oppression.

Although Noddings' (2005) work is widely referred to by other educational researchers to support the transforming potential of caring for a child, she proposes care as an ethical act that differs from the natural drive to care for one's own child. Ann's responses seem to diffuse that distinction. For her, caring seems to be an act of love. In line with the Rogers (1954) concept of unconditional positive regard, the prerequisite to the manifestation of love is the freedom of choice. Introducing it as an ethical principle for teachers implies the imposition to care/love, which contradicts the nature of the phenomena that only exists in freedom.

Ann critiques 'pointless' workloads aimed at measuring and evidencing the children's progress against national standards rather than appreciation and development of individual child's abilities. Moustakas (1966), standing

firmly against such practices that can decrease a child's self-worth and motivation, offers alternative forms of reviewing the progress of pupils which are collaborative and pupil-led. Those learner-led ways of setting up the targets and reviewing own progress has been widely researched as more effective (Aspy & Roebuck, 1970; Cornelius-White, 2007; McCombs, 2012) and yet continue to be disregarded in context of UK SFE.

Ann identifies some aspects of her job as meaningless, and although she complies with requirements, she divides her attention accordingly. Experiencing aspects of teaching as meaningless or pointless is also reflected in Braun & Maguire (2020) findings where teachers are 'doing without believing'. Choosing the expression '*I am not going to kill myself*' regarding the workload implies the deadening potential of those exercises; the external expectations that arrive from positions of power can easily take priority over the needs of pupils. This can contribute to desensitising the teacher and diminishing the potential for meaningful relationships with their learners.

5.5.2 Relatedness/Alienation

A need to belong is a first psychological need in Maslow's hierarchy, and if met, it can contribute to an individual's healthy self-actualising tendencies. In Rogers' (1969) view, a formation of well-functioning learning communities can facilitate the growth and development of the person. Sanders and Joseph (2016) note that the individual's strive towards growth requires the 'right social environment' and that a lack of such an environment can lead to distress and disorder in the individual. This is observable in the

case of Carol. Carol's memories of the previous school she worked at suggest the importance of friendships with other staff members and the relationships that she could not seem to form in her current job.

She presents as judgemental and unappreciative of herself and worries a lot about what others might think of her. She seems conflicted in her own meaning-making when evaluating others; on the one hand, she observes that other teachers/mothers are better at managing their lives. On the other hand, she seems judgemental of those who present as having a life outside of being a mother, as if one could not be a good mother and have a life outside of their children.

Carol on a notable number of occasions compares herself to others and those comparisons suggest an alienated position where she struggles with relating to or identifying with other teachers or mothers who have children at school. This might be viewed in light of findings by Lyubomirsky et al. (2001) where the lower the individual wellbeing, the more frequent the tendency to compare oneself to others. The concept of comparison is also present with Bella when she compares her own choice of profession to the choices of others, as if she was evidencing, she made a better choice. Schwartz and Ward (2004) found that individuals compelled to always choose the best option also have lower levels of wellbeing. What seems connected to the tendency to compare in the current study is the competitive atmosphere within which all the teachers seem to exist. This seems to be connected to the

concept of alienation, especially when comparing oneself 'from far' and seeing oneself as different from others.

The perception of the teacher–learner relationship varies between the teachers in the present study. Ann and Bella talk about this explicitly, while Carol concentrates on relationships with colleagues and family relations, hardly mentioning her pupils. This absence seems like a curious finding and perhaps one worth exploring further in future studies. For Ann and Bella, their relationship with learners seems interwoven with other factors impacting their occupational well-being. Like teachers in Moustakas (1966) findings, they identify it as a motivating factor; for Ann, it provides meaning, and for Bella, it is mostly a challenge but also a sense of community. Carol notes that she *'didn't have a heart'* for teaching and, presumably, for her learners after having her own children. She identifies a role conflict between herself as a mum and a teacher and continues to struggle with it. Hence, she displays the uncomfortable feelings of resentment towards her role as a teacher.

Social inequalities exist in every classroom, negatively impacting the pupil's achievement and engagement (Hannam, 2020; Hobbs, 2016). Ann recognises the therapeutic potential of the teacher–learner relationship that can offer the essential conditions for flourishment as a way to challenge those inequalities. Although this commitment comes at a cost to Ann, it is also intrinsically rewarding when she experiences the positive changes in the children's growth. This may be how she balances the needs of her children with her own.

The choice of the descriptor of personal pleasure as 'alien' to Ann suggests some level of neglect of one's 'wants'. In the context of Ann's account, they seem to be superseded by the needs of others. It is clear that it is a choice that Ann is making, guided by her values rather than some unfair reality of the job, in that it seems consisted with authenticity. Pinto et al. (2012) found that authentic people are less likely to respond aggressively in situations that they perceive unfair, which is also reflected in work of Joseph's (2016) linking authenticity to altruistic attitudes.

Although Ann seems to be orientated towards the needs of her learners, Bella tries to negotiate her own need for being around children with the children's needs. Carol, on the other hand, feels drawn to the needs of her own children, which is in congruence with her need to feel needed. Being exposed to conflicting experiences can generate psychological distress and hamper a teacher's authenticity. Ann distinguishes herself from younger or inexperienced teachers in that her maturity contributes to greater resilience.

5.5.3 Freedom to Teach/Learn/Compliant Control

When examining Ann's responses, having freedom in the context of curriculum and assessment seems to have a positive impact on the teacher's well-being and their acting in authentic ways. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) suggests, *'If too many obstacles are placed in the way of risk and exploration, the motivation to engage in creative behaviour is easily extinguished',* which is

congruent with Moustakas'(1966) and Rogers' (1980)view on freedom to follow own learning interests in the classroom. Kriz (2008) offers an in-depth exploration of the complexity in constructing a structure to organise the perceived chaos while having flexibility that enables creativity. Ann is continuously emphasising that she is in a privileged position as a reception class teacher because the curriculum is much more open, and the children have more freedom in deciding what they want to do and that this all stops after the children enter year 1.

What is present in all three accounts is also a varied degree of compliance; Ann described herself as a compliant person, Bella seems to be acceptant of the status quo and offered no critical stance while Carol gave various accounts of doing what is expected of her, or what she perceives as being expected of her. At the same time Bella and Carol, seem to be more concerned with maintaining discipline and being in control of the environment; none of them share a similar enthusiasm for the freedom to learn. It is as if Bella and Carol attach a value to being in control as being a 'good teacher', while Ann she seems to value the curiosity and self-direction of her learners and associates this with being an effective teacher.

5.6 Summary

The findings of this study suggest that teachers' wellbeing is connected to their motivations; some reported being driven by their love and care for the learners, by the conviction of doing something that is meaningful,

or the reward of watching children grow and develop and being part of that process. But a large part of the data also captures experiencing various part of their practice as demoralising, where one of the teachers reports 'loosing heart' for teaching, another complies with the externally imposed requirements despite experiencing them as pointless. Feelings of exhaustion were connected to being compelled to proving own's worth where both teachers and learners are always doing – but never enough. English educational system is driven by the neoliberal 'terrors of performativity' (Ball, 2003); this study suggests that the performative tendencies can have a negative impact on psychological wellbeing.

What seems less discussed or researched is the possibly negative impact of performative orientation on developing meaningful solutions to the existing problems within education. The 'deficiency culture' seems to contribute to the resistance and 'box ticking' type of engagement. The resistance contributes to the existing problem of 'prescribed curriculum' where the learning goals are set externally and not in a teacher-learner relationship; and where performance (grades/results) is valued as a product and disconnected from meaningful learning or individual interests. Only the teacher with many years of experience (Ann) offered some critique of the system in connection to how it impacts on her learners, but there was no evidence of resistance.

The homogeneity of the sample, while representative of the majority, was also a limitation of this study when exploring authenticity. Future studies

could explore experiences of male teachers and/or teachers of ethnic minorities which could offer different insights into striving for authenticity and its potential impact on wellbeing. For example, Hannam's (2021) experiences as a male teacher evidence the resistance of the existing systems and Hannam's unwavering persistence in searching for environments that align with his values of democratic education. His account is strikingly different to those presented in this study, and while this might have nothing to do with gender, understanding the inequalities based on gender or ethnicity in connection to compliance, wellbeing and authenticity seems important.

CHAPTER 6

Becoming Useful and Being a Threat': Autoethnographic Study of Authenticity in the Context of Learning and Education

6 Autoethnography: Part 1

Abstract

This autoethnographic research of the self as a learner/teacher consists of two smaller studies, in which one helped to inform the next. The first part presents findings from exploring the experiences of authenticity/inauthenticity in relation to self-concept in the context of learning with the polarised themes of 'Becoming Nothing/Becoming Useful'. The second study focuses on the experiences in pedagogical relationships that were identified as encouraging or suppressing the authenticity of the self as a learner/teacher, here with the polarising themes of 'Betrayal/Transparency'. The emerging themes have been explored through person-centred theory to offer an alternative understanding of some of the perceived challenges that exist in contemporary education and possible ways forward. The current study shows that becoming an authentic teacher or learner is often perceived as threatening and unsafe because it rejects the need for external control in learning. Contrary to this, the analysis of the presented experiences suggests that varied forms of external control are at the source of the issues they are claiming to prevent or resolve; contributing to demotivation and distress. Furthermore, striving towards authenticity is the way towards experiential safety connected to psychological well-being, intrinsic motivation and constructive social attitudes.

6.1 Introduction

When thinking of becoming a researcher, I did not consider autoethnography as a pathway I might choose. My initial research proposal involved a mixed methods study, in which my intention was to focus on the experiences of other teachers. It was one of my supervisors who suggested autoethnography, and as I was contemplating the idea, I resisted what I perceived would be a potential self-centred practice. At the time, being an autoethnographer was incongruent with my self-concept as an other-person-centred researcher. As I was progressing in my research stages, the distinction between self and other 'blurrified'. I began recording the reflections and notes on the experienced events and encounters in the form of drawings, semi poems and critical incidents, but I still was not convinced about carrying out an autoethnographic study.

It was my struggle in accessing the participants, as well as in accessing deeper levels of their experiences that naturally shifted me towards autoethnography. I considered it a practical choice; I was a participant who was always accessible, invested in the practice of research, had time to commit, was willing to reveal herself and was able to accept the potential discomfort. I was also prepared to take responsibility for keeping myself safe. I became more systematic in my autoethnographic data collection, but I was still more concerned with my other studies.

The process of reflexivity revealed my identification with the teachers I interviewed; my own experiencing and understanding inhibited my ability to

stay in the frame of reference of my participants. My initial intention of focusing solely on the experiential claims of others proved to be futile when my energy was utilised in attempting to suppress my own experiencing and flow of thought. This is when I began recognising that, before I can genuinely listen, explore and dive deeper into the experiences of others, I need to acknowledge, accurately symbolise and unconditionally accept my own experiences (Rogers, 1957). This was the point where autoethnography became a necessity rather than an option. I decided to 'become the evidence' of how psycho-socio-environmental conditions impact the authentic development of an 'always learning person'. This could be achieved by describing the perceived social and educational realities, revealing the inner processes triggered by those perceptions, followed by the interpretation of those using person-centred theory. This is how autoethnography in my understanding differs from other forms of writing, such as memoirs and autobiographies; it has a purpose of giving life to theory. It is a form of metabolising the theoretical understanding throughout my own body, dripping it into my own bloodstream to test its validity and sharing the results with others as an invitation for further experimentation.

6.2 Positionality

I would like to emphasise that, in the current study, I am bringing forth my own understanding and application of person-centred theory in an attempt to make a case for its application to pedagogical practices. Although the present study applies person-centred philosophy to the phenomena of

authenticity by offering a specific theoretical structure, it seems to me that it is also a 'lived theory' that my organism was experiencing long before I encountered the writings of Carl Rogers and others who found his work to offer an 'acceptable truth'. I am making this explicit not to claim any form of originality but to argue that, for me, what makes person-centred theory valid and reliable is the wholistic functioning of my own organism and the observed strivings of others. As a result, I arrived at a tentative belief that the person-centred approach has the potential to transform our rigid educational and social systems into self-regulating organic learning systems.

I see my research practice as a way of documenting the realness of occurring phenomena; however, although the existence of the phenomenon can be viewed as objective, my interpretation of it is subjective because I can only use what I already know to

6.3 Always learning person

Learning is our way of being, and it does not matter if we are committed to learning as a conscious process or if it happens outside of our awareness. I am drawn to understanding what it is that we are learning when we do not think that we are learning and what we are teaching when we do not think we are teaching, which seems to be the real 'hidden curriculum' embedded in all places. Hence, my autoethnographic writing, although it is focused on the experiences of formal education, spills over into pedagogies present outside of the school settings. This is because it seems necessary to

understand the relationship between the social structures and their impact on the formation of our self-concepts, and even more as it is the incongruence between our self-concepts and organismic experiencing that is often at the core of our psychological distress (Rogers, 1959; Joseph, 2016).

There is also a growing body of evidence suggesting that this incongruence is often an outcome of problematic relationships that we have with others and a lack of relational depth (Mearns & Cooper, 2017). Because schools, high schools, colleges and universities are places where we spend a lot of our time not just learning about the things of the world but also about ourselves, it seems important to understand the relational components of our experiences and their potential impact on both learning and our formation as persons. This complexity seems to be captured in Schmid's (2015) work, in which he explored the transformative potential of the person-centred approach as a form of sociotherapy, and in the work of Murphy and Joseph (2020), in which the person-centred approach was presented as a social pedagogy.

6.4 Authenticity as a pedagogical choice

The literature has offered a variety of conceptual frameworks regarding what it means to be an authentic teacher (for a theoretical review, (see Kreber et al., 2010), making it difficult to form concise and cohesive arguments that could impact contemporary educational policies. The recent metasynthesis of

qualitative studies on teacher authenticity (Plust et al., 2020), although

bridging existing findings, expose the theoretical inconsistencies in the

understanding of human nature in connection to authenticity and, therefore,

are easy to dismiss (for philosophical critique, see Bialystok, 2007). This study

builds on the work of Carl Rogers and his ideas contained in the book

'*Freedom to Learn*' as well as the book '*Authentic Teacher*' by Clark

Moustakas and the recent work on authenticity from a person-centred

perspective by Joseph (2016), where being authentic has been shown to

signify openness to learning about oneself and others.

Both Rogers (1980) and Moustakas (1966) have argued that the

authenticity of the teacher appears to be the only constructive pedagogical

choice for the ever-changing social reality because it opens up our capacity to

encounter one another and learn about what matters to us individually and

collectively so that we can negotiate optimal pathways of moving forward

through the challenges that we face. More implicitly, the positive impact of the

relational component of authenticity on learning and motivation has been

advocated by other researchers in person/learner education (Cornelius-White,

2007, 2010; McCombs et al., 1996).

Furthermore, Bonnett (2010) argued that, in the Western tradition,

many ideas only make sense in relation to self; hence, 'Understanding ideas

of the self is thus central to understanding the idea of education in that

tradition' (p. 28). Therefore, if we understand a teacher's authenticity as

'knowing, being, owning oneself' (Joseph, 2016) as a way of understanding

the idea of education, this can help in clarifying the view of authenticity as a pedagogical approach, where fostering the authenticity of learners becomes the self-determined direction of the teacher.

6.5 Auto-ethno-graphies

The number of autoethnographic studies conducted by teachers or teacher educators appears to have been increasing in recent years (Adamson & Muller, 2018; Dyson, 2007; Grossi, 2006; Hayler, 2011; Knapp, 2017; Legge, 2014; Piner, 2018; Tombro, 2016; Vasconcelos, 2011). Teacher-researchers are drawn to the reflexive and narrative qualities of autoethnography. I also find the flexibility and freedom in methodological choices of autoethnographic studies as their advantage (Vasconcelos, 2011). Although Anderson (2002) and Ellis (2009) made clear distinctions between different approaches, ranging from the evocative to analytical, in evaluating and attempting to categorise and separate them, my intention is to integrate these approaches.

I recognise that, as a human organism and as a researcher, I am driven by two contradictory needs: the need to identify patterns and create order and structure, as well as the drive to create, transform, discover and change (Kriz, 2008). The fluidity of an autoethnographic study presents me with a unique opportunity to embrace both of them.

Just like Ellis (2009), I see meaning as being found in the record of the experience in the narrative of the author; sharing and engaging with stories has a transformational potential when the reader is captivated in the inner dialogue with the writer.

The written or visual narrative that saturates the reader changes its substance, becoming something new; here, the knowledge seems fluid and always in the process of making. However, as a researcher, pausing just there, at the point of narrative seems unfinished. Comparably, much like Anderson (2002), I perceive the value in an analytic approach where I can locate the findings in a theoretical context, question the internal and external influences, and identify the patterns that might challenge existing understandings. Within that, I also recognise my intention to expand my awareness so that I can accurately symbolise my own experiences and integrate them into my self-concept in a way that promotes inner congruence and, consequently, inner peace.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1 How did you experience your authenticity across your educational lifespan (as a learner)?

1 How did you experience (educational) systemic structures in the development of your authenticity as a learner?

2 How did you perceive the impact of relationships on your drive to follow your own direction as a learner?

2 How did you experience your pedagogical authenticity when interacting with children, young people and adults?

6.6 Methodology

6.6.1 Composite Characters and Stories

Naturally, as I became my own study participant, my identity is exposed, so the study context and others within that context could be identified by association. This can be ethically problematic when revealing relevant personal and, therefore, subjective truths that might be harmful to the reputation of others.

Redacting timelines and other information that could potentially lead to the identification of others would defy the purpose of this research project, which seeks to reveal patterns and connections between the development of a 'always learning person' within a sociocultural context over time. To overcome this dilemma, I decided to merge the characters and situations into composites that represented my experiential claims. This strategy also enabled me to compress large amounts of data into the concentrates of repetitive experiences that are ready for analysis.

6.6.2 Sources of Data

There was a number of data sources available to me (see table 7 and summary of data types), but it was my responses or experiences attached to the particular data source that were identified as more relevant to the autoethnographic study, Therefore, rather than sharing the school reports, I was more interested in connecting to experiences of failing and the ways of understanding that then and evaluating it through the person centred theory.

Data types	Data description
Official records	School reports from primary and secondary education in Poland. Diplomas from higher education in the UK
Artefacts	Art and craft objects from childhood, handwritten poetry from adolescence, photographs of significant meaning
Reflective online journal entries with timestamps	Stored on MAXQDA App: record of experiences of encounters and meetings; developmental reflections; poetry; critical incidents
Handwritten reflections and notes	Reflections and notes with and without dates from the period of the last 2.5 years
Drawings	Comic strips in response to events and literature; visual representations of concepts; my research processes; etc.
Blog entries	Online blog entries
Emails	Email exchange between myself and other students, supervisors, university staff and with people that I have met while being a student at UoN
Feedback from others	The feedback on my own narrative and recollection from people that were present during particular periods of my life
Supervisions	Records of my official supervision from my PhD

Table 7. Summary of data types

6.7 Findings and First Stage Interpretations

This autoethnographic study was conducted alongside my other research projects during my doctoral studies, so the focus of it was informed by these projects' findings. To capture this process of interconnectivity, I decided to present them as three separate studies located across my thesis in the order of my own inquiries. The polarising themes and their subthemes are organised into two categories: personal and relational. These two categories formed two separate parts of the current autoethnography.

The first study captures my inner lifeworld: what happens in me or what I do, how I understand it and in what ways I feel I have or do not have the agency in shaping myself as a learner/teacher. The second study presented in Chapter 7 reveals the meaning-making processes when experiencing the human-created systems within which we function. The final study (Chapter 9) focuses on the experiences of existing in relationship with another person or group of people in the context of education.

Although the themes are presented as opposing, it is more useful to view them as existing on the spectrum because they are not in absolutes. For example, during my earlier formation, my experiences of self could be located on various points between the 'becoming nothing' and 'becoming useful' spectrum. However, for the sake of clarity, I have attempted separating them.

Opposing themes	
Personal	
BECOMING NOTHING - Self-annihilation - Defiance - Disengagement - Anxiety	**EMPOWERMENT** - Self-acceptance - Excitement /joy - Self-reliance -Imagination
Relational	
DECEPTION - Betrayal - Normalising distress - Indifference	**TRANSPARENCY** - Trust - Pursuit of truth and justice - Openness

Table 8. Opposing themes in autoethnography.

The first two themes of 'Becoming Nothing/Becoming Useful' are included to invite the reader into an inner world of the learner, here starting from their first encounters with education up to their professional development as an 'educator' and eventually as a facilitator of learning environments. Rogers' 'freedom to learn' was a starting point to the most recent developments in person-centred/personalised learning conducted by McCombs and Miller (2007, 2009), McCombs et al. (2008) and McCombs (2013a, 2013b). All these empirical studies acknowledge that learning is a

complex process with shifting and coexisting components, both intrinsic and extrinsic to the person. Some of the similar findings are present in the studies by Ryan and Deci (2000, 2020), who, although not explicitly grounded in the p-c approach, shared many of the common factors regarding the importance of self-directed learning and motivation. Encountering that complexity seems relevant if we are genuinely committed to the growth and flourishment of every learner or, should I say, every learning person.

6.7.1 Becoming Nothing

The concept of 'becoming nothing' initially emerged during one of my supervisions when I was exploring my own conditions of worth (CoW) that have impacted my intrinsic motivation. In other words, exploring the tension between doing/being what is deemed worthy by others versus doing/being what I see as worthwhile and how avoiding that tension impacts my authenticity and, consequently, my engagement with a given activity. Gaining deeper insights into my own learning processes and functioning of my motivation was relevant in the context of my doctoral studies, yet equally important was understanding how my own self-structure influences the pedagogies I engage with as a facilitator.

Equally important was the consideration of how the pedagogies of others influenced my own striving for authenticity. The data from self-interviews enabled me to identify the process of 'becoming nothing' in the learning experiences from the time I was 6 (because those are the earliest memories I have) until the age of 13. However, this theme threads all through

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the collected data, illustrating the experiences that progressively shaped my self-concept, where parts of me have been received as unworthy of positive regard by significant others (Rogers, 1959). I no longer perceived myself as acceptable, trustworthy or constructive. I understand this to be a consequence of an unmet need for positive regard and systematic experiencing of rejection, destructive criticism or indifference from significant others (Illustration 2a), which resulted in my unconditional negative self-regard (UNSR). By UNSR, I mean a form of self-distortion: an unwavering negative view of myself where everything that originated out of me felt insignificant, not good enough or pointless. Perhaps this relates to what Proctor (quoted in Vaidya, 2013) called '*unconditional lack of positive regard',* but I find it difficult to comprehend how one can exist among others and not be positively regarded at all. This theme is woven with phenomena of anxiety, defiance and disengagement. The process of shaping my self-concept within my own perceptual field will be reflected through the use of Rogers' theory of personality (1959).

The illustration of 'destructive feedback' has the outlines of me as a child, being open to experiencing and excited to be in the world. That sense of self that seemed large and centred began shrinking as I grew up. I noticed I have drawn my toes going inwards on the middle figure (Figure 10), and it made me curious because it seemed 'illogical' when drawing a person (and I am fairly competent at drawing). Then, looking back at my photographs from childhood, I noticed I often stood on my toes, defining gravity as if wanted to walk back into myself, with my legs and toes pointing inwards. It made me think of not feeling welcome in the lives of others.

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I find the image of 'destructive feedback' (Figure 10) particularly distressing because it reflects my 'exaggerating attitude' pointed out to me by others, that I am just imagining this, and it is not like that, and people do not really mean it, and I am just reading it wrong, or I should just ignore it and not make a big deal out of it. Intellectually, I understand that a lot of this was said in anger. I know this is just part of the feedback from adults that I have received; it is not a representation of the complete 'reality'. I wanted to be a source of joy to others, and I felt like I was taking it away, like I was the source of problems—a type of threat. I was then a child, but I still hear it as clear as if it was said a moment ago, 'It will be a miserable life for the one living with/choosing you'.

Figure 10. Destructive feedback.

7.7.1.1 Self-annihilation

The thoughts of self-annihilation seemed to be the result of a process where adults (parents, teachers and others) in pedagogical roles within the community were involved in the systematic judgements and attempts at imposing values that they often did not follow themselves:

…There were occasions when I attempted to voice that, that it didn't feel very kind, respectful or, god forbid, Christian! That would most often end up with me being either physically or verbally punished. I quickly learned that adults could say whatever they wanted about me— but my voice needed to be sweet to them if I wanted to be heard. My voice did not know how to be sweet.

Conditional and negative regard contributed to alienation from others, where I often felt like I was an intruder, dangerous and/or unwanted. I also became alienated or disconnected within myself, where the conflict within me grew and I began to inaccurately symbolise parts of myself that were negatively regarded by others: exaggerated (sensitivity), sinful (curiosity) and dark (creativity). Inaccurately, because I began to identify them as parts of me that were bad, weak or dirty even if they were part of me that initially felt natural and needed to learn. Rogers noted that our need for positive regard can override self-experiences (1959). Neglecting, supressing or distorting my organismic experiencing is a form of self-alienation, and I see it as part of my self-betrayal and another factor that contributes to the felt inner incongruence. Moustakas explained that *'Self-betrayal means that the person does not use*

his own faculties in determining which experiences contribute to self-realisation' (1966, p. 4). This corresponds with Rogers' (1951, 1959) view on reliance on external locus of evaluation as a source of incongruence and distress. It is also reflected in Owen (1996), where, in the pursuit of a deeper understanding of human distress, he proposed that alienation (from self and others) is often at the centre of psychological distress. This connection between external locus of evaluation and inauthenticity has been utilised in the development of the authenticity scale developed by Woods et al. (2008), where seeking external approval inhibits the development of authenticity.

I began to operate in ways that were inhibiting my authentic development and learning capacity, and through self-actualising, I was progressively moving towards destruction rather than growth. At first, this seemed contradictory to Rogers' fourth proposition, in which the '*organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualise, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism*' (1951, p. 487). Going back to those memories, I did not resent being alive. I just felt as if my presence was not contributing anything of value to others; on the contrary, I perceived myself as the source of stress. This was accompanied by my own UNSR and state of confusion. I wanted to learn how to function in a constructive way. In simple terms, as a child and teenager, I wanted to find happiness, but in my immediate environment, there were no happy people to learn from: not at home, not in the context of broader family, not in school and not in church. I was experiencing distress that seemed unnecessary—and not just my own. I was somehow being caught up in the distress of others and some depressing

collective acceptance that this was it, that this was the only reality that is possible. Then, I learned that, with my own being, I was making it worst for others. At the time, what seemed to be making it worst was my neediness, my negatively valued curiosity, my emotional expressions, my moodiness, my selfish behaviours, my laziness, my messiness, my generally bothersome nature and so forth.

Across my lifespan, the instances where I was thinking of ending my life were always accompanied by the feeling that those that I care about would be better off when I was gone. This overlaps with the reasons reported in McGarry (2018, 2020) and fits in within the existing debate over suicide being potentially experienced as a constructive choice. I had two core needs that appeared as conflicting: to enhance my own organism but, equally, to contribute to the flourishment of others within my own social environment. In my core understanding, even as a child, I did not see how one could function without the other: they were intrinsically connected. This is reflected in the work of Schmid (2006), in which both dimensions are inseparable, where we are both 'autonomously functioning creatures' and 'socially-dependent creatures' (2019, p. 223) at the same time.

My need for positive regard was connected to both. I needed to feel accepted to feel safe when taking risks in discovering what it was that I could be and do in my own 'perceptual field'. I needed to feel safe to discover my potential. I also needed positive regard as a way of learning when my being and doing positively impacted others who were within my perceptual field. I

would make it more explicit in the Rogerian (1951)19 propositions that the organism is seeking ways to enhance its own perceptual field with itself in it. Rogers (1951) himself proposed that when we are born, we do not distinguish ourselves from the perceptual field; it is as if we were one with it.

It is my personal understanding that distinguishing ourselves from it is not meant to separate us from it, but rather, the intent is to facilitate a process of discovery of personal power to be one with it in a meaningful way. This corresponds to the idea of being born into a social group that is a part of the larger society existing there prior to the individual person being born and the concept of 'We before I', as discussed by Schmid (2006, 2019). Just as our whole being forms inside of the womb of our already existing mothers, our phenomenological field forms inside of the already existing 'We' of society. I will always be of them—whether willingly or unwillingly interconnected. Just as my connection to my mother is a relationship that, although undeniably existing can be nurturing or not and that will have an unescapable impact on my development, so is my relationship to society. In that sense, I see the flow of my actualising tendency as an energy/motivation that is equally orientated towards the enhancement of my organism because it is towards enhancing my phenomenological field with Schmid's (2006, 2019) 'We'.

Cornelius-White (2004, 2007) argues that it is the formative tendency that explains our motivation that extends past our self-enhancement/maintenance into the living world we are part of. When developing my arguments about the relevance of person-centred

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understanding of authenticity, I struggled with capturing in words that experientially felt and known consequences of being authentic as being more concerned with 'Us' as opposed to 'I'. In that regard formative tendency as the central motivational construct aligns itself with authenticity (Cornelius-White's, 2004; 2007). What seem important to acknowledge here is that inauthenticity either prevents entirely or thwarts the release of formative tendency.

It is my understanding, to know and evaluate through experiencing my impact on the others, I relied on positive regard. However, in my case, positive regard was scarce; my interactions with parents were often triggered by me doing something wrong, which consisted primarily of criticism, sometimes violent outbursts and my achievements being belittled as a way of motivating me to do better. My relationship with my dad was particularly challenging: on the one hand, I felt a deep connection to him, and on the other hand, I felt actively hated by him. As time has moved forward, I could better understand the complexity of my parents' lives; I empathise with them and appreciate their struggles. I feel protective of them when writing about my childhood experiences, but they are instrumental in evidencing the shaping process of my own self-concept and are connected to the way I experienced other adults in their pedagogical roles.

This tension between the conditionality of the positive regard for my parents and intrinsic motivation of the child was also found in the study of 101 students conducted by Assor et al. (2004). One of the reoccurring statements of my dad was 'father loves the obedient child', which to me translated quickly

into 'father does not love me'. Assor et al. (2004) found that the perceived conditionality of positive regard from parents negatively affected both the behaviour and affective capacity of their children, contributing to, for example, 'internal compulsion, short-lived satisfaction, shame after failure, fluctuation in self-esteem, poor coping skills and low self-worth' (2004, p. 84). I am often surprised by how easily teachers and others in pedagogical roles disconnect their present pedagogical approaches from their past when learning from their parents/teachers.

My education in school was often reflecting my parents' judgements; many aspects of my authentic presence were symbolised by others as disruptive, unwanted, problematic and unpleasant and must be extinguished: 'She is so lazy', 'What kind of questions is that?!', 'Put your hand down and your head down!', 'What is wrong with you?!', 'Don't be creative! Just follow the instructions', 'You make everything complicated!', 'Curiosity is the first step to hell'. I am aware that the fact that I did not perceive positive regard from many of my teachers has been coloured by my expectations and my UNSR. I kept seeing the rejection or hate in adults' eyes where it was just stress or impatience, frustration or superficiality.

However, I am confident that, although they might not have had bad intentions, their behaviours did not communicate unconditional or often not even conditional positive regard. I experienced them as indifferent or negative, not expecting much. The concept of low expectations is also acknowledged and challenged by Thompson (2004) calling out the

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discrimination that can still be present underneath projected warmth and kindness, when comes to teachers making assumptions about the learning capacity of their learners based on their heritage or socioeconomic status. While I cannot be sure of my teachers motives, I do agree with Thompson (2004) that experiencing teachers having no/low expectations contributed to my own disengagement.

My self-concept wanted to rip itself away from my organismic self, as if they were moving in opposite directions (Figure 12). The illustration below captures that inner struggle between a self-concept that seemed to be worthless and yet all I had and the organismic self that did not concern itself with such man-made concepts as 'worth' and only wanted to grow. When I look at the finished illustration, I feel the sense of helplessness regarding my self-concept, with its tiny little hand and oversized body rolling off the edge rather than actively jumping. The organismic self, while significantly smaller, seems more active; it grabs onto the poll on the bridge, looking for an anchor in the 'real world'. It clearly wanted me to survive.
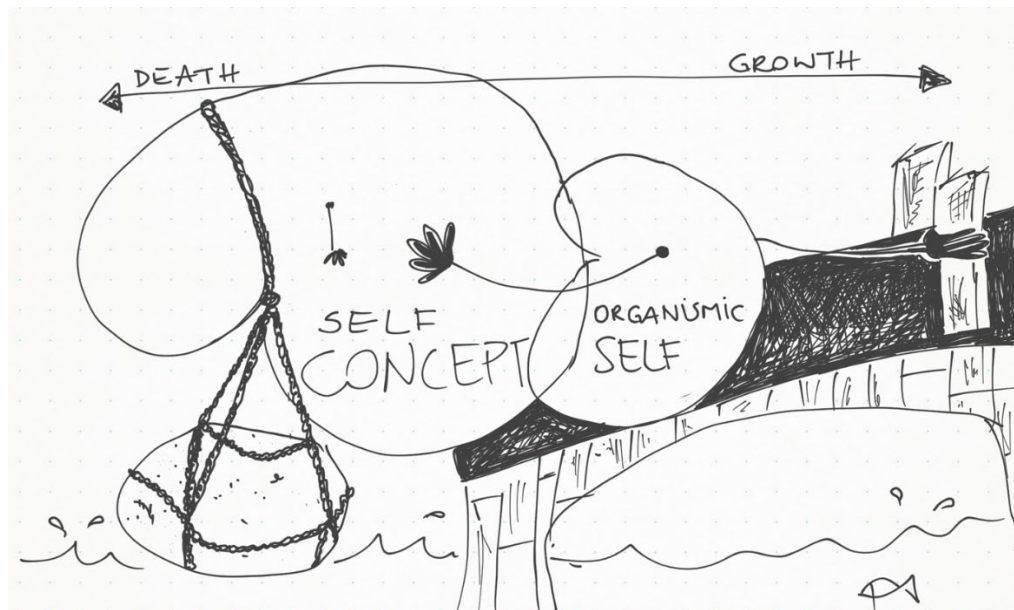
Figure 11. Opposite directions in suicidal/survival thoughts.

There was something very rigid about my self-concept, as if this self-concept was fixed and unchangeable. This fixed view of what I was and what I could and could not do was reflected in my self-perceived learning capacity; this is captured in what my father used to say to me: '*Wyżej dupy nie podskoczysz!*' (Translation: You cannot jump higher than your arse!).

This fixed and rigid self was entirely incongruent with my organismic self and the actualising tendency, with that quietly whispering inner voice that I am not what others say I am. Instead of finding fluidity within my existing self-concept, accurately symbolising and integrating experiences as Rogers (1959) proposed, instead, I have moved to a 'phenomenological field' that fit with my rigid self-concept of an obstacle, unwanted and deserving nothing

person. This phenomenon can be understood as a manifestation of self-actualisation, where the effort is made to maintain that self (Rogers, 1959). As a 14-year-old, I joined a homeless community.

When I look back at myself as if I were my own child, my heart freezes and stomach churns. I would not want that for anyone, especially for my children. Yet, as strange as it might be on the streets, I felt more authentic:

I was choosing how I wanted to be. I could pick those whom I wanted around me and walk away from those whom I needed to walk away from. I could act and behave however I wanted, any one of us could, because we had nothing to lose. Despite the multiverse of differences between us, we were most often choosing to help each other out. We were both cats that walked their own pathways and wolves in a pack when we needed to, and there was a beautiful harmony in that.

It was my perception that, as community, we were accepting (UPR) and understanding (empathy) of our 'maladjustments', and no one was pretending (congruence) that they were better than the rest or trying to introject their own values into others as if they knew the best pathway; '*we all agreed we were lost in a messed-up world*'. I am still learning from those experiences because it seems that the core conditions were more common in the homeless than in the educational communities. It is as if being fully human was somehow less civilised and not fit for modern intellectual society and knowledge economy. It seems that this is reflected in the view of Moustakas

(1966), where the fragmentation and flattening of the person as if the intellect was all that was of value.

So, from thinking about suicide as a way of erasing myself/my self-concept, I moved towards maintaining it by changing the environment. This has been judged as a 'crazy', 'dysfunctional', 'stupid', 'fucked up' or 'ill in the head' idea by others, whereas, from my own frame of reference at the time, it seemed like a better choice. This link between person and environmental conditions was the focus of Rogers' (1980) work, which showed the conditions that either facilitate or thwart the growth of the human organism and the person's '*authority within*' in identifying which ones are which. I did not seem to make much of a positive impact in the 'phenomenological field' I have been born into, hence moving away from the environment that was only reinforcing my CoW that contributed to a distorted self-concept seemed like the most constructive choice. I located a space where I could learn and coexist freely.

This brings me back to the debate as to whether the drive towards suicide can originate from the tendency to actualise and be viewed as constructive behaviour (McGarry, 2018, 2020). Like Rogers (1963), I am convinced that I did not actualise my '*potentiality for self-destruction'*, but my suicidal thoughts and plans were a manifestation of constructive and misunderstood behaviour motivated by my actualising tendency. What I mean is that my actualising tendency was motivating me to remove and challenge a self-concept that became an obstacle to my own growth; at the time, I did not understand it consciously, yet still I did just that. I moved my 'perceptual field'

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to a new environment that could be seen as maintaining my self-concept as worthless; instead, this was where I began to discover my own personal power.

This is where I began learning about what it is that I value: searching for intimacy in human connections and having an openness to the world as it is. I reassured myself as having a disregard for the materialism and those authorities that I thought of as pointless; although I was not aware of it then, I began becoming a person of tomorrow, a person truly open to learning and unlearning (Rogers, 1980). Only during the revising of this theme did I realise that 'becoming nothing' might have been linked to the influence of capitalism and the increasing importance of having rather than being, where one's value is determined by what one has. By having nothing, living as part of the homeless community that had nothing, that notion of 'having' as a measure of a person's value was destroyed, here simply by loving the persons I met there.

This permanently freed something in my own self-concept while making my relationship with financial rewards and material possessions somehow incongruent with the systems within which I function now. This recognition of the negative influence of materialism and materialistic values has been explored in depth by Kasser (2016). Kasser (2016) found that those placing high importance on materialistic values/goals have lower levels of well-being (both psychological and physical), lower quality of interpersonal relationships and lower intrinsic motivation, among other outcomes. This

seems to fit with my own experience that the more we strive to *have,* the less

we *are*.

Disengagement

This theme captures those strands of experiences that reflect being

disconnected, disinterested or demotivated as a response to social conditions.

Illustration (Figure 12) is a composite of my experiences that are intrinsically

evaluated as rewarding. These are the moments where I embraced the

spontaneity of dancing in the rain, found personal power in cooking

independently, wanted to make time for relationships that felt nourishing,

began to recognise when I am driven by desires, found flow in writing and

wonder in connecting to nature and became a 'warrior of justice', defending

kids who did not seem to be able to defend themselves.

The midsection of illustration in Figure twelve represents the external

valuation of my experiences, which were received by me as unfair judgment

followed by rejection by adults who filled pedagogical roles. Under the term

rejection, I compiled a number of experiences in which various forms of

aggression, hostility, humiliation or any other form of withdrawal of

acceptance were employed to punish me for undesirable characteristics or

behaviours. In response to this, I gradually started becoming disengaged, as if

the connection between my organismic self and reality became dormant as a

way of keeping myself safe from external threats.

For example, I would have loved to dance in the rain with my little sister, but was it worth the stressing out from my mother or being whipped with my father's belt or a TV cable; therefore, it was safer not to connect to the feeling of raindrops on my face gently drumming a melody. I would love to stay over with my grandparents, but was it worth my dad's bad mood and accusations of just wanting to defy him and of being a disobedient child; therefore, it was safer to suppress (or deceive) the felt need for cuddles, closeness and feeling loved. I would love to continue writing my story past the expected time, with disregard for punctuation, but every moment of delay was upsetting the teacher, which could have all sorts of not-worth-it consequences:

> *... It was not that the work was going to get a good grade anyway, cause I did not 'take care' in my writing.*

It was not the spirit, passion or even my ideas in my writing that mattered most but the bureaucracy of Polish grammar. Therefore, it was safer not to get carried away by my own process or creativity and to instead avoid possible punishment. This can be looked at as the twofold expression of actualising tendency; I wanted to be and learn experientially because this was the most engaging and rewarding way that facilitated my optimal growth, but it was also my actualising tendency that prioritised my safety. This fits with Rogers' (1959) view of two strands of actualising tendency: to enhance the organism but also to maintain it. To make myself safe (to maintain my organism), I needed to disengage from what I wanted/needed/found rewarding because, if I did not, I was putting myself at risk. This is consistent

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with the thwarting impact that CoW can have on the actualising tendency of the human organism (Rogers, 1959; Patterson & Joseph, 2007) and perhaps with the importance of UPR in experiencing safety.

Some behaviour were valued by the adults in pedagogical roles, I had to conform and substitute my personal values, meanings or directions for their own, which I both tried to do and resisted. This connection between '*directly controlling teacher behaviours*' and what could be viewed as my own maladjustments is consistent with findings of Assor et al. (2005) in their study of N=319 fourth and fifth graders; the authors found that controlling behaviours were *'particularly harmful as they lead to a-motivation that is intertwined with anger and anxiety'* (p. 397). Opdenakker's (2021) study of N=566 learners also found that controlling and need-thwarting behaviours contributed to procrastination and disengagement. In my case, disengagement/ demotivation/ a-motivation in the context of education had many forms: disengagement from others (learners, teachers), from subjects, from school values, and, perhaps most importantly, from experiential learning.

These 'teaching strategies' that intended to control or stir my behaviour in a particular way and that were applied systematically contributed to the process of conditioning, where I learned that if I was to be accepted and This did not mean that I wasn't learning about myself during that time; on the contrary, I actively collected experiences that served as further evidence that fitted the structure of my self-concept as a lazy, problematic and worthless person.

Figure 12. Experiencing rejection of emerging values

Although the formative experiences of education no longer defined me,

their aftermath has lingered in my experiences as an adult. By aftermath, I

mean the unexamined or not yet accessible to awareness elements of my

self-concept. There is a disengagement reaction in me that is triggered by the

'should do', and it does not seem to matter if it is someone telling me what I

should do or if it is me that feels I should do something. Although this might

sound reasonable in the instances when I do not want to do something, I find

it really disruptive that even when I want to do something, the moment

someone else also wants me to do it—or if I am committing myself to it—then

feel I should be doing it.

The intrinsic motivation diminishes, this is illustrated (Figure14) as

deflated intrinsic motivation. There is a tension or incongruence here because

my self-concept is threatened by the external input; 'I only listen to myself'

was a way of keeping myself safe in the previous socioenvironmental

conditions, but it was no longer useful to me in the new environment.

Figure 13. Deflated motivation

Becoming aware of this did not immediately resolve this tension, but it allowed me to develop a different approach where I accepted my resistance. I learned that when I do not push against it and wait for my own willingness to surface, accepting that it might not, it always does. This is a good example of Rogers' (1995) view of acceptance that facilitates change: '*The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change'.*

Similarly, when I am doing work that is going to be assessed or the work for which I am paid, I feel I must push against myself, even if it is the work I wanted to do and felt excited about doing in the first place. This has something to do with the way I engage with the work when I believe I am producing it to the expectations of others, even if I am not sure what these expectations are. It seems that just the thought 'would they like it/approve of it/will it be good enough for them' creates some anxiety and takes away the perceived freedom that comes from unstructured but intuitive processing. I found it to be especially explicit when producing creative pieces of work during my fine art studies or paid work illustrating a book—where I could almost hear the judgement of what I was doing, which was very disruptive to the creative process and yet somehow impossible to escape: producing something to be liked and somehow being very weary of it being disliked. This resulted in persistent procrastination, where I felt I had to wait for the '*threat of the deadline to kick in, so it no longer mattered what others might say, and I just needed to get it done*'.

Automatic defiance

As noted in the subtheme of disengagement, my organism began to draw me outside of the formal settings seeking external validation on the fringes of society. Although this tendency of my organism seems to have reinforced my disengagement with formal education, it has also offered me new spaces for belonging that I needed to sustain my life force. Because my self-concept integrated others' judgments of me as toxic, worthless or not good enough, besides my inner conflict and feelings of anxiety and anger by default, I also felt I had nothing to lose, which left me vulnerable to some reckless and destructive behaviours. This connection can also be seen in the work of Moller and Deci (2009, p. 41) and their study of N=235 participants, which found a correlation between *'interpersonal control and tendencies towards interpersonal violence',* which were facilitated by *'perceived mechanistic dehumanisation'*.

I agree that defiance is a strategy my organism developed to resist any form of external direction or control that violated my own needs or felt dehumanising. This might be seen in connection to defensiveness in person-centred theory, a process triggered by the perception of threat to one's self-concept (Rogers 1951, 1959). However, eventually, the activation of defiance became a default response when interacting with others who offered me any form of suggestion or even an alternative view. I agree that defiance and other defensive mechanisms might stifle the enhancement of the organism. Warner (2009) argued that Rogers' theory of defence is counterproductive because it can be viewed as negative and less deserving of acceptance, as something to

overcome. I disagree with Warner's (2009) critique; in my understanding, Rogerian theory must be read with the core conditions as a lens; therefore, defences deserve just as much of UPR or UPSR as any other aspects of the person.

The recognition and interpretation of my own defiant approaches seem to have shifted significantly during the process of autoethnographic data collection. This is because, at first, I inaccurately symbolised my defiance as a manifestation of courage, self-direction and individuality. Doing so made it easier to accept it as it is and maintain the self-concept; that distortion also seemed congruent with my ideal self as a courageous person. However, as I was deconstructing the experiences in an attempt to locate my own resources for dealing with some of the rising challenges around intrinsic motivation, I learned that my defiance often disrupted my learning and development and contributed to feelings of uneasiness and frustration. This can be viewed as a consequence of incongruence between the self-concept and ideal self (Rogers, 1963, 1990). Also, in the third stage of personality development, Rogers (1959) asserted that the person might distort some of their experiences that do not fit with the CoW; in my social environment defiance, as a child, I was 'bad' but courage was 'good'; I did not know how not to be defensive and was striving to be more accepting of myself, so I was trying to 'accept' myself as defiant as I convinced myself it was courageous—which only reinforced the defiant behaviours because I still did not accept them for what they were. Defiance served a similar role to disengagement because it was connected to maintaining self-concept, and both functioned as systems of

defence for me (Rogers, 1959). I experienced a period of frustration with myself when I recognised that they were no longer useful, yet I was unable to change them and release myself from my own self-protective armour.

I experienced another form of defiance as a response to any form of perceived 'authority', which here could be a person, group of people or even institutional regulations that impose their expectations on me. My experience of authorities as an opposing force rather than servants of human safety was influenced by my own childhood and teenage experiences in the context of Poland; but, as I have learned in recent years, this was also consistent with Rogers' view of stiving towards the self-direction of people of tomorrow (1980).

Similarly, although it can be constructive and leaves me open to my own subjective view of systems within which I function, I also recognised, that at times, it was counterproductive. It often drains my energy to resist things like, for example, the expected dress code, standardised approaches or 'blanket rules' that do not make sense to me or to use a professional superficially polite ways of communication that avoid any form of (constructive) confrontation. These aspects are draining because there is a significant risk involved but a minimal chance of change as a result of it, that is, apart from me being identified as a threat to existing ways of doing things. Being identified as a threat tore away the possibility for belonging and changed my status to an outsider, reinforcing my existing CoW.

When examining and overlaying these situations, I discovered that defiance was also a way my organism chose to differentiate itself from the things (behaviours/values/etc.) that I did not want to identify with, but this was not available to my awareness at a time. Only when I observe those processes carefully and with curiosity and wonder rather than judgement and a 'can I fix it?' attitude am I able to understand the function of my actions and appreciate them for their intention, hence accepting them. Then, I have a choice of integrating them in a way that is movable and fluid, here as a result of re-integrating myself (Rogers, 1951, 1959). One of my quick drawings (Illustration 2f) captures this movement, where instead of wearing permanent body armour, always ready to be attacked, I only need a shield for safety, and even that I can easily move to the side when I want to.

Figure 14. From rigidity to fluidity: defences.

I found myself using up all my energy to stand against and critique, having little or no energy to stand for, to appreciate or contribute, hence becoming destructive (reference to the sword in the Figure 15) rather than constructive and that, in my understanding, was part of 'becoming nothing'. However, as I have learned by observing others reacting in a similar way, there might be another function to this behaviour: an illusion of empowerment; if I can push against others and impact their trajectory of intentions, then I have the power. The power in this scenario (Figure 15) exists outside of me, and I can only experience empowerment when I(I) affect others (O). I do not actually experience personal power, where I can change my own trajectory without any outside input, where I can find and follow my own direction that might or might not have anything to do with others.

Figure 15. Empowerment vs. personal power
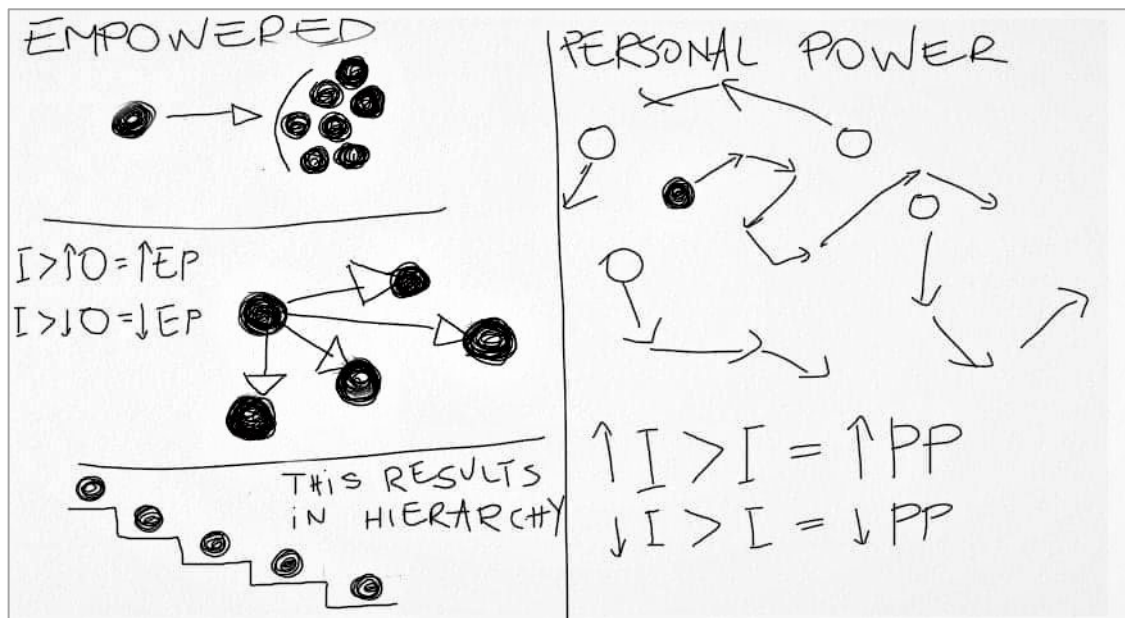
In this illustration (Figure 16), the arrows represent directionality; the higher the number of others who are impacted or influenced by me, the heightened the experience of empowerment will be. This way of being organises hierarchies, where one's position depends on the degree of one's influence.

Anxious hypersensitivity

Illustration in figure seventeen captured my initial experiences of becoming a researcher of 'authenticity' at the University of Nottingham. Here, I am a little girl with ponytails, a teddy bear, backpack packed for every eventuality; there is my childlike curiosity and the feeling of setting off on an adventure. However, there is also an Ariadne thread tied on my finger, a note 'do not disturb' on the overwhelmingly large door, sweat droplets, and my feet facing inwards as if I wanted to walk myself out of the idea/situation.

My anxiety is here (in the shape of do not disturb sign), and although it is telling me that I am not welcome, I am walking in anyway. It only occurred to me that, even in this illustration, as a little girl, I was still being received as a threat to the order that did not want to be disturbed. I was the disturbance again. I recall feeling surprised and disappointed because this was not how I experience myself. It feels distressing because my self-concept as 'helpful to others' was not aligning with the experience of how I was being received, resulting in both anxiety and anger for being treated unfairly.

Figure 16. PhD—My journey begins.

In person-centred theory, anxiety is a form of distress that occurs as a consequence of inner incongruence (Rogers, 1951, 1959, 1990). It might be incongruence between the self-concept and experience (organismic self), as in the example above: self-concept and ideal self or ideal self and organismic self (experience).

This thread of anxiety is tightly woven through most of the data I have collected for the current dissertation. It is a thread weaved through all my

educational lifespan. The physical experience of anxiety feels like a micro-vibration of my whole being, using up my lifeforce and enlarging the voids the swallow my lifeforce, voids here are the representations of traumas and betrayals. It is my perception that becomes the most difficult 'condition' to manage; it is a 'condition' because it has been conditioned/developed in response to the social environment—it is not a reference to medical diagnosis. It has been conditioned by the pedagogies of betrayal when I was led to believe that the environment was safe or caring, but it turned out to be the opposite.

Moustakas wrote about the destructive nature of betrayal that has the power '*to destroy the individual in his search for himself and his efforts to live authentically in the world*' (1966, p. 1). That form of betrayal occurs in response to the rejection of the individual and their direction (Moustakas, 1966). In turn, this contributes to distrust in oneself and others and disconnection or alienation that moves me away from the pursuit of authenticity. Much like Schmid (2005), I see my anxiety as a form of suffering directly connected to feeling alienated from others and myself because I am '*incurably social*' (Rogers, 1965, p. 20, as quoted in Schmid, 2005).

On the other hand, during the COVID-19 lockdown, I noticed a pattern of peaceful existence and authenticity when living in solitude for extended periods of time, so I agree with Moustakas (1961, 1972) that experiencing loneliness can have the therapeutic and restoring qualities needed for self-awareness and self-regulation. This time can be where solitude is spent on

reconnecting with oneself. This further supports my understanding that I experience anxiety in relationship to/with others, here in response to the social environment. It also fits with the view of incongruence within the 'self' that is most often revealed when interacting with or being challenged by others; I can also see why Vaidya (2013) suggested that incongruence and its consequent anxiety can be brought up by a lack of perceived CoW, as if there was nothing that one can do to ever become worthy. However, I am not sure if creating an additional concept of 'conditions of un-worth' is needed here (Vaidya, 2013). In my case, I have interpreted the lack of positive regard (conditional or not) as a condition of worth in itself: I will be worth something when I become nothing. This relates to Kriz's (2011) view that we have an innate capacity for organising our reality through a reduction of chaos; therefore, once a pattern has been identified, everything that does not fit is discarded or distorted in an attempt to preserve the experience of order.

This theme also captures my hypersensitivity to the reactions of others, here followed by obsessive anxiety when symbolising these experiences. This obsessive anxious hypersensitivity occurs 'in' and 'out' of interactions: 'in' when I symbolise the experiences of betweenness (the space of the encounter between me and another person or persons) as somehow threatening, resulting either in my withdrawal, defensiveness or defiance, and 'out' when I am inhabiting the space of waiting for a confirmation of the other person's acceptance or approval; this is usually accompanied by obsessive revisiting and reinterpreting of the interaction (content of discussion, emails, messages) and projection of rejection.

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This anxiety was also present throughout my educational lifespan when it came to the work I was to produce and how I predicted the judgement and external valuation of it would be. It was as if the work I produced was the measure of my value as a learner, or as a person compared with others. I do not think I ever had clarity of what it is that I had to do very well in my school work; expectations of others were often a mystery, and no matter what I did, it never felt as if I did enough. My personal perceptions of how I did were very rarely reflected in my grades, so the whole process always seemed confusing, counterintuitive and stress-provoking. When using my internal locus of evaluation, the Rogerian (1967) organismic valuing of all of the learning that took place—the time it took, the planning, the concentration, resources, willpower, associated feelings, knowledge gained, skipped learning opportunities and intentional shortcuts—my own e-valuation aligned with these of the teachers only 'once in a blue moon'.

It felt confusing that I valued what I did highly but received a low grade, while, other times, I did not invest myself much and received what felt like an inflated grade. It was confusing as it signalled that I was missing something, that I could not trust my own perceptions. Perhaps this occurred because the feedback was rarely specific to the content. The 'expected learning' quickly became a chore for which I had to muster all of my willpower. Procrastinating and relying on adrenaline when working with tighter and tighter deadlines became my learning process. Hence, procrastination was an outcome of

avoiding the possible failure and a difficulty in staying with the discomfort of that possibility.

Similar anxiety accompanied me in my work as a trainee teacher, where I was evaluated, graded, assessed on my performance and measured against others, and as a tutor, where I was delivering the accredited courses where I was accountable for the progress of my learners, as outlined by some external criteria, as well as pedagogical approaches of testing, disciplining and 'jumping through hoops', which did not feel congruent. If I did what was expected, I was anxious because I could feel the stress of the learners; when I did what I felt was in the interest of the self-direction of learners, I was worried about meeting the criteria and sustaining our funding. This seems related to the findings of Perryman (2007), who reported on the negative, anxiety-provoking, disempowering impact of the OFSTED inspection on teachers at a secondary school. Perryman (2007) framed her discussion with the idea of 'panoptic performativity' as a regime where the purpose moves away from learning and is rigidly fixated on passing the inspection by '*performing in ways dictated by the discourse of inspection in order to escape the regime*' (Perryman, 2007, p. 173)

Similarly, my own anxiety was often present when there was a risk of failing against the measures set by others. This anxiety was underpinned by the fear of being labelled/judged as not smart enough, good enough, hardworking enough and so forth. Although Perryman (2007) did not make the specific connection between the person-centred approach and the distress

experienced by teachers, her findings pointing to practices of controlling, 'disciplinary powers', 'hierarchical observations' and 'normalising judgement' could be understood through the person-centred critical theory of socialisation proposed by Schmid (2004). I will expand on this in the coming themes of harmful systems and organismic structures.

The most challenging, which I admit is somewhat shameful to reveal, was the anxiety that came from being in the position of a deceiver: anxiety that underpinned the daily reality of avoiding some truths, of exaggerating some claims, of consciously or without immediate awareness manipulating the person/people in personally challenging situations, of *'disguising the remains of the broken rules'* or of *'hiding behind some ancient totems that do not even represent my values'*. This form of anxiety was the most present in my parenting, where a combination of fear for the futures of my children, fear of being held responsible when things go wrong, fear of crushing reality when I was the one that had been deceived and a lack of trust in my own parenting when it went wrong in the past were all used to justify actions that I did not believe in myself. Currently, becoming person-centred in the pedagogical practice of parenting is my biggest challenge.

6.7.2 Becoming Useful

The theme of 'becoming useful' captures the phenomenon of becoming responsive to my own intrinsic valuing process, but also more sensitive to the needs of others: doing, keeping and following what is useful to the optimal functioning of my organism and learning how to be useful to the actualising

tendencies of others. Simply said, it is about my self-concept becoming useful to my actualising tendency and the actualising tendency of the groups I am part of, instead of inhibiting it. This theme is closely related to meaningful learning, where it is my whole organism that decides what is meaningful learning to me and where my whole organism is attentive to what might be meaningful learning to others. It captures the experiences where I was engaging with learning that I found exciting and meaningful, validated by my intrinsic valuing system, where I began to recognise my personal power as a result. In a simplified definition, my 'personal power' is my capacity to learn and unlearn.

My understanding of Rogers' (1977) view of personal power is in my recognition that I have tangible control over constructing, reconstructing or deconstructing the self, that is, the 'I'; and in learning how that fluid 'I' can enhance the phenomenological field, in which that 'I' is one with (Illustration 13); in my understanding, this includes the 'We' that Schmid (2003, 2005, 2015) proposed as a shared reality prior to a formation of self. To learn what is useful and unlearn what is no longer so, learning capacity can become the shaping force of my own self-concept.

Illustration in the figure nineteen is the image that I had in mind when thinking of the 'phenomenological field' in person-centred theory: the initial chaos of experiencing life as a human being and the subjectivity of that experiencing from the point of self. Representing it as a universe was intended to capture the vast potential of becoming, learning, knowing and the

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combination of curiosity and fear of the unknown. Experiencing oneself as in

the process of 'becoming useful' is closely related to optimal functioning within

that field, as well as creating the conditions for the optimal functioning of

others (Shmid, 2006) that then activates the actualising tendency of the

'subjective universe' the person is one with. In Illustration 13, the spiralling

motion is representative of that oneness, in which the person expands as far

as their experiencing.

Figure 17. My phenomenological field.

This theme also offers composites of the experiences that have been

'*engraved deeply in the fibre of my being*', where my internally validated

experiences were recognised by another, accepted, welcomed and cherished, that is, externally validated and positively regarded.

The perceived light of excitement in the eyes of another that can truly see you and value your effort, failure, intellect, your struggle, your creative force, your spirit, intention—in my experience. that light cannot be substituted by superficial or prescriptive praising or official formative or summative feedbacks that correspond to academic learning criteria. When another person is fully present, meaning living the core conditions of empathy, congruence and UPR, this is where relational depth emerges (Mearns & Cooper, 2020); and it is this depth of relating that validates my own self. On the journey of discovering my own inner resources, I came to understand that external validation, just as an internal one, is experienced by my whole organism. Researchers have begun to explore that being mindfully connected to the whole of the person can positively impact the actualising tendency (Beitel et al., 2013), authenticity or/and emotional intelligence (Tohme & Joseph, 2020). It seems that only when I encounter a whole person with my own whole person are we becoming authentically 'useful' to each other. Schmid (2001, 2015) argued that authenticity is in itself an 'encounter attitude', an openness to individual persons and to social groups and society itself.

It seems that unconditional acceptance, self-direction, satisfaction and imagination have, in my case, an important role in experiencing myself as 'useful'. There is also a connection here to my phenomenological field, to the

reality that I am part of and that I observe and to the needs of that reality as recognised by my own experiencing and by my sensitivity to experiencing others. It is my direction to move towards becoming an active participant in enhancing that reality for the better in its wholeness. Because, in my understanding, 'becoming useful' is an expression of my authenticity, it corresponds with Schmid's (2005) view that authenticity is two-dimensional; it is just as much about self-determination as it is about interrelatedness. I am self-determined in shaping my self-concept in a way that is the most useful to my optimal functioning. Interrelated here is the honing of my capacity for empathically understanding others so that I can become useful to others in their own learning journeys. In my experience, the people's understanding of authenticity usually contradicts my own, and it is very rarely connected to any form of interrelatedness or solidarity. The common view I continue to come across seems to be aligned with Potter's (2011) idea that authenticity is rooted in ego-centric approaches and hedonic pleasure-seeking behaviours, in which one is honest about and makes no apologies for, regardless of how they impact others. This view could not be further from the person-centred understanding and its ontological stance on socially constructive human nature proposed by Rogers, which has continued to be misunderstood or omitted (Schmid, 2005).

Satisfaction

In this subtheme, satisfaction is related to the Aristotelian (2007) concept of eudaimonia and can be seen as an outcome of meeting one's psychological needs that contribute to experiencing one's existence as

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purposeful (Joseph, 2016). This can be framed in a larger discourse of human flourishing as a goal of education, where the whole of a person has room for learning and growing in a direction experienced as meaningful (Guanawardena et al., 2020; Kristjansson, 2017). One might note that, in this theme, I report on experiences from only extracurricular activities in state-funded education in Poland, as well as experiences from higher education in the United Kingdom. As a child, I found the process of creative writing very satisfying; it did not belong in the classroom because the standards of my writing would have been unacceptable and the content concerning from the perspective of teachers. I find it disappointing that, in state-funded education, the measures of what is good enough or worthy of pursuing are set and judged externally rather than by the learners themselves. This form of judgement was reflected in the perspective of my parents, where, on a few occasions as a teen, I was punished severely for using my writer's imagination in 'sinful ways' and being curious about 'shameful things'; but that did not stop me from writing. I felt a sense of excitement and freedom of becoming when looking at the blank piece of paper; this feeling is still present with me today. This is connected with Joseph's (2016) reflection that it is up to the person to move in the direction towards the self that one wants to become and that becoming is a creative and never-ending process. Writing gave me the space to create and organise the 'imaginary reality' the way I wanted to; it gave me a voice to 'talk' about things I thought that mattered, even if that was just on the paper. Writing sustained me, helped me with processing difficult emotions and gave me voice that was satisfying.

Diamond (1993) argued that writing and the use of narrative can facilitate the reclaiming of self; this seems to fit in well with my own experience and connection between exercising my personal power through the 'written voice' both as a learner and learning facilitator. Writing also kept me connected to and in search of what mattered to me in an environment that did not seem to share the same values. This connection between finding ways of recognising and living close to one's intrinsic values as satisfying and having a positive impact on well-being and motivation is reflected in the work of Sheldon and Kasser (2001). A recent meta-analysis of 223,209 participants also found that staying close to one's personal values has a significant impact on persistence in learning (Howard et al., 2021).

I also experienced satisfaction when reading the literature, when I could jump into the worlds of others and have 'conversations' with whichever authors I decided to 'talk to'. Again, similar to writing, reading sustained me during times when 'real world' was unwelcoming and alienating; visiting the worlds of others met some of my need for relatedness. I found validation in the shared visions of 'reality'. This corresponds to the work of Ryan and Deci (2000, 2020), in which relatedness can be seen as one of the psychological needs that, when satisfied, facilitates intrinsic motivation. It also seems to be connected to experiencing loneliness and finding ways of sustaining oneself when the need for relatedness is not fulfilled through being with another *real* person(s) (Mearns & Cooper, 2020). The fact that my eyesight was poor, that the text was often 'dancing' and blurring on the page and that I would get headaches from prolonged reading did not stop me. In year 5, I fell in love

with poetry and enjoyed stepping into the shoes of other authors, reciting the lines as if it was me who wrote them. I was surprised and excited when my Polish teacher seemed genuinely impressed with my abilities and quickly put me up for competitions. I was encouraged by the fact that she seemed to positively regard my performances and did not recognise the conditionality of that regard. I did well, but I lost the purity of joy I used to experience because my purpose had changed. I was performing for adults and fell under their judgement rather than my own evaluation, which was often unhelpful and hurtful. My experience stands in direct opposition to the arguments and findings of Cameron and Pierce (1994, 1996) and Cameron et al. (2001), where those extrinsic rewards aligned with intrinsic interests did not seem to have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation.

Although the hostile and disapproving reactions of others mentioned earlier did not seem to interfere that much with the core of my motivation (intrinsic motivation), here because they were immediately recognised as threatening and my defences went up, the externally validating/rewarding responses were initially allowed into my experience as positive and not recognised as conditional and potentially threatening. Consequently, being praised and externally rewarded for the performances that entertained adults led to a change in my own self-direction. I began thinking what they would like instead of what I liked. I started observing others who were receiving higher rewards and wanted to copy their style instead of trusting my own and develop further. It is as if I willingly substituted my internal locus for the external locus of evaluation to satisfy the need for positive regard (Rogers,

1959). The whole aspect of competitiveness brought forth anxiety that was difficult to self-regulate, eventually leading to a disconnection from poetry altogether, that is, until I found a new way of engaging with it.

I found my joy again in an extracurricular poetry club in high school, where, for the first time, I felt that all of me was welcomed. My writing and my voice no longer needed external censorship; it was not judged by teachers with pre-existing expectations. Instead, I could observe my teacher and peers' faces and see the reflection of myself in their widely open eyes—they were not afraid to see me. In fact, they wanted to see the *real* me. There was a *mutuality* in that experience because they were also sharing their *real* selves with me, and I cherished them as whole, complex persons. Murphy and Cramer (2014) explored *mutuality* and its therapeutic potential in the context of psychotherapy, where the core conditions are experienced by both therapist and client. However, as Mearns and Cooper (2017) noted, this form of encounter and relational depth is not exclusive to a therapy room and can occur in any context where the real persons share their reality.

This experience of relational depth was satisfying in and of itself, opening the space for me to see myself and my work with much less judgement—and experience agency over what I wanted to change, improve, leave or remove. Similarly rewarding experiences characterised my MA and PhD studies, where I felt that my thoughts and contributions mattered, that they were weaved into the fabric of broader discussions, hence evoking various reactions in others and provoking us to think deeper. The dialogical

exchanges that were honest and respectful contributed to a feeling of belonging with others, even if our views differed.

Intrinsic satisfaction can also be present when the learning 'clicks into place', where I feel that I really understand something I was not able to understand before; that feeling of joy is so intense I want to share with others close to me, even if they just look at me in bewilderment. It is a very childlike feeling where following one's own curiosity through trial and error, one becomes competent at something and there is the drive to keep doing it or talking about it excitedly. The examples of such learning that are present in my own 'data' most often relate to the learning that changed me, that opened me up, removed a barrier, limiting self-belief, challenged preconception, dissolved judgemental attitude and so forth. However, it could be something of a more skill-based nature, like learning to drive or being able to understand statistics. Even then, it still expands my self-concept by the new things I can do and new ways I can interact within my perceptual field. I still vividly remember that, at the age of 31, I had a feeling for the first time (that I can remember) that I could learn anything I set my mind on and that there was no limit. This was accompanied by the understanding that some things would be very difficult while others might come easier and that it would be my choice what I decided to pursue:

> *At first, it felt as if my universe exploded and made itself anew, so many pathways opening up all at once. I thought that I wished that I had that feeling sooner, you know, like 20 years ago! I opened the web browser and started looking at beginner science courses that could*

lead to neuroscience and the exploration of the brain and human

connections. I even looked at doing advanced maths—just to remove

the stigma of being incapable in that department … And as I was

researching, I began to realise that what I do today is still what I would

choose. I felt proud of myself and appreciative of what I have achieved

so far and of my own path. However, I have also recognised that I

always belittled my own choices, that, because I am the one that can

do it, then they are less valuable, less difficult and lazy choices.

Choosing them consciously today, even if I felt I could do anything

else, made them just as worthy pursuits as any other. That realisation

felt really sweet!

Discovering and embracing my own capacity to learn expanded my 'subjective universe' and strengthened my experience of my own agency and competence. The link between the psychological need for competence and satisfaction coming from meaningful learning explored by Ryan and Deci (2000) has been recently evidenced by Martela et al. (2018) in their study of 332 participants. Martela et al.'s (2018) study of *'four satisfactions'*—competence, autonomy, relatedness and beneficence—found that all four consistently emerged as independent predictors of meaning in life and were connected to the person's well-being.

Coincidentally, my own findings are also congruent with Martela et al.'s (2018) exploration of beneficence as one of the 'satisfactions' contributing to experiencing one's life as meaningful or, as I argue, one's self-concept as

'becoming useful'. This is because I find it equally satisfying when I exercise my capacity to be useful to others or when I am making a positive change of enhancing our shared reality. As far as I can remember, I was able to identify the problems and issues around me, whether it was with persons, structures or institutions. I was very young when I was perceiving incongruences in the taught pedagogy and lived pedagogy in church, where I was hearing one thing and observing something quite the opposite, but because I was unable to verbalise that constructively, my observations were seen as threatening or judgemental. Because I was a child, I found it personally rewarding to be helpful to others. As I grew up, I moved through various helping professions, from mentoring youth with addiction problems in Poland to supporting young women in a homeless hostel in the UK, to becoming a counsellor and eventually a teacher. I see all those roles as pedagogical in their nature because my concern always was on how we unlearn what is unhelpful and learn what is. Being part of and seeing others learning about themselves, learning about them with them and being part of the process of discovery of oneself was rewarding to me in the relation to all '*four* satisfactions' (Martela et al., 2018). Learning more about human beings met my need for competence and being in encounters, seeing the real person and being seen met my need for relatedness; doing what aligned with my intrinsic values and interest met my need for autonomy; and serving others or the learning community, though it often felt challenging, met my need for beneficence.

When I feel I am doing something that matters—that *I can* do something that matters—this drives me, drawing on energy sources I did not

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know I had at the time. However, interestingly, when I am expected to do something (asked, delegated, etc.), while I might still want to do it, I feel less energised overall. Perhaps this energy surge can be understood through the findings in self-determination theory, where voluntarily chosen activities were found to be connected to a higher level of vitality as opposed to those assigned to the participants in the study (Martela at al., 2016).

I find that when I stay focused on the task that I find meaningful and satisfying and flow with my intuition without overthinking it, I produce my objectively best work. Objectively, my own valuing of it overlaps with the subsequent valuing by others. This is consistent with Csikszentmihali's (2001) view of *flow* as a psychological concept of a wholistic immersion in experience that surpasses the boundaries of time and space, where any external influences are seen as disruptions of that process.

My own way

My written work also offered me the space for my own direction and my own decisions, fostering a sense of personal responsibility over my contributions rather that '*guess-work in meeting vague targets set by invisible others'*. My own way is a manifestation of authenticity and is congruent with the theory of self-determination and the need for autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000m 2020). It is also connected to findings from Gueta and Berkovich (2021), where at-risk-youth authenticity fostered in autonomy-supportive environments had a positive impact on their engagement with the learning programme. The extract from self-interviewing well captures the inner drive to

follow my own interests as a young person and its connection to imagination discussed in one of the next subthemes:

So … At the age of 16, I decided to become a 'rapper' (haha). Funnily enough, music wasn't my strong suit, but I was skilled at rhyming, and I felt the urgent need to communicate to others that the reality that we consider as 'normal' is everything but that. At the age of 18, I knew my reality was messed up, but working with kids as young as 10 already 'addicted' to various substances crushed my universe even more. I came to the UK at the age of 20 hoping I would be able to earn enough to rent a music studio back in Poland so that my 'crew' and I could have an uninterrupted recording space. Family members kept saying that I was crazy and that I was living in a fantasy land, while others thought I had no ambitions—to me this was both a realistic and ambitious plan. I always needed to imagine a new reality first—maybe that's where my direction comes from, as in, I get my energy from imagining what could be and trying to walk towards it.

Although today it makes me chuckle to think about this—especially now, from the position of a parent, where I can see how some might have been concerned over this kind of life trajectory—I am also appreciating my younger self for following my own direction, no matter how 'disillusioned' it might have been. It was only disillusioned in imagination and not verified by reality, yet I think of it as a very valuable learning. I followed my own direction, and though it did not get me where I thought it would, it got me somewhere even better; and no one could have predicted that. I would not be here if I did

not step into my 'illusions' and check how far I might go. There were times when choosing to follow my own interest felt riskier, either because I was doing something unconventional or because those in pedagogical roles shared their concerns over it—but as long as it was my choice, taking risks included an element of excitement and acceptance that I might fail. I was more motivated to adjust to the challenges on that pathway that I had chosen. The ability to adapt to the change also seemed connected to regulating my emotional responses; it was—and still is—much easier for me to self-regulate when I was following my own direction, that is, when I do not feel pressured, coerced, forced or manipulated. This is because when—as introduced in the subtheme of 'excitement'—I see my own findings as reflecting some of the views and results presented by Deci et al. (1999) and Ryan and Deci (2000, 2020)

One of the most vivid memories of experiences from my first school (7 years old) was the time when the headteacher listened to what I had to say, understood my action and, instead of punishing me, proposed better options for the next time. What was also significant was that the head teacher apologised to me for her initial assessment of the situation that felt unfair to me. I was willing to take responsibility for my actions—for the whole of my actions as far as I could understand them but not for the external judgement of these actions that fragmented them, changing them into something I could no longer identify with. In this scenario, personal power was maintained as a result of a few corresponding factors: the fact I was invited to evaluate the situation myself rather than it being judged by others, that I was listened to

and felt recognised and accepted, even when my actions were undesirable and that, at the end, I was left with a choice of what I wanted to do next.

It seems that I need to have a choice over what happens to me next to experience personal power. This happened 31 years ago, and I am still learning from this experience and from that headteacher; she was genuine, nondirective (regardless of her position), accepting and empathic. In his meta-analysis of 119 studies and combined sample of N=355,325 participants, Cornelius-White (2007) found that genuineness, empathy and non-directivity were among nine variables of person-centred teachers that were positively associated with student outcomes. Perhaps the fact that this headteacher was one of two adults that I remember from my first primary school—the second one being the janitor who also treated me as a person—is telling in and of itself.

I also experienced the energy that comes from self-direction in my pedagogical role as a tutor. I had a high degree of freedom in how I facilitated the learning environment when working with youth and adults with diverse learning needs because there were no structures in place when I joined. I found it exciting and challenging and was eager to build a structure together with the learners. There was a significant period of time when the learners resisted taking up the responsibility for their own learning and pushing it towards me; this was accompanied by various attempts to discredit me or label me as not a good teacher. They kept telling me that it was me who was a teacher, so I should tell them what to learn; otherwise, what am I there for? I

persisted that I wanted to hear about and understand what it is that was important to them, what they were curious about and what they needed to learn to enhance their everyday lives.

Although, during my teacher training, I was curious about theories of learning, ways of supporting various learning styles and understanding their diverse learning needs, I found it distracting to observe or implement those when trying to be actively present in the classroom. The more space I occupied with my 'teaching', the less space there was for the learners; but simply sharing with them that I was interested in what they want to learn seemed like an alien concept to them:

> *I mean, it is ok to say that I am here for you and with you and that I am interested in what matters to you. I trust your own direction. I respect you and care for you as a fellow human being. I genuinely believe I can learn from you and that we can learn together. However, it is how I make these words alive, how I communicate them in a way of being with my learners that makes the difference.*

At first, they would propose the topics that they covered in other settings; they said they wanted to make a salad or colouring page. So we would do that, and they would complain that they did not like vegetables or the colouring was pointless or boring, so I would bring it back to them that this was what they asked for, and I would appreciate that they now knew they do not like it. So, I would ask them what would enjoy doing/learning. McCombs (2012) recognised the need for 'learning to learn'; in this case, unlearning

what they thought was learning was just as important as learning. It did take a few months of doing things they did before in schools, clubs and community centres before it finally happened and they began recognising that they had a choice, that they can do something that was their own. this was how their own interests, frustrations and realities surfaced in the classroom:

> *We started talking and learning about homelessness, immigrants, cancer and death, loneliness and love, family traumas, 'rude teachers', discrimination, collecting postcards and 'the jungle out there' (as in the world outside of classroom). There were tears, laughs, silence and conflicts; there was anger and joy—we became a learning community. I took responsibility for myself as a teacher/learner. I wanted to be and they embraced their freedom to learn—it was a transformational experience for all of us.*

I did not know how to do this; I found it difficult at first as a trainee teacher to hold that space. I was also critiqued that, because they were a group of adults with diverse learning needs and a variety of labels and diagnoses, I must 'take control' and was instead resisting that. I did not know exactly what it should look like, but I did know how I did not want it to be. Similarly to Hannam (2020) I found it incredibly satisfying to be their resource in learning about and discovering themselves. Similar benefits of the nondirective approach or, in other words, the autonomy-supportive approach have been found in the recent study by Reeve and Cheon (2021), which

evaluated 51 autonomy-supportive teaching interventions, including 38 randomised control trials. Reeve and Cheon (2021) made a clear distinction between passiveness as a form of nondirectivity and presence that is learner focused. This corresponds with Cornelious-White (2007), where person-centred teaching was proposed as a gestalt of variables or conditions that communicate presence to the learner.

One of the expressions I very often used in both my writing and self-interviews when reflecting on realities in education was '*krew sie gotuje*', or 'it boils my blood'. This was an actual physical experience when I would feel as if my blood vessels and thoughts were expanding faster than I could accommodate. That kind of anger unsettles me greatly and alienates me from others in that moment; I hear only myself when I am in that state.

> *I will continue to refuse capitalism as a reality that is to continue, in education and otherwise. Just recently, I offered my help on the project that I felt intrinsically connected to, against any rational thinking, because I am already behind on everything. And the person in charge really wanted to pay me, even if I never expressed any expectations. I openly challenged that, and they said it would not feel right to have me on the team without pay. And I do understand concepts of exploitation, etc. However, I really didn't care. Sure, I have a large family, and it's usually important to get paid, but I felt intrinsically drawn to this project, regardless of external rewards. Besides, I pursue knowledge so that I can share it freely to impact the reality positively. I don't want to be*

calculating how much my knowing is worth; it is not a capital! That's when my blood boils because this side effect of academic capitalism is that by being conditioned to only feel worthy when rewarded externally, we must continue doing what's rewarded to maintain our value. We must actively prove our value by competing with others and evidencing how they have less value, so our self-concept remains unchallenged, and we stay in the competition for resources. There is a very dangerous flip side to this—that we will only do the work we are paid for giving away our direction entirely. This is what I resist the most, and it makes me angry to see that we seem to have some kind of partial blindness or senselessness to the dangers and hurt caused by capitalism in and out of education without even considering alternative realities!

Although experiencing rage, anger and frustration is not a comfortable place to be, I trust that it is a space I need to channel the adrenaline into keeping myself awake in my daily reality and noticing the various implicit forms of oppression and dehumanisation. I see it as constructive because it unsettles me enough to take action, to write, to debate and to challenge, like Sheffield et al. (2011) I understand emotions as indispensable to learning that energises to action. This connects to what I noted before when writing about my learners: being connected to one's emotions seems to be facilitative to the learning environment that is connected to life itself. McCombs (2008) was very clear that the feelings or affective capacities of the learners played an

important role in engagement with learning; it can be seen as a part of the experiential dimension in person-centred learning.

'Failppreciation'

In my self-interviews, my casual discussions with others that know my past—a theme that kept surfacing—is the one of how much I learned from my mistakes and failures and how they led me to where I am now. I wanted to find a word that could specifically describe appreciating one's mistakes; this is how I arrived at '*failppreciation*'. I enjoy the sound of it when spoken. Recognising failure as part of my4 learning emerged consciously in my PhD studies; this is where I began to strive towards accepting myself with failures and mistakes as a developing person rather than shaming or belittling myself and feeding my own anxieties.

> *Perhaps this is simultaneously my biggest treasure and disappointment that came out of education … Treasure—because after over 30 years of living in the hell of self-depreciation, I found a liberating force in the acceptance of myself as an always learning person and its positive impact on my capacity to unconditionally accept others. It started with the idea that such treasures exist in the land of education, followed by confusion and misguided treasure maps. Then, I discovered a map tattooed on the palms of my hands in a fluctuating ink that only appears when I am whole, not fragmented. I kept searching, digging in the unwilling soil till I surrendered, defeated and undefenced. That's where I found it. Right where I left it. My own self-worth. Why is this*

disappointing? Because it took me 30 bloody years to dig it out of myself! Educational environments and experiences with those in pedagogical roles were more often harmful and rarely therapeutic. I am hearing myself and judge—a bit dramatic ain't ya? However, no … actually, perhaps not dramatic enough! I am talking about systematic disfiguration and annihilation of humanity through education if we continue fragmenting and disconnecting ourselves from ourselves and from the 'reality' we have collectively created. I am also talking about the possibility of healing and transforming humanity through education. I know it happened inside of me, and it keeps happening the more open I become: that is evidence enough for me to believe it can happen inside of all of us.

I vividly remember the first day of being on campus as a full-time PhD student on stipend. It felt like I was walking on clouds; all the struggles up until that point were rewarded. I was receiving not just free (to me) but financially supported education, where I was to research the topic that felt the most organic and natural to me. I thought that things were going to flow smoothly from here on out, that the path was now clear and that I found where I belonged. However, as I was openly encountering the school that I was part of, I started experiencing all sorts of unpleasant, hostile or judgemental attitudes. Before I knew what was happening, I felt alienated, inferior or simply not good enough. I felt like my way of being was received as threatening, and this brought back a lot of unwanted feelings. I became suspicious, even of

those with whom I felt warmth and acceptance from, as if they must be regretting giving me this opportunity.

Just like that, all the struggles were attached to failures, mistakes and maladjustments that flooded back to drown me. I felt obsessively anxious and did not understand why. Why was I feeling so threatened, even with those who were clearly supportive and accepting? Why, all of the sudden, had the environment became hostile, contrasting how I felt initially? All these inner and outer conflicting experiences helped me realise that I still carried a lot of fossilised self-depreciation that held me back; that is where I consciously connected it to my perceived failures in learning, functioning and becoming. In my perception over the years, failures were the end points: if I failed when I tried or if I failed because I did not, the failure was the end product that reinforced self-depreciation that fed into my struggle with UNSR. It is during writing this autoethnography that I clearly saw these failures as learning points, which changed and transformed my reality. It seems to me that '*failppreciation*' is closely connected to unconditional positive self-regard and the fluidity of the self-concept (Rogers, 1958). When describing caring communities, Rogers referred to 'mistakes as lessons learned' as opposed to '*blots on one's character*'. Although I have read this many times and intellectually accepted it, it took me a long time to finally appreciate my past failures and mistakes as life lessons. Today, I find '*failppreciation*' to be the most useful approach to learning at a greater depth and a helpful way of self-regulation.

Imagination

As I was reading and rereading this, the word courage got stuck in my mind, and I resisted it. I still resist it. To me, courage means entering a scenario knowing that you might get hurt or not knowing what might happen but going in anyway. I cannot remember a situation that I willingly entered without imagining what I wanted from it first and then keeping that as a guide. Hence, I have rarely felt that I had much real-life courage, but I always had an abundance of imagination. In some ways, I feel that it was my imagination that led to acts that might have seemed courageous to others, especially in times of hardship when reality seemed grim. I think, early on, I inhabited a space somewhere between reality as it is and reality as it could be. Maybe this was because I did not feel I had much power over the existing reality and I needed a safe space to be myself or a my own space for becoming.

The concept of failure does not exist in the realm of imagination—there is only adjustment because nothing there is final. To me, imagination is a playground for my soul, my spirit or life force—it is a space that sustains me as a human being. I found imagination to be essential in searching for pathways that would feel right. This is because in the absence of ideal conditions I needed to first imagine my solutions. Second, it would help in stimulating motivation to continue moving forward despite difficulties. Third— and this is perhaps most relevant in connection to self-direction—this enabled me to follow my own curiosities. From the start, I could experience the projects as my own, even when working to some externally set targets. I was actively searching for ways where the targets would fit with my outcome, rather than the other way around.
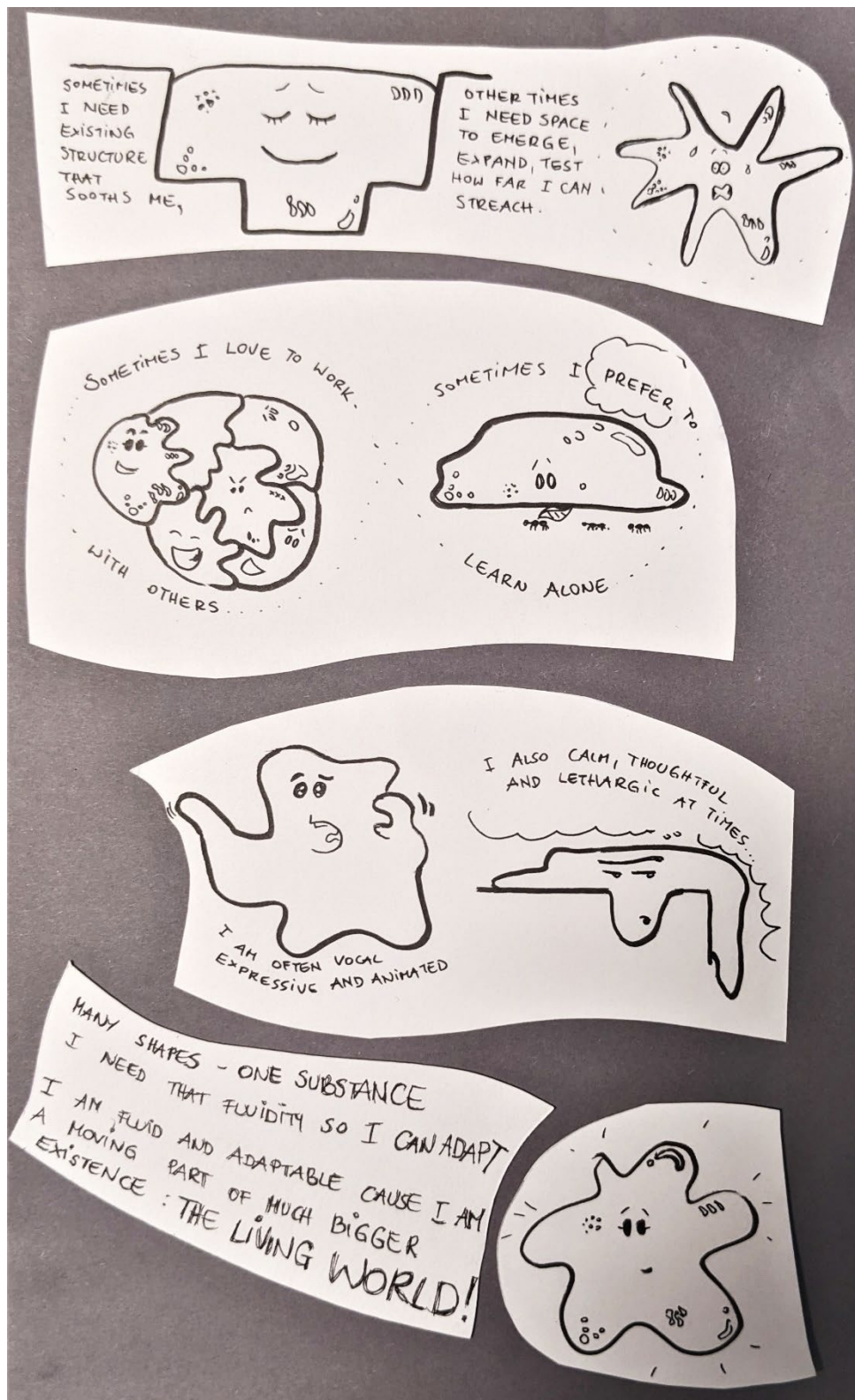
Figure 18 Imagining the freedom to be.

Furthermore, today, I am convinced that I would achieve 'better' formal results/grades if I worked step by step to the set expectations, which I learned how to do in my teacher training course; but it was also a teacher training course where I started becoming a teacher I did not like. Also, although my grades might have been higher, I do not think I would have continued with education if it was not intrinsically rewarding. That realisation has only contributed to the essential nature of imagination and curiosity in following my own pathway, staying motivated and ultimately becoming useful.

I agree with Ada Lovelace that imagination is an act of discovering the less apparent connections and combining what has been discovered or learned in a new way (Lovelace, 1843). In that explanation, imagination and creativity are inseparable: an act of creation is always an act of combining what is available to us. Throughout most of my educational experiences, I have learned that the understanding of creativity is being increasingly flattened, where it has been ripped away from our human nature and reserved for the arts and 'creative industries'. Every time I hear a human being voicing to me that they are not very creative, it saddens and angers me. It is my intention to keep challenging the concept of what it means to be creative as phenomenon—and restore it within our understanding of the whole person.

6.8 Concluding notes

The themes 'becoming nothing' and 'becoming useful' presented as on opposite sides of the 'becoming spectrum' and one they both seemed to be

connected to experiencing a source of threat within myself. Here, that threat to psychological safety can be viewed as caused by or causing the potential incongruence. The awareness of the presence of various degrees of threat or risk in context of learning seemed to be stretched across all of the themes and subthemes. However, there were significant differences in how it was symbolised and processed in connection to authenticity. The findings suggest that the strive towards authenticity had a mediating effect on experiential safety; meaning that when there was an active choice to follow own values or/end motivations the perceived threat was often symbolised as a potential learning or growing opportunity, a risk worth taking. Whereas, when the choices are experienced as imposed, the threats feed the fear that inhibits the flow of actualising and formative tendencies.

The findings seem relevant since safety is directly linked to well-being and optimal functioning (Maslow, 1943). What this means in the context of education is that the capacity for learning enables the enhancement, but for the energy and motivational force to be channelled, one must first feel safe enough. Meaningful learning also leads to change, and change is experienced as risky in and of itself because it temporarily destabilises the self-structure or subjective reality (Kriz, 2008; Kriz, 2013). If the condition of experiential safety is not met, then the energy is channelled into the maintenance of what is, which involves the self-preservation or preservation of the systems one is a part of.

The finding of this study can also be viewed through the self-determination theory where intrinsic motivation is sustained by meeting the basic psychological needs for relatedness, competency and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These psychological needs can all be viewed as in reciprocal relationship with experiencing psychological safety; safe enough to relate, safe enough to make own choices and accept the responsibility.

Creating safe learning environments is often connected to external conditions that need to be present. Flesner & VonDeLipe (2019) began unpacking what 'safe space' means in context of education, what is it we need to be 'safe from' and 'safe to' exploring the potential use of conflict and presence of judgment as learning opportunities. which again suggests that while we keep standardising and tightening policies of professional conduct, the safety, especially the experiential one, is not guaranteed. Boostrom (1998) argued that 'safe spaces' can actually inhibit learning processes as while they make room for sharing own views as the end goal, they avoid challenges and potential conflicts that are needed for growth and change. Cornelious-White (2020) also while acknowledging concerns over harmful or dangerous teacher–student relationships in which various abuses of power occur, he also provided evidence that it is the positive, authentic relationship where the safety needed for learning can become the reality.

The findings of this study while acknowledging the external influences, focused on the internal organisation of the self-concept that can inhibit or

facilitate experiential safety. This approach does not take away the power of keeping oneself safe from the individual, by externally deciding what is safe enough. Authenticity in this context facilitates learning how to take responsibility for own safety and for co-creating safe learning environments.

CHAPTER 7

'Sucking results out of children' reflective

lifeworld case study of a primary school teacher

striving for authenticity

7 Reflective Lifeworld Case Study

7.1 The purpose of this study

The purposes my research was to develop a better understanding of teacher's

perceptions of the contextual influences that impact on their ability to follow their own

values, beliefs and directions. Interviewing a white British female teacher was both

an advantage and a disadvantage; UK teaching force consists of 88% of white

British female teachers so while the results from one case study cannot be

generalised, they might capture some of the shared reality as well as being relatable.

At the same time, having a teacher from different culture, ethnicity, gender might

have generated a sharper focus on the tensions between systemic and individual

values when striving towards authenticity.

To understand the contextual influences that might either facilitate or inhibit

the possibility of becoming an authentic teacher, my interest was twofold; first, I

needed to open the space for a teacher to identify those values and beliefs and then

explore how they interact with pedagogies prescribed in a State funded primary school setting. I choose the non-directive interviewing style as a means of establishing trust and reducing the imbalance of power. The methodological choice of RLR was informed by the inquisition into the experiencing of the participant to better understand the phenomena of authenticity in the given context. The researcher's intention was also to offer an alternative view on authenticity by means of interpreting the experiences and perceptions disclosed by one primary school teacher using person centred theory.

The publication is extracted from this PhD dissertation.

• As the published works thesis includes copies or offprints of journal articles, book chapters etc. which already have page numbers, the pages of the publications themselves will not be included in the pagination sequence of the dissertation.

• The font Calibri (Body) in this manuscript was set to differentiate itself from the dissertation.

• The tables, figures and page numbers are re-labelled and re-numbered for the systematic presentation in this PhD dissertation. Please refer to the published journal paper for the citations.

• The reference of this manuscript is collected in References (p.117).

• The word count of the manuscript is not included in the PhD dissertation.

(Please find the published version in Appendix)

'SUCKING RESULTS OUT OF CHILDREN' REFLECTIVE LIFEWORLD CASE STUDY OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER STRIVING FOR AUTHENTICITY

Urszula Plust, Stephen Joseph & David Murphy

Figure 19. Sucking results out of children.

ABSTRACT: This qualitative study presents an analysis of the experiences of a teacher who had recently left working in an England state funded primary school. Using reflective lifeworld methodology, this study explored the teacher's struggle to be authentic in the context of state funded education. Three prominent themes were identified as: 1) enhancement of every learner; 2) systemic oppression; and 3) tensions in being a teacher. The study concludes that being authentic as a teacher was experienced as being incompatible with the current educational system.

Keywords: teachers, authenticity, systemic oppression, primary schools, case study

7.2 INTRODUCTION

The issues concerning teachers' retention are ongoing and spread worldwide (See et al., 2020; Shanks et al., 2020). The challenges in retaining teachers can vary in nature depending on the contextual factors; some examples include lack of adequate preparation and support for new teachers (den Brok et al., 2017), poor working conditions (Bettini and Park, 2021), leadership behaviour (Semarco and Cho, 2018), racial discrimination (Frank et al., 2021), and effects on well-being (Liu, 2020). High teacher turnover is particularly a problem in England.

Findings from Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 suggest that teachers in England remain among the least satisfied with their job among all the OECD countries (OECD, 2020) with 30% of teachers leaving withing the first 5 years (House of Commons, 2019). Despite the government strategies aimed at promoting the teaching profession (Department for Education, 2019), concern over teachers' retention remains (House of Commons, 2019; House of Commons Library, 2021). Existing research finds a variety of reasons for teachers' decision to leave, most notably concerns over workload and its impact on work/life balance, accountability (House of Commons Library, 2021), and performativity culture (Perryman and Calvert, 2020). Therefore, teachers' retention must be viewed in the context of these

However, it is not simply that there are these external demands on teachers that is the problem, but that these external demands may be incongruent with the values of many teachers. The Department for Education (2013) teacher standards include the expectation for teachers to 'make the education of their pupils their first concern' and to 'act with honesty and integrity' while remaining self-critical, they also must always 'act within the statutory framework which set out their professional duties and responsibilities'. However, this can lead to impossible to resolve contradictions if teachers' values differ from those that underpin the statutory framework driven by principles of standardised (e.g. Ball, 2003, 2018) and meritocratic education (Owens and de St Croix, 2020). As teachers' accountability to externally set targets continues to expand, their role aligns itself with Michael Gove's

craftsman that delivers 'best possible instruction' (Gove, 2010) rather than a pedagogue that strives towards education for human flourishing discussed by Gunawardena et al. (2020).

What we are proposing is the possibility that for some teachers the lived experience of being a teacher is one of inauthenticity which can negatively impact their job satisfaction. The psychological literature asserts that people strive for authenticity, to be able to live in ways that feel joined up, consistent, congruent, and where dissonance or incongruence exists, a state of tension arises (Festinger, 1957; Rogers, 1959, Joseph, 2016). Van Den Bosch and Taris (2014) found that authenticity at work was positively related to job satisfaction in 646 participants. This seems relevant when considering issues around teachers' retention.

Authenticity in teachers is a topic that has long interested scholars and practitioners in humanistic education (e.g., Moustakas, 1966; Rogers, 1969), and it has more recently become a topic for research by contemporary educationalists. Findings from a number of studies show that when teachers do not have the freedom to restructure the pedagogy in a way that is congruent with their values, they feel limited in being able to 'be themselves' and in providing what they see as meaningful learning (Akoury, 2013; Carusetta and Cranton, 2005; Cranton and Carusetta, 2004; Rabin, 2013). When this happens, it can be seen as a loss of integrity as a teacher (Santoro and Morehouse, 2011). Moustakas's (1996) findings also suggest that teachers who are struggling within themselves to be authentic will

also fail to create opportunities for growth, development, and creativity in their pupils.

While the empirical studies to date did not explore the explicit connections between teachers' authenticity and retention, Akoury (2013) reported a possible link between teacher's inauthenticity and burnout. What existing findings offer is the insight into the external conditions that can inhibit becoming an authentic teacher; these include competitiveness (Akoury, 2013; Carusetta and Cranton, 2005; Rabin, 2013), punitive mechanisms (Rabin, 2013, Rappel, 2015), discriminative (Rappel,), controlling and rigid systems (Carusetta and Cranton, 2005; Cranton, 2010; Cranton and Carusetta, 2004; Rappel). These are important issues to consider in the context of a decline in the overall quality of education in United Kingdom (Childs and Menter, 2013).

The purpose of this research was to develop a more nuanced understanding of a teacher's decisions to leave the profession. Specifically, we were interested in whether perceptions of the contextual influences on them were experienced as conflicting with their own values and beliefs, and whether this was perceived as influencing their decision to leave teaching. There were two primary interests; firstly, to open the space for a teacher to identify those values and beliefs and, secondly, to explore how they interact with pedagogies prescribed in a state-funded primary school setting.

7.3 METHOD

7.3.1 Study Participant

This study presents and interprets the experiences and views of a primary school teacher six months after leaving the teaching profession. She had experience in teaching students aged 7 − 11 years. This study follows from a larger interview study on teachers' wellbeing, where all of the participant were recruited through a snowball sampling method. While this larger study was not directly concerned with the topic of authenticity, it emerged as a topic of possible interest in the discussion that ensued when the lead researcher was presenting the findings of the study at a debriefing session to the participants. This led us to think the topic of authenticity in teachers worthy of further deeper exploration. In the same debriefing session, it was the participants that suggested talking to a teacher from their school that had recently left the profession. This prompted us to approach that teacher and following an initial conversation we chose that teacher for this more fine-grained study.

The participant had worked in a small population state-funded faith primary school in a rural area of England. The school was recognised as Outstanding in the OFSTED reports and students were primarily of British heritage with very few children from minority groups. The socio-economic status of parents living in the area was higher than national average. The school is part of a multiacademy trust. As

this a small school based in a tight community providing any more information about the teacher could potentially compromise her anonymity.

Context: primary Schooling in England In the recent years, English primary schools have been striving towards forming a more coherent system in response to concerns over significant variations in quality of the educational provisions often referred to as 'postcode lottery' where the quality of education depends on location (Ball, 2018). In 2016, Department for Education released Educational Excellence Everywhere which introduced the plans for multi academy trusts (MAT's), where struggling or failing schools can be integrated into academy trusts with outstanding schools and create a self-improving system. MAT's have been presented as promoting the agency of the schools because the academies were no longer led by local authorities. However, the new found independence of the schools must be viewed in light of standardised curriculum and regulating body of Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) that decides on the quality ratings of the schools. In addition, schools are also subjected to the competition driven by the 'regime of national and local league tables based on test and examination performance' (Ball, 2018, p. 14). This involves standardised assessment tests (SAT) that take place in year 2 (age7) and year 6 (age 11) and their outcomes serve as evidence of the quality of education at the schools. In turn, this leads to prioritisation of subjects included in the lead tables and unnecessary testing pressures on children. It also supports practices of grouping children based on their 'ability' which contributes to hierarchical structures and segregation within the classrooms. Teachers working in the academy schools in England, while not legally

required, are expected to hold a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and maintain

Teachers' Standards as outlined by government (Department for Education, 2013).

7.3.2 Ethical Issues

Prior to conducting the research, ethical approval was gained from the

University Ethics Committee. The informed consent from the participant was

obtained prior to conducting the interview. The consent covered the voice recording

of the interview as well as publication of data in the form of text and images

representing findings in research journals and online research orientated

environments. The participant was assured that all the personal information would

be kept confidential and any revealing data anonymised.

7.3.3 Procedure

The interview began with the interviewer's opening question 'how did you

experience your own values and the things that you believe in about education, how

they fit with those of the school you had worked at, and if you felt that as a teacher,

you could be true to yourself?' From that point, the interviewer used reflective

listening to encourage the participant's exploration of her experiences as a teacher.

We choose the non-directive interviewing style described by Rogers (1945) to ensure

that we were soliciting the participant's own views, without influencing the content

of her answers, and to help her probe more deeply into her own understanding of

her experiences. In this way, it was our intention to remain open to the emerging data rather than to be contained by our pre-existing understandings (Dahlberg et al., 2008). The interview was 80 minutes long to allow enough time for the participant to explore her thoughts and experiences at a greater depth.

The intention was also to offer a safe atmosphere where the participant exercises freedom in exploring her lifeworld. This is important in phenomenological research in which we wish to understand not only the individual but also the social systems within which they function (Dahlberg, 2006). In this case study, it means discovering the participant's inner world, her motivations, values and her interpretations of the external world of the educational system and how she chooses to interact with it. Arriving at a greater understanding of the experiences that occur in this 'inbetweenness' reveals the how of the becoming which seems to be reflected in Dahlberg and Dahlberg (, p. 5) where phenomenology is 'concerned with unearthing the structures or conditions of possibility that constitutes the world as we know it'. This happens by contrasting individual experiences in the system with theoretical possibilities of the system as it is presented to us.

The methodology that offered this was reflective lifeworld research where the researchers are comfortable with 'the continuous negotiation between the stance of immediate immersion in experience and the distance of objectivity' (Dahlberg and Drew, 1997, p. 31). Moving towards a greater understanding of lived experience is anchored in the concept of phenomenological intentionality; where the researcher begins from the preposition that our being in the world is intentional

(Dahlberg et al., 2008). In other words that we do/act/behave in certain ways for a reason and understanding of those motivations can offer a more holistic view of occurring phenomena.

7.3.4 Data Analysis

After transcribing and a thorough reading of the recorded interview transcript the lead researcher began systematic coding and analysis of the data using MAXQDA2018. MAXQDA2018 is well suited for embracing the creative aspects of reflective lifeworld research as it offers a variety of tools including word clouds, mind maps on top of traditional coding functions, that can be helpful in visualising and re-organising the data. This process was conducted under supervision of the second and third authors. First, identification of key segments of data was completed, next theoretical and analytical memos were created, and finally these were assigned with codes.

The analytical process involved repetitive re-reading of the interview transcript identifying and reviewing codes guided by search for the participant's values, experiential claims and meaning making processes. Once completed the functions of creative coding to group and organise subthemes were followed by code mapping to visualise the relationships between most occurring codes and themes. Creative coding in MAXQDA supports the process of generating, sorting and organising codes into meaningful groups, it is a virtual space where parent codes can

be created, codes can be renamed, assigned colours and ordered in logical sequences (MAXQDA, 2020) The penultimate stage involved the three researchers completing an audit of existing themes and interpretations to challenge the reflexive process of the lead researcher by bringing forth the perceived similarities between the existing themes. This resulted in reducing the number of themes by grouping them together into final subthemes that were then organised into prominent themes. Those themes aim to reflect the essential meanings behind the experiences described by the participant (Dahlberg and Dahlberg). The final stage of the analysis culminated in a written commentary on the final themes in the form of this paper and their representative data extracts.

7.4 RESULTS

Three prominent themes and a number of corresponding subthemes were identified when searching to identify values and beliefs held by the participant and explore how they interacted with pedagogies embedded in the primary school she has worked at. The first theme, 'Enhancement of every learner', represents the teacher's conviction that staying true to the values encapsulated in the subthemes of 'freedom', 'excitement' and 'trusting' is necessary for the emergence of the environment where every child in the classroom can flourish. The second theme, 'Systemic oppression', describes the teacher's perception of the school's environment and her understanding of its impact on herself as a teacher as well as her students, and encapsulates four interrelated subthemes, 'control' that leads to 'pressures' 'discrimination', and 'dependency'. The third theme, 'Tensions in being a

teacher', reflects the responses of the teacher to the 'contradictions' of the educational system she was part of, her 'awareness' of her part in the system, and her own feelings of 'distress' and 'powerlessness'.

While presented as separate, these themes were represented through tightly interlinked statements experienced by the study participant. The narrative for each theme and the subthemes are shown below and supported by interview extracts (see Table 1).

7.4.1 Enhancement of Every Learner

The participant talked about how she saw the children in her classroom as individual learners with potential for growth and development. It appeared that she possessed a strong sense of justice and her idea of a 'great lesson' is where 'everyone can be learning in their own way' regardless of their starting point. As she explored her discomfort with some of the expectations she felt were experienced by children, she unravelled a cluster of her own values that she believed where important for the growth and development of learners.

Table 9. Themes and subthemes in RLR case study.

Enhancement of every learner	• Freedom
	• Trusting
	• Excitement
Systemic opression	• Control
	• Pressure
	• Dependency

	• Discrimination
Tensions in being a teacher	• Contradiction
	• Awareness
	• Distress
	• Powerlessness

Freedom

The subject of freedom was threaded throughout the interview, from the teacher striving to 'give everyone the freedom to be where they were', to provide a 'relaxed environment' where children can 'take responsibility for their own learning', to, recognising that it was also important that as a teacher she had her own need to 'be given more freedom' in order to be able to provide it for others.

> *[00:05:23] I definitely wanted to feel that I was to be given more freedom to just let those that need to spend more time on something that were drawn to it because often they are drawn to what they need to spend time on you know.*

Excitement

Freedom was seen as important because of how it allowed children to explore what they were drawn to, and in recognising the intrinsic motivation of her students she connected that with how learning then becomes exciting:

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[00:54:54] If you think we want an ideal world we want people to be working out what excites them. What … you know … when they're experiencing learning in that way some things are more exciting than others.

'Working out what excites them' enables the learner to tap into their intrinsic motivation for learning. She shared her observation that there are 'children that are flying' because they find it rewarding, 'they can grasp it' and they learn that 'they can do even better'. She used words like excitement, love, self-fulfilment to describe their experiences.

Trusting

In offering what she felt as freedom, it was underpinned by the sense that she could trust her children to make the best use of their freedom:

[00:14:35] I would want to let children feel … I'd like to provide them with a relaxed environment to learn where they weren't feeling a sense of come on come on you got to move on, we got to move on. I definitely trust that they would get where they needed to get.

She recalled a few situations where children were still engaged in the activity when it was time to move to the next, and for her that seemed more appropriate than pushing them to a new activity. Her reaction seemed to be summarised in this statement: 'if a child just wants to keep on practicing the same thing, I trust that

they're doing that for some reason'. It was important for children to experience themselves as trusted by their teacher:

> *[00:43:49] The key is in the relationships you form with those children. And if you can form you know a really trusting relationship where they feel properly valued as people and if you are forming that relationship you wouldn't be forcing them to do things in their hour of a lesson that they couldn't access happily.*

In this extract she made a connection between trusting relationships and feeling 'properly valued', going on to discuss tensions between being a trustworthy teacher and having a role of an enforcer that betrays that trust.

7.4.2 Systemic Oppression

When talking about the school system itself, however, words like 'forcing', 'crushing', and 'disappointing' were used. The theme of 'Systemic oppression' encapsulates how the 'control' inhibits the freedom of both teacher and students, creating 'pressures', 'dependency' and 'discrimination'.

Control

Practices embedded into the school system were experienced by the teacher as restrictive, 'if you were letting children find their own way you wouldn't be following a study plan'. This is further emphasised in her reflection:

[00:28:18] I really do wonder how children within a system that is so intense and so rigid and so structured, what they're learning about … what works for them. How are they learning what works for them?

She used the analogy of 'sucking out the results out of children' (illustration) to capture her experience of the instrumental role of assessment. In her understanding, the controlling mechanisms integral to the school system did not acknowledge learners as trustworthy:

[00:51:57] That we don't need we shouldn't be forcing them off things that I suppose that comes out to me that I do trust them. Hmm. You know I do think that everyone is … you know children are trustworthy. If you gave them that trust they would respond really well to it, but I don't think schools do. I just think we're taking it all away from them.

As a teacher she recognised herself as an unwilling enforcer, she acknowledged that those control mechanisms go far beyond the individual school system:

[00:33:36] And it you know you could have the most supportive Head in the world, but they will be judged according to what the system that's been put in place by people way above them. So, with the best will in the world you don't have that flexibility.

Pressure

Being judged, evaluated, measured and compared in the context of standardised assessment with externally determined and narrow educational goals clearly conflicted with her values as a teacher. An analogy of 'toxic' captures the intensity of her negative experience within the system as a member of the teachers' collective:

[00:36:23] I mean it's some really, really toxic kind of system. I think it's toxic because I think you've got teachers doing … well doing it in ways they don't want to do it because they're feeling the pressure and the stress and children are feeling pressured and stressed.

Such 'toxicity' contaminates the intrinsic motivation of the teacher; she asserts that she cannot stay true to what her experiences tell her is in the best interest of children. The accompanying animated body language and frustrated tap on the table further emphasised the points she made about the rapidity of introducing new information where she is 'trying to get as many to learn as much as they can in the hour'. This is experienced as stressful, not only for her but she is also 'very aware that for children it must feel, I can only imagine, it must feel so

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pressured', and lead to 'knocked confidence' 'knocked self-esteem' and was experienced by her as 'painful to watch'.

Dependency

The teacher recognised that to be considered good or worthy enough the children must meet the expectations and educational goals set for them, thus creating not trust in themselves but rather a 'dependency' (illustration):

[00:15:08] I just think that their experiences within the system are so shaping that if you manage to provide something more facilitative they had been conditioned into this way of learning, you know. Where I think it will take time almost to let them find their own way again to trust themselves. I don't think that they trust themselves. I think that they are waiting to be told, you know, you need to do this you need to learn that, you need to ... This is the way you learn. Rather than being allowed to trust themselves that they'll get there.

Conditioning and trust are polarised, where the fragmented, standardised practices that occupy every moment of being in the school inhibit the children's ability to trust a process of becoming as learners. This is related to her discomfort of being pressured to comply to function as an 'enforcer' of the system that she does not agree with.

Discrimination

The teacher recognises a number of, in her perception, unfair practices within the school system. Some are more implicit, such as the judgemental and fragmented ways she is being assessed as a teacher. Others are explicit, where 'it feels very wrong' to her to have a hierarchical system where the learners in the top tiers 'know they are all superior'. It is this discriminative side effect of the system that promotes excellence and outstanding results at the cost of letting down those that are 'struggling' with potentially 'every kind of problem' in and out of school that has been captured here:

> *[00:19:17] Obviously there are children within that group of children that that are flying that are finding it rewarding, they are first in the class. They're excited about what they're going to be learning. They love it. That it's very self-fulfilling because they can grasp it and they practice, and they can do even better. That's fine. But it's the children that that doesn't happen for and then they're the ones that were coming in last because it didn't give them that sense of fulfilment.*

She recognises that as the 'education system has children for so long it could have such a positive impact' but her experiences suggest it is more of a matter of 'luck' rather than consistent outcome. She is very clear that the rigidity and tight structure and expectations of the curricular are 'pushing it on to children that haven't got that' and prevents her from creating the environment where all children can experience learning as rewarding and fulfil their potential. Another form of

discriminative tendency within the system came from her passionate critique of explicit elevation of some subjects that align with the political and economic agenda at the cost of removing others:

[00:30:49] What I find really sad is that through primary school you're gearing towards SATs to the point where subjects are just wiped off the board. You know there's no P.E. or there's no art or there's no music or ... you know. And for what? These three subjects that again should not be defining children they are part of education and I find that really sad because again it's just seeing goals that aren't about educating our society really.

She identifies the problem as 'those politicians who are deciding on what our education looks like are not responding to the research or evidence' adding with resignation that 'they are not listening'. This again, contributes to her perception of injustice as such instrumental approaches place some learners at a disadvantage as well as disregard the individuality and variety of the interests and passions that children possess.

7.4.3 Tensions in Being a Teacher

This final theme captures the teacher's lived responses and struggles with what she experienced as tensions in the system that she perceived as oppressive in the ways described above.

Contradiction

The teacher described the response of the system to issues in the field of education as 'bizarre' which captured the perceived contradictions between educational research findings, policy and actual practice where:

[00:27:46] It's almost responding in the opposite way. So, where there is evidence that our children perhaps aren't doing as well as they'd want to do. They're kind of making it more rigid. Which I find bizarre. So … you know what we want to be doing is creating independent thinkers and problem solvers and you know enthusiastic learners and what we're doing is almost crushing that from a young age.

This dissonance between what she believes to be good for the child; a holistic education that is not just about the results but learning as a rewarding and self-directed process and, her perceived reality of schooling is apparent in her question:

[01:09:42] How can anyone be looking at a system like that and saying that sounds good for the child? You just wouldn't, would you … You would think somebody was talking nonsense.

The notion of acting in the best interest in her learners outlined in teacher standards is challenged here – she does not believe that the systemic policy is

actually good for children. Those contradictions between the seeming purpose of education as pathway to empowerment and independence and the systemic structures that foster compliance and dependency, having 'crushing' effects on those within the system, and are also reflected in the next subtheme of 'awareness' as she understands that as a teacher she was part of that system.

Awareness

This subtheme captured the drive of the teacher towards becoming more self-aware, she recognised her own values and beliefs, her own motivations and examined them in light of the expectations and demands that were placed upon her as a teacher. At the beginning of the interview the teacher recalled that she was 'very aware' that some children were having low levels of self-confidence as they were not secure in the basics or had gaps in knowledge, but she didn't have time to accommodate for their needs:

> *[00:03:12] So I felt as though I was letting down children. I was, I was almost part of a system that was discouraging those that, that there was no … I don't know how to say this, I don't think that the children needed to struggle if they had time to get key basic concepts.*

Her awareness included her understanding of herself as a vehicle that had helped carry forward what she perceived as systemic oppression, and she saw how

this contributed to the children's sense of feeling lost and unworthy, and how she

felt that as a teacher she detracted from learning as a fulfilling experience:

[00:06:05] And they are going 'well I was just beginning … ' (she role-plays

herself with an authoritative voice:) 'Oh no put that away. Turn the page.

Next page we are on subtraction!' They are just beginning to understand

subtraction and you start multiplication and there's no room for them to

enjoy that sense of fulfilment. 'I'm getting it I'm getting it' you know … and I

felt that so often.

This exemplifies being aware of how her actions impact on her learners even

if she does not perceive it as positive. Earlier in the interview she stated: 'I always try

to give everyone the freedom' and the above extract is saturated with a sense of

hopelessness that contradicts that. It is her willingness to remain open that seems to

enable her to expose such incongruences that are at the root of her discomfort or

'distress'.

Distress

The use of expressions such as 'painful', 'frustrating', 'crushing', 'sad' when

recalling experiences from her pedagogical practice that are fused into a subtheme

of distress. It is also an absence of the antonyms of those expressions and her

reflection on 'poor teachers' where she accentuates on the absolute: 'certainly not

something I would ever want to do fulltime or for my life'. The teacher's distress

manifested in a number of experiential claims when discussing 'pressures', 'control' or 'discriminative' tendencies. Perhaps it is just as important that she did not voice complaints about the long hours, difficulties in work-life balance, wages, teacher status or career progression when unfolding her narrative. She committed the time she had during this interview to talk about the negative impact of contemporary school systems on children and perceived injustice incongruent with her own intrinsic valuing:

> *[00:06:31] It was the ones struggling that for me it was most painful to see really because I think it knocked confidence it knocked self-esteem. Feelings of self-worth. Yeah. It wasn't a nice feeling.*

The prescriptive structure of the curriculum itself restricted her own freedom to adapt to the needs of her pupils:

> *[00:51:57] Some of the hardest bits … when one little girl in particular she just wants to keep doing this same thing and I felt like I couldn't let her even though she was feeling such satisfaction because she could do it. And you know, why would we not be letting her you know?*

There seemed to be a frustration and powerlessness in her tone of voice when she asked why she cannot let the little girl follow her own direction. This was related to her perception of not being trusted as teacher, where she had to constantly prove her worth in light of externally set expectations.

Powerlessness

It is significant that she opened and closed the interview with the acknowledgement of experiencing powerlessness. Her very first words referred to the 'impossibility' of staying true to herself in the context of working in the school:

[00:00:56] No. I didn't feel that. I don't feel that the education system allows me to feel congruent really in what I believe what I think is best for children and the job of being a teacher. I think there were ways which I tried I kept trying within the constraints to stay close to what I believed but it isn't actually possible.

In her understanding, being a teacher did not permit her to act congruently with what she believed to be the natural tendency towards enhancement of every learner/child. Her final reflection expands on what powerlessness meant to her:

[01:11:22] Powerlessness. yeah. Massively and I think that is the not being trusted, it's not being given the opportunities to experience learning in a really positive fulfilling way. That is that powerlessness.

She seemed to connect the powerlessness to distrust stating that she is 'not sure there is much trust in teachers anymore' which emphasised the issue of distrust that strips teachers of their agency. The interview data suggested that she held the

systemic structures at least partially responsible for inhibiting authenticity of both teachers and learners.

7.4.4 DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of a teacher in context of state-funded education. Reflective lifeworld was a good fit to this research concern as just as studying the society can reveal new insights about the individuals that function within it, studying the individual can support a deeper understanding of the structures of social organisations, in this case, schooling. This case study reveals how the systemic structures can play a role in desensitizing a teacher to the educational needs of children as a way of surviving in the system.

The teacher reported being held accountable for actions that go against her own valuing, forcing her to engage in pedagogies that do not align with her understanding of what is best for the children, but are then symbolised by her and integrated into her self-concept as a form of betrayal of herself and her learners. These experiences of the teacher are the signs of inauthenticity described by Moustakas (1966), where the teacher betrays the trust of the learners by pressurising them to follow teacher's direction rather than learn to trust themselves. It can also be seen as a loss of her integrity as a teacher, a loss that she was not willing to accept. The findings of our study could be considered within the category

of 'principled leavers' as proposed by Santoro and Morehouse (2011) where the decision to leave occurs on moral or ethical grounds. It is our understanding that it is the teacher's unwillingness to accept such state of the matters while experiencing powerlessness to challenge it, that resulted in her decision to leave the profession, and which we have tried to conceptualise as a way to resolve the lived tensions of a felt inauthenticity.

Following from the above, the findings suggest that the teacher did not have the freedom required for her to 'be herself'; to learn from and restructure her pedagogy in a way that is congruent with her values. As such, the case study has illustrated the perceived incompatibility of the explicit and implicit values that underpin standardised curriculum and results-driven pedagogies encapsulated in the teacher's experiential statement of 'sucking results out of children' and her own valuing of what constitutes constructive and meaningful learning. These findings can be viewed in light of educational reforms where values and beliefs about learning align with maximising performance, productivity and resulting in externally set measurable outcomes, and the neoliberal values of individualism that seem to saturate British education currently (see, Amsler, 2011; Ball, 2003, 2018).

The existing state-funded education system appears to promote the principles of cognitive, fact-based, outcome-orientated education, reflecting the values of economist approach focussed on efficiency, effectiveness and achievement of set aims at a 'reasonable cost' (Barrett et al., 2006). In such a system, motivation is thought to be promoted through the implementation of mechanisms of control in

the form of rewards (eg. praise, grades) and punishments (eg. disappointment, failure) and amplified by the principles of individual accountability typical in systems that are based on notions of neoliberal individualism and entrepreneurial self-concept (Ball, 2003). This appears to happen at the expense of more meaningful learning, aligned with values in which a person learns how to learn, build constructive relationships with others and to grow as a person (Barrett et al., 2006). Tellingly, the majority of studies on teachers' authenticity discusses a decrease in teachers' agency and in their opportunities to develop trusting, caring and genuine relationship in the context of educational reforms and control, authority and hierarchies in education (Plust et al., 2021).

As such, the exploration of teachers' authenticity cannot be separated from the context of 'capitalist reality' and its impact on educational systems that can fragment pedagogies and stifle human flourishing (Amsler, 2011; Akoury, 2013; Arthur et al., 2020; Gunawardena et al., 2020). Finally, we acknowledge the limitations in generalizability of a single case study, and while the reflective nature of lifeworld research strives to reduce the 'confirmation bias' it remains our interpretation of data that emerged. Reflective lifeworld research methodology by design remains open to interpretations and invites the reader to 'continue beyond the researchers' interpretations' (Dahlberg et al., 2008). We think that this study provides important new insights into teachers' experiences and how the concept of authenticity might help to understand teachers' the problem of retention within the profession, in the context of the wider social, political, and economic contexts of their role.

CHAPTER 8

8 AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART 2

8.1 Introduction

In the first part of the autoethnography, I was exploring what I have learned about myself or, perhaps more importantly, how I learned what I can term 'myself', recognising the self-knowledge and values that came from my experiences (organismic valuing) and the external evaluations of me by others and their introjected values. The findings of the first part of the study suggest that authenticity had a mediating effect on the experiential safety needed to engage with meaningful learning and optimal functioning. This was considered in the context of safe learning environments in education, and how taking responsibility for own experiential safety is inhibited by external control.

The second part of the study explores the experiences of teacher authenticity in context of relationships; both from the perspective of a teacher and a learner. While the primary focus here is on the social conditions they are also contextualised in the existing structures of educational systems in

attempt to deepen the understanding of external forces that shape educational environments.

8.2 Betrayal

Education is known to be a 'public good', but it is unclear how to make sense of experiences that are far from positive; it is a common knowledge that educators put their learners and their learners' interests first, but what do we do with the experiences that contradict this common knowledge? I continue being uncomfortable with using the concept of betrayal in the context of education, which can be defined as an action that can 'expose to danger' (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). I am conscious that a lot of effort goes into creating safe learning environments. I am also aware of various forms of social injustice that cannot be weeded out with regulations and policies alone; it needs 'intentional critical consciousness' (Plust et al, 2021a) or in other words an intention to really understand.

The current study explores the interpersonal dimensions of safety and its relevance to 'learning to learn' in meaningful ways (McCombs, 2001). Here, betrayal applies to a 'relational reality' where a person takes the risk to trust another person and where that trust is broken, whether it is intentional or not. Betrayal is also connected to the concept of power in the relationship, where taking away the personal power from another person can be viewed as an act of betrayal. Furthermore, exercising power over another, while

threatening their self-structure, passing judgements and giving hurtful evaluations will be also looked at as a form of betrayal. Rogers (1951) explains that when the experience threatens the self-structure, the person works even harder to maintain it to feel safe. This shuts us down from experiencing ourselves and receiving others, contributing to the rigidity of the self-concept. That rigidity in the way of being is unhelpful in the context of learning, and it can be linked to the idea of a fixed mindset, where the capacity to learn is seen as finite and intelligence is understood as static (Dweck, 2006). Here, the 'exposing to danger' of one's self-concept applies to experiences in relationship with another person, but to expand this understanding, it also unravels the instances of self-betrayal and how that might impact relationships with others.

Self-betrayal can take many forms; it can be intentional or not, yet available to awareness, nonetheless hurtful and destructive. Its understanding can be straightforward, like in the case of knowingly exposing oneself to a situation one might be hurt so as to have some other needs met, like when you distort your own perceptions of an experience as a way of self-concept protection (Sheridan et al., 2015). In both cases, self-betrayal is connected to surrendering personal power in keeping oneself safe and severing the connection with organismic valuing that desensitises the person's experiencing.

Betrayal can be viewed as one of the sources of distress; it can also contribute to or cause a radical incongruence between oneself and

experience, which can be traumatic to the human organism (Joseph, 2015). Although very few of my own experiences in the context of education were traumatic, many have been hurtful and distressing, with some being linked to the traumas I experienced elsewhere. This theme consists of three subthemes: multideception, normalising-dis and indifference, all of which contribute to feeling betrayed or participating in an act of betraying.

8.2.1 Multideception

Multideception captures the complex themes in which various types of deception occur, from being deceived, to self-deception and to the deceiving of others. Self-deception can be understood through person-centred theory as a distortion or denial of experiences that are experienced as threatening to one's self-concept (Rogers, 1959). This goes both ways, for example, in distorting negative experiences as positive to maintain a positive view of oneself or by distorting positive experiences as negative so the negative self-concept can be maintained. Multideception seems to be situated in the relational dimensions, even when considering self-deception, here as it occurs as a result of interaction. The below semipoem moves through the composites of my experiences that progressively contributed to suppressing my own intrinsic knowing (organismic valuing), which eventually stripped me of my personal power:

Sitting in the classrooms with just ears; ears on fire from the teacher's accusations of dishonesty, disrespect, lack of interest, bad behaviour or attitude;

Lips in my pocket dancing with rage.

Sitting in classrooms divided by teachers' understanding of learning capacity, claiming expertise on knowing how far we might grow;

Fighting the urge to decide for myself.

Sitting in classrooms where we were merely the objects to be pushed, fixed, adjusted, manipulated to eventually become something of value;

Resisting the shapes of me that I want to see.

Sitting in the classrooms that discriminated against those who were struggling economically, emotionally, intellectually;

Collective humiliation numbing my core.

Sitting in the classrooms led by 'mechanical men' with their standardised fairness in shape of punitive and rewarding prescriptions;

In fear, I comply, fragments of me wither and die

Sitting in classrooms where only 'correct' answers were heard and taken on a journey towards a deeper understanding;

Swallowing the voices of the unheard

Sitting in the classrooms led by teachers who claimed the stage just for themselves; their voice, their subject, their opinions, their emotions, their truths and beliefs or those alike;

Forced into a game I did not want to play

Sitting in the classroom infested with patriarchal, racist and capitalist ideologies disguised as common knowledge of intellectually intact;

Slowly castrating my courage in the face of injustice …

The self-deception occurred here because my whole organism was

gesturing towards the injustice and betrayal of my own emerging values, and I

suppressed it and submitted parts of me to the pedagogies that anaesthetised and devalued my own experiencing. I was conditioned to be silent when having views that were received as unappreciative of all the hard work teachers put into lessons instead of being encouraged to communicate in a respective and sensitive manner. I had been deceived that compliance was the only way of being in the classroom.

Organismically, it felt unfair for us to be treated as objects talked at, to be disrespected and constantly doubted as if we were untrustworthy as a given. What I mean by organismically here is the full experience of the body and mind, the simultaneous emergence of sadness, hurt and anger felt in the body with tearful eyes, fast-beating heart, flushed face and clenching of the fists, shaky voice accompanied by racing thoughts about here and now, all of which is attached to memories of what happened before.

The 'standardised fairness' in the semi-poem is connected to classroom equality. The concept of 'equality' presented as 'I treat you all the same' can be seen as a betrayal in itself; seeing us as the same felt like saying, 'I don't see any of you at all'. Even as a 10-year-old, I already knew that some of my friends were hungry, some did not sleep much waiting for a mother who did not come back that night, some (including myself) could not find a comfortable way of sitting down with bruised up behinds, some had a terminally ill parent, and some were bullied—the list can go on and on. However, somehow, this was all to be magically erased once we walked through the classroom door to learn about the life of paramecium. That

complex organismic experience mentioned a little earlier did not seem to have a place in the classroom, which contributed to us feeling disempowered and disconnected. Sheffield et al. (2011) takes it further, arguing that pedagogical approaches that dismiss the emotional element of learning needed for self-direction and agency are also inhibiting the development of citizenship needed for democracy.

There is something deeply sad and concerning in the accounts of the teachers that I heard, accounts that do not seem to value the teacher–student relationship in connection to student learning. I heard teachers admitting that they do not really like children/young people but feel personally satisfied by sharing the knowledge about the subject and see their role as constructive in shaping the future generations, a sense of fulfilled duty almost. This understanding can be viewed in light of self-deception, where the teachers maintain a positive self-concept of being the one who makes a difference, without even considering that the difference might not be for the better.

Aspy and Roebuck (1977) have found that there is a direct connection between positive regard for the teacher and the learner's motivation to learn; their findings are consistent with my own childhood experiences, in which my engagement with the subjects I was not that interested in was greatly influenced by my relationships with teachers. Furthermore, in the conversations with my own children, on a few occasions, I questioned a decreased motivation in engaging with subjects they seemed to enjoy before,

in most cases finding that the teacher changed. Therefore, disregarding the evidence by Cornelius-White (2007) of the effectiveness of positive teacher–student relationships on their engagement with learning can be viewed as another form of betrayal.

I also remember some lessons from my own teachers that contributed to the argument that the lack of UPR from the teacher had a negative impact on my engagement with learning:

One of my schoolteachers said: 'I don't get paid to be nice I get paid to get you to learn'. I quickly learned that the only way to get a positive regard from most of the teachers was to excel in their subject; otherwise, you are just a needy nuisance to be fobbed away.

The conditionality of positive regard here can be seen as a manipulative strategy to get the children to learn things they do not find interesting or personally rewarding, and it might seem inevitable because the children must meet standardised learning objectives. The very idea of on-directivity central to person-centred education (Test & Cornelius-White, 2009) is impossible to accommodate when the learning objectives are narrow and predetermined. The intrinsic directivity in standardised learning is reinforced by teachers' accountability for extracting the results from learners (Plust et al., 2021).

A composite of stories shared with me is presented in Illustration A, capturing the power dynamics between a teacher and student that communicates the student's interests clearly but is gently stirred away towards a 'better option' by the teacher. This form of manipulation is often presented as 'in best interest' or 'a positive influence' over young people's choices and can be justified even in pedagogies that value and advocate for the social aspects of learning, as in Vygotsky's (1978) ideas.

Figure 20. 'Your grades matter—not your interests. Oh, ok then'

This betrayal of trust happens here not because the teacher offers their insight, but rather because the teacher, instead of attempting to understand the student and let them weigh in their options, directs them away from the student's choice. Rogers finds the following:

Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is perceived by the student as having relevance for his own purposes. (1969, p. 158)

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The relevance of the subject chosen by the student was never questioned here because at the core of advising against it was the fact the grades were not high enough. Even in this short story, the teacher offers conditional regard: looking warm and friendly (positive regard) when suggesting choosing art and distant and displeased (negative regard) when talking about choosing Design Technology. In doing so, she manipulates and directs the situation towards what she believes is best for student outcomes, contributing to the resignation of a student. It remains unknown what would happen if students were given information rather than advice; they might have reached the same decision or decided to work harder. What is known is that this form of directiveness, especially at the stage of education where the young person is beginning to search for their direction, can inhibit the autonomy of the student (Reeve & Cheon, 2021; Rogers 1969; Rogers et al., 2014).

Illustration B is another composite illustration based on the anecdotal evidence where another form of deception takes place, where respect is presented as a set of behaviours to be followed and is applied as one directional from student to teacher. It might be viewed from the perspective of incongruence between the teacher's own behaviour and the expectations of the behaviours of others, but it is not clear if the teacher believes they are being 'respectful'. Perhaps more transparent here is the way the concept of respect is being constructed; it seems that obedience is 'disguised' as respect. As a result, the experiential aspects of respecting one another can be flattened and superficial. A recent study of N=197 participants explores the

correlation between authenticity and emotional intelligence; the findings

suggest that higher levels of congruence/authenticity are associated with

higher levels of EI (Tohme & Joseph, 2020). This suggests that the deception

captured in Illustration B can negatively impact the development of emotional

intelligence in both the teacher and learner. The teacher teaches about

respect, says that she respects her learners, but then, she acts in a way she

just described as disrespectful towards her learner. What the learner might

have learned is that the teacher is not respectful towards them; if it is a

common experience, this might be accepted and integrated into their existing

self-concept, and it can be experienced as unfair and result in a challenging

response or disengagement.

Figure 21. What does respect mean?

My personal experience stands in opposition to Sheridan et al. (2015),

who argue that self-deception might enhance well-being when in 'covitality'

with other positive character traits because it can help in maintaining a

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positive outlook when life becomes challenging. Although I do see the relevance of self-deception as a survival tactic, including the use of imagination (Jopling, 1996), when, for example, you imagine being respected and distort your reality to match this so that you can create an illusion of experiencing it, I do not see how this might positively impact well-being in any meaningful way other than silencing one's own self and distorting one's subjective reality. It is my understanding that I cannot be fully present if I am not fully open to experiencing both comfort and discomfort; any form of self-deception jeopardises that, hence contributing to incongruence (Tohme & Joseph, 2020).

However, although it felt unfair, soon enough, I began identifying myself as 'naughty' or 'disruptive' based on the evaluations of others, even if to me it initially felt 'honest', 'curious' or 'impatient'. This form of deception seems to be related to the concept of introjected values, values imposed on us until they integrate into our self-concept (Rogers, 1951). Kiriz (2008) argues that introjected values can be seen as a medium of reducing chaos and facilitating the experience of safety; this view seems to fit particularly well with the conditioning behavioural management strategies employed in classrooms. This is because teachers value certain ways of being that are helpful in staying in control of the classroom rather than working out together with their learners to discover and agree on what would make a conducive learning environment for them.

In my understanding of the above examples, I betrayed myself, but perhaps, it is equally important to recognise that by integrating the introjected values of compliance, control, superiority, intellect and hierarchy, I have played an active role in deceiving others. Integrating not in a way I felt superior or drawn to power over others but in that I accepted I am inferior, that I am incapable of directing my own life trajectory in a positive direction, and that all I do is a waste. I am deceiving because, on one level, I might strive to appreciate all individual resources within persons; however, by devaluing my own creativity, imagination, spirit, emotional lifeworld, free-flowing curiosity, and manual skills, by default, I am at risk of devaluing them in others. This has challenged my understanding of the external locus of evaluation because I have been resisting and rejecting the direction others might have wanted to impose on me because the views of others do not seem to directly impact my actions. Because I do what I chose, my locus of evaluation must be intrinsic and organismic. Even here, I allowed myself to be deceived because, now, I can see that my 'rebellion' did not protect me from integrating the values of others and devaluing or invalidating my own experiences; it only further disconnected me from myself and others.

Classrooms concerned only with intellect and competition can be seen as facilitative to the development of 'pathointelligence'. 'Pathointelligence' ('patointeligencja') is a term used by the young Polish rapper MATA when reflecting on the state of schooling, in which achieving intellectual excellence can be entirely disconnected from becoming a decent human being. This seems to corollate with Bonnett's (2010) arguments that state educational

environments can be considered places of unselving, with *'impoverished-if not downright antagonistic'* environments for the learning person. This touches upon another form of deception: where we are told that schooling or education is what is best for us, that it is a common good and that achieving higher intelligence signifies the ability to flourish. It can be seen as another form of reduction or simplification that denies experiences that do not fit that view. It can be said that MATA's 'pathointelligence' represents a state of incongruence of the educational system itself and challenges the common view that 'educated individuals' are more constructive members of society. This also corresponds with Sheffield et al.'s (2011) arguments that disembodied and emotionless education can be considered 'miseducative'; based on my personal experiences, I would go even further, stating that such education can be harmful to the individuals and social groups they form.

An illustrative example is in the pedagogical practices of teachers who labelled me as lazy because I did not engage with or complete the work assigned to me, despite having the intellectual capacity to do so: 'Ula is very clever, but she is also very lazy'. My own experience of myself was that I was easily excitable, imaginative, valued being and learning with others and was curious about many things. I did not experience myself as lazy, and it was hurtful when I was judged in that way. I was lazy because I resisted doing chores, completing homework, doing what I did not like to do and so forth. Again, the reductive and symbolic function of language here seems important (Kriz, 2008), showing how a variety of my experiences were clumped together into an external assessment of being lazy. A much more accurate

symbolisation would include being bored, disinterested, tired, distressed, worried, scared, anxious, neglectful, sad, ignorant and indifferent. Although, at first, I was resisting the 'lazy label' because it was threatening, I eventually integrated lazy into my self-concept because this was how others who 'knew better' perceived me. As an adult without thought, I generously applied that same label to others: my teachers/lectures, my students and my children. At the same time, I remained conscious of evidencing to others that I am not lazy, always anxious that I am not doing enough. Through the writing of this section and accompanying reflections, I realised that 'being busy' became my condition of worth; the one that I rarely met and, though now so obvious, seemed so veiled.

During the analysis of the data, I discovered that all five of the lecturers that I experienced as most important in my growth as a learner/person were at first labelled (symbolised) by me and often by my peers as lazy. This was inconsistent with my actual experience of them, where they were engaged during classes, often even excited; they had time for students after the sessions and were generous with their time during tutorials. They did not seem to spend time evidencing their value and effectiveness by structuring and controlling every aspect of classroom interactions as (in my experience) promoted by teacher training provisions.

In striving to understand the reasons behind the 'lazy' label, I discovered that, as a result of introjected values, I had devalued spontaneity, excitement, dialogue, experiencing, intuitive knowing, and being in the

moment. At the same time, my whole organism was signalling to me that this was what mattered. I was energised and animated. I felt my knowing was appreciated; in simple terms, I was genuinely happy in these classes. In my own practice as a teacher, I attempted doing it all, being there for students and proving myself worthy; it felt exhausting, unsustainable, and often, I felt like I was contradicting myself.
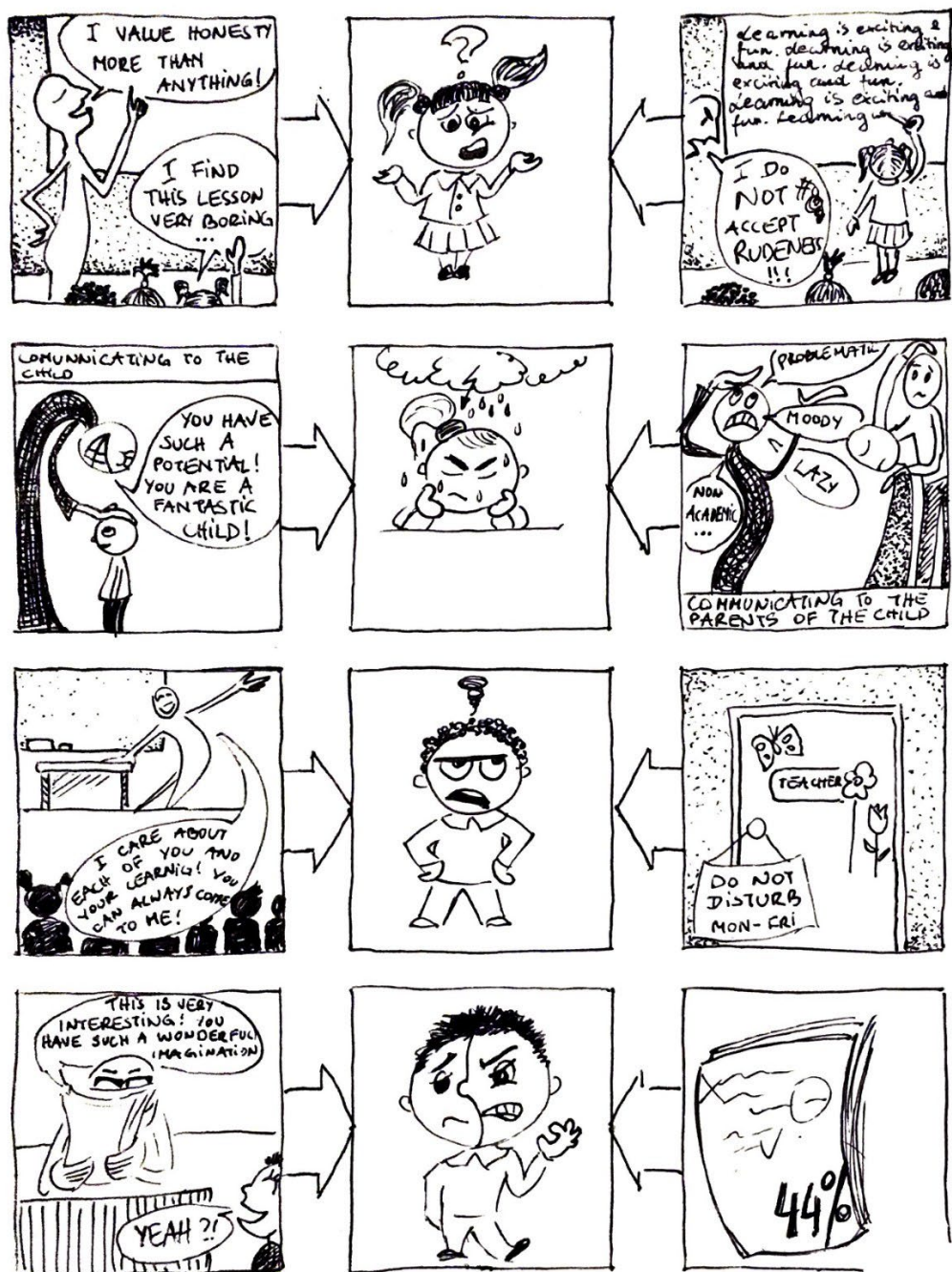
Figure 22. Perceived deceptions

This revealed an incongruence between what I experienced in the moment and the introjected values that I integrated as my own. In that sense, incongruence can be an outcome of deception.

There were a number of significant others in pedagogical roles that, in my perception, perhaps varied the levels of awareness and finesse engaged with deceptive strategies as a means of conditioning and maintaining control. Again, in the top line of Illustration C, valuing honesty is contradicted by punishing it, rather than exploring the voiced disengagement of the learner and perhaps finding ways of communicating that are more appreciative in tone. Caring for learners is contradicted by being constantly unavailable, hence not actually making space for relationships to develop (line 3).

Although there are case studies that can cause restructuring of the system, there are also those that ensure the system does not change. I have been dosed with a number of such cases that function to prove that, only if you try hard enough, if you are passionate enough, if you follow the guidance, if you obey the rules, can you then achieve excellence. Social mobility works through education, and it is the individual choice of students not to aim higher, not to engage and not to try. Because this sounds plausible, it entirely neglects the environmental factors that make such transitions nearly impossible.

Both of my parents came from a long line of working class families, and they were the first generation to go to university. My father struggled with adapting all through education, but because of the nature of his fine arts studies, he was able to use his defiant attitude as his motivating factor in proving others wrong. He would proudly tell stories when, early on in his life,

he learned how to deceive others into believing what he had was better and unachievable to them as an attempt to avoid the discomfort of having less, that is, as a way of protecting himself. My mother carried forward the significant shame of not having enough in both an economic and cultural sense, carrying forward a stigma of poverty. She worked extremely hard and eventually was able to achieve excellence, but this came at the price of neglecting many of her other needs. I experienced both of my parents as emotionally unavailable, both of them, in trying to prepare me and my siblings for 'what was coming in the world out there', acted in ways that were very hurtful and rooted in tactics of fear and control. It is my belief that the coping strategies that they both developed as a result of both family-based and educational experiences to survive and perform well were destructive to them as human beings. My own educational experiences, while perhaps less severe, were also often hurtful and discouraging. Hence, one can argue that social mobility works through education. Here, I can use my family as an example; my parents moved up in the social ladder, and their four children (including myself) are all in higher education, where I (oldest) and my youngest brother are PhD candidates. However, it seems to me that the only pathway of succeeding for those less privileged is paved with shame, poverty stigma, fear and anxiety, with very little support for how to deal with these situations other than advice such as 'put your head down', 'suck it in' and 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger'. Therefore, the phenomenon of social mobility as a solution or constructive way of supporting those who struggle the most, from my perspective and from the lips of the hundreds of people I encountered across my life span, is only another form of deception.

8.2.2 Normalising 'dis'

The normalising 'dis' is a play on words, where 'dis' can be read as 'this' or as a prefix that points to a range of experiences such as distress, distrust, distortion, discrimination and so forth. This theme captures the experiences in which various shapes of incongruence in education and learning are presented as 'normal' and often referred to as 'that's just the reality of things' rather than being presented as problematic. In a way, this explores the processes where we are stirred to learn how to be incongruent. Incongruence is connected to experiences of alienation, decreased motivation, defensiveness, poor self-regulation and, most recently, to lower emotional intelligence (Tohme & Joseph, 2020). It is these connections that seem worth exploring further in the context of education.

Before I enrolled in teacher training, I considered myself a rebellious and opinionated learner who was very critical of the system, yet by that time, I had learned I did not have many chances for progression without qualifications. At the time, I did not have an interest in being a teacher, but I was advised that if I could 'survive' the teacher's training course, it would open the doors into further education, and I knew I wanted to continue learning; so studying seemed like the most viable option. The above statement itself suggests at least a partially deceitful act during the interview, where to secure a place in the course I concealed my main motivation, instead shifting the focus to my interests in supporting others in their educational journeys. Although it is true that I am committed to learning

together and to pedagogies that facilitate such learning, I did not see a pathway for this in the context of formal education. I learned that there were many others who enrolled in the course for reasons other than being of service to learners, but I have not heard of anyone disclosing those reasons in interviews for the risk of not being accepted. Although there seems to be an inherit aspect of performativity built into the interview process, it is my experience that, in educational environments, it is often more 'normal'—or at least socially acceptable—to deceive than to be transparent.

This subtheme reports on normalising/overriding the distress experienced in the world outside and inside of me, and it can be seen as an expansion or follow-up from the subtheme of multideception. It seems that my organism developed a system of normalising 'dis', which enabled me to function in an environment that was not conducive to meaningful learning and the development of authenticity. As a student, I learned it was 'normal' that most of the teachers did not really care about anything else but positive outcomes. It was 'normal' to be disconnected and disinterested in learning; the approach 'just get over with it' was a 'normal', widely shared consensus.

As a teacher, it was 'normal' that students would be demotivated and behave inappropriately, and having (normal) systems of rewards and punishments was presented as a solution to that. It was 'normal' that the students resist learning and did not really want to be there. It was also 'normal' to hold back your own feelings and just get through the day; as long as the students' outcomes were improving, everything would be OK.

Illustration (Figure 23) is another composite of anecdotal stories that were shared with me by other trainee teachers.

Figure 23. 'No need to make a fuss!'

This illustration is a representation of an interaction between a trainee teacher and their placement mentor; there is no exploration of what is actually happening for the teacher, and the display of emotions is regarded (negatively) as unprofessional. The teacher is at the centre of this distress; it is them who must adjust to the new reality and become tougher, rather than acknowledging concerns with the somehow normalised 'reality' where teachers are expected to be hurt by students. The whole experience of the teacher is missed here, and what the teacher is learning is that it is OK (normal) to do that, that is, to disconnect feeling from learning.

The normalisation here is not necessarily intentional; it might be because there is no time to encounter one another, it might be that the mentor is uncomfortable, or it might be that this is a reoccurring scenario so the mentor is dismissive of it. Because the reasons behind this remain concealed, coerced normalisation becomes the most likely outcome. In my own personal experiences of delivering workshops in a primary school setting, I learned that there is no space for processing thoughts or emotions relevant to learning, that the schedules are filled with activities that evidence learning targets, that those learning targets have little to do with the learners themselves, that they are set externally, and that they are standardised. The standardisation of learning outcomes can be viewed as another form of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to education that stands in opposition to the personalised learning research advocated by McCombs (2014). Standardisation has also been critiqued by Foucault as a way of normalising discriminative and coercive practices in education:

> *The Normal is established as a principle of coercion in teaching with the introduction of standardised education and the establishment of the 'Ecole's normales (teacher training colleges) (…) In a sense, the power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it individualises by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. (1975, p. 184)*

Some normalisations are apparent, such as the example where physical punishment is symbolised as care for one's learning to be a better person, which was prominent in my childhood experiences. Others can be seen as more subtle, like when a person (teacher/parent/peer) invites you to share your feedback freely but then finds ways of punishing you for being honest or critical, normalising the expectation of politeness over genuineness. However, and probably the most damaging in the context of education and wider society, is the normalisation of judgement, which is also noted by Foucalt (1975) as a way of creating hierarchies and maintaining control. The normalising judgemental approach stands in direct opposition to UPR; it is judgement that underpins the conditions of worth, where positive regard is conditional upon what is valued as good or worthy (Rogers, 1951, 1958). Winslade (2013) questions the sufficiency of UPR in therapy in reversing the effects of conditioning that occurs through external judgements; arguing that the normalisation of judgement continues to exist in the social realities outside of the therapeutic relationship. Winsleade's (2013) can be equally applied in context of education: is UPR of the teacher sufficient in removing the threat to the individual freedom of the learners when the systemic conditions remain judgemental by default. In the context of schooling, the normalisation of judgement is widespread and takes various shapes of assessments, evaluations and examinations, in which progress and positive outcomes are valued positively and failure, mistakes and a lack of progress are valued negatively.

I remember numerous scenarios of myself as a learner and teacher where, when I got the correct answer, I was invited/inviting to elaborate, yet

when the answer was incorrect, this was hardly ever explored. One of the uncomfortable realisations was in the reflection on my own practice. Here, when striving to secure the funding for the learners' activities to continue, I decided to go through the process of accreditation:

The strange thing is that I didn't see it until it was too late because, in the process, attention shifted from their best interest to my own, and it was subtle enough. I kept reassuring myself that I was doing it for my students, the funding bids, and the accreditation of courses so that they could continue with their learning. At first, it felt like the right thing to do. I wanted more for them, and I became responsible for it. The project became more of my success, and all the external praise made it even more successful. It became stressful for all of us, but because I was receiving some external recognition, I kept going. It felt almost addictive to keep climbing higher and pulling my learners with me. I was climbing, getting overwhelmed and stressed cause I felt as if I was carrying them also. Their experience was that of being pulled, some just barely hanging, and they did not like it; some were afraid. I used my existing relationship with them to override their own discomforts and directions.

I coerced my learners and actively searched for ways to normalise what was happening to avoid the discomfort rather than stay with it. This fed into the next subtheme of 'indifference': to be able to carry on an already

difficult scenario, I needed to disconnect myself from their discontent. I needed to feel indifferent to complete the process, and as a result, I betrayed the trust of my learners. Yes, we succeeded with the project, but as soon as the project was over, the majority of the group disengaged from the activities.

In my experience, for some reason, the concept of 'freedom' has evoked hostile or fearful responses in others when talking about pedagogies, parenting or social structures. When I tried to understand this, it seems that freedom is often associated with anarchy and chaos. I wonder if this is another form of oppression, that is, that I have almost normalised 'freedom' as dangerous rather than transformative and exciting.

8.2.3 Indifference

With the ongoing debates around 'behaviour management', bullying concerns in schools, challenges in offering education that fosters positive citizenship and various costly government initiatives such as 'behaviour hubs' or 'prevent programmes', facilitating indifference can be seen as counterproductive. The essence of what I still mean by indifference is captured in the rap song I wrote when I was 14 (Figure 24). Indifference here stands in opposition to empathy and compassion. Although this text might be viewed as inappropriate, offensive or vulgar, it is representative of the indifference I felt then and the indifference I still feel today; and it is the existence of that indifference that is offensive, vulgar and inappropriate. Similarly to participant in Richards et al. (2019) study I found a therapeutic

potential in rap music; writing and rapping about the injustices, for me it was a way of sustaining my motivation to stand counter to dehumanisation.

Figure 24. Indifference - rap song.
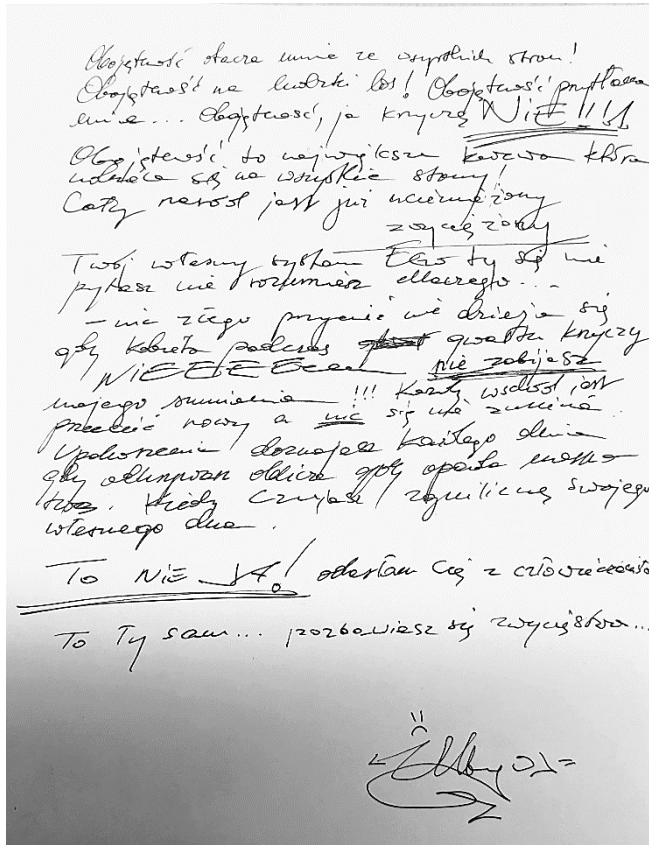
Translated from Polish:

Indifference surrounds us from all sides, indifference to other human lives, indifference crushes me down, indifference—I scream nah! Indifference is the only whore that spreads herself to all.

The whole nation is already dominated. She conquered your own ego, you do not understand. You do not ask why that is! To you, nothing that bad happens when you hear an assaulted woman shouting NO!! You will not kill my capacity to feel; you won't hack my conscience. Although every sunset is new, nothing ever changes.

You get humiliated every day when you uncover your real face, when the mask is off, when you feel the stench of your own lowest point. It is not me that ripped away your humanity; it is you who gave it away willingly!

Something would have to die within me to accept the indifference as the only reality possible. A recent study of 530 participants has reported a correlation between the higher level authenticity and more compassion towards others (Bayir-Toper at al., 2020); this seems to be reflected in my own experiences, in which indifference seems to be a manifestation of inner incongruence (as opposed to authenticity); of doing something that does not agree with my organismic valuing and more or less consciously attempting to numb or distort my own senses and do what I feel I have no control over.

When I was/am a learner, many of the pedagogical practices I felt were unfair, unjust, mean or exaggerated or even unnecessary; but when I occupy the pedagogical role of a parent, I often replicate those practices, so I might tone them down, disguise or alter them in some way—but the intention is the same: maintaining control when the chaos emerges. Control in parenting is tangled into the experienced responsibility for my children. I still find it difficult to navigate through this. There is a very distinctive difference between grasping for control and finding a shared order in perceived chaos. My personal intention was never to avoid the messiness of human encounters. In my attempt to stay open, I fought against any sort of boundaries, holding a polarised view that the only options were madness in the chaos or dehumanising control (Kriz, 2008). I chose to stay human. It is important for me to note that I did not feel the need to control the 'potential chaos' in my pedagogical practice, but I perceived it as something that I ought to do to prevent situations where I will be judged as 'unprofessional'.

Therefore, to provide an environment presented as 'professional', I needed to, at least on some level, become indifferent to the experiences of others. What would be the purpose of tuning into the needs of my learners if I cannot facilitate an environment that supports them? When I engaged with such practices, I did not think that they were damaging, hurtful or unhelpful. I saw them as necessary, that being in control was part of being a teacher, alongside writing detailed lesson plans based on schemes of work planned to meet the outcomes that had nothing to do with the individual goals of my learners.

The educational environments often imposed structures that seemed to prevent the possibility of adjusting my own behaviour, even after I discovered it was problematic or at least unhelpful. I needed to change to fit with an externally set structure, just like my learners needed to change to fit with mine.

> *Becoming a teacher was initially an alienating experience. I often felt judged, compared with others, inadequate, and not good enough. I certainly did not feel like we are a learning community but individual competitors in a future job market, and I hated that feeling! But it was one of those experiences that you just must survive, and I guess numbing yourself is one of the ways to do it.*

This 'numbing' is another pathway to indifference. There are aspects/practices/institutional frameworks and guidance in education that I do

not believe are fair and just; many feel dehumanising or fragmented, but staying sensitive to this seems like a waist of inner resources. Staying sensitive so that I can function in the most useful way seems productive, but staying sensitive to what does not seem to be changeable seems futile and psychologically painful. The process of numbing can be a way of preserving my own resources so that they can be used for something productive, but there is a risk that the numbing will eventually disconnect me from myself and others.

It is also that indifference that I have observed in other teachers, parents and people in pedagogical roles. There were occasions when I attempted to explore this in a casual conversation and was surprised that others did not seem to identify this tendency in the same way I did, often defending the 'traditional pedagogies' of getting on with the work or justifying them by arguing that it is the way to teach and that we would not learn anything otherwise.

Indifference can also be viewed in light of deception, where, even when we feel we are in a position to react, we convince ourselves that it is not our place. In some ways, I felt that it was almost expected to remain indifferent when seeing and experiencing the education that disempowers rather than develops agency, education that demotivates instead of fostering curiosity and love for learning, education that is psychologically harmful instead of being restorative or therapeutic. In the attempts to discuss this with teachers working in schools, I kept hearing, *'Well ... that's just the way it is'*, *'That's the*

sad reality', 'There is nothing that can be done', 'This is not an ideal world' or

'No point in wasting time debating about this, just get on with it'. In these

statements, resignation and compliance is the fertile soil for indifference, for

disconnecting oneself from the reality one is part of. To remain open to

experiencing in these scenarios means staying with the discomfort of being

part of a system that goes against the value of acting in the best interests of

your learners. In turn, this challenges the self-concept of being a 'good'

teacher, and it sensitises us to taking responsibility for our own actions. It calls

for action. However, the potential action explored above feels futile and

hopeless, resulting in experiencing disempowerment.

Personally, on the few occasions I worked in schools, I felt that the

price for being part of the system was to relinquish my personal power, to

accept the imposed state of incongruence for myself and my learners and to

desensitise myself to perceived injustices. It was my understanding at the

time that, to survive the system, I had to learn how to be indifferent to its

maladaptive functioning. My approach has shifted after reading Schmid and

his call to an encounter attitude stating that the only way to bring change in

our 'phenomenological fields' is to understand them, appreciate them and

accept them for what they are. Indifference is made possible through

alienation. Alienation, on the other hand, can be sustained when we operate

from 'rational self-interest' (Fisher, 2013) because, 'rationally', I can only trust

myself to care for my own interests, be it as teacher or learner. This is only if I

see logic as the 'only way to generate commitment' (Fisher, 2013, p. 305);

Fisher (2013) explores the paradox of rationality of self-interest in game

theory and the flaws/insufficiency of using intellect as the sole tool for resolving human problems. This connects to the previous subtheme and concept of 'pathointelligence', where intelligence alone does not stop us from dehumanisation.

I also heard of 'occupational indifference' in the context of schooling as a parent of four children currently in SFE. This is brought about reflecting on the basic interest in what my children are personally invested in and the questions that they asked or answered that have not been directly connected to the topics in the scheme of work. To have teachers respond to individual interests and curiosities with, '*You don't really have to know that',* is evidence of some pervasive twisting of what lies at the core of learning. Although existing policies and guidance strive to prevent potentially unsafe situations, create boundaries to clarify what is included in the role of a teacher and protect teachers from additional workloads, they can also separate/alienate us from our learners. I would also like to note that I am aware that I might have projected indifference onto my teachers based on my previous experiences. This indifference dissolved once the relationship began to form, where the teacher recognised me as a unique person, not just a class member.

What surprised me most in my informal conversations with many of the teachers, educators as well as students I have encountered was that they did not seem to want to be authentic in a way that Joseph (2016) describes authenticity. Joseph's (2016) three-dimensional authenticity model consisting of knowing-being-owning oneself seemed flattened in peoples understanding

to just 'being oneself' which understandably as argued by Bialystock (2007) could have equally positive and negative consequences. The idea of authenticity as just 'being yourself' without the regard for others was also argued against by Potter (2010) as it can fit well with the concept of indifference.

8.2.4 Controlling toolkit

I experienced the teacher training course as very rigid and instructional; the sessions were often about how to meet all the learning objectives outlined in the assignments, which made them feel disconnected from the classroom practice. I found the information to be of interest, but there was no space to truly examine anything. We were expected to do our own reading in our own time, but in reality, I did not have time or energy to do so because I also had parental responsibilities. At first, I just wanted to make it through the course. I said I did not care about the grades or about what others thought of me there. However, that changed as a result of a highly competitive and intimidating environment:

> *I felt as if I was back in secondary school, surrounded by the judgmental eyebrows of teachers. I felt small and inadequate. So I went on the defence, I saw that I can do well, and I entered the unspoken competition so that others would not use me as their springboard for feeling superior. To maintain some level of internal cohesion, I integrated the values that were not my own: that externally set grades matter, that competition is a tool that stimulates*

progression, that social mobility works and that, if I adjust to this system, I will be worthy. This came at a cost. I was constantly anxious that I would get something wrong. I pushed aside my children. I was frustrated and had regular outbursts at home. I submitted myself to the judgement of others and convinced a part of myself that it mattered. I kept pushing down the feeling of fakeness and superficiality of it all because, for the first time, I was experiencing how it felt to be received as an 'excellent student', even being offered as an example to follow. I must have needed that.

The rigidity of the system, fragmentation of knowledge, fragmentation of roles, game of tick-boxes and blame culture all seemed like tools of control within this artificial system of education. Indeed, it was artificial rather than mechanical because it was disguised as something that emerged naturally in response to human nature.

I thought that I would enter the system, make use of what I need and stay close to my original plan and original self. But instead, the system enters you and alters your goals, your values. These are small changes in perspective; they even seem reasonable and logical, so easy to miss or to put down as normal. That, to me, is the deception, that you get systematically disconnected from what has mattered to you in the first place, and you think it is your decision, that you have chosen this.

Children today have more of a voice in the classroom, but they still have very little choice. The forms of punishment today are less severe, compared with, for example, corporal punishment, which used to be an acceptable form of discipline. However, the teacher-centred practices remain, where, in the children's perception, teachers have complete authority over what and how they are meant to learn.

Although challenging behaviours are a common occurrence in contemporary classrooms and one of the more prominent factors in teachers' low job satisfaction (REF), the link between teacher-centred pedagogies and challenging behaviour does not seem to receive much attention. On the contrary, rather than considering alternative pedagogical approaches, decision makers focus on new ways of controlling children, such as 'behaviour hubs', which has been one of newer initiatives of the Department for Education (2020). Furthermore, Kriz (2013) critiqued attempts at both inner and outer control as entirely unpredictable regarding how they actually impact the human organism because, in its complexity, it cannot be altered by force into a desired predetermined structure. In the context of education, continuous attempts at imposing control over the learning and development of learners and pedagogical approaches of teachers is, by default, unreliable because of the fluid matrix of individual differences (existing knowledge, experiences, maturity, emotional intelligence, available resources, etc.) that, in each case, might interact with each other differently.

Competitiveness supports and sustains the concept of hierarchies. It fragments the learning communities, and I found it most unhelpful in my own learning and development:

Because I kind of lost that (a sense of community) studying for the art degree—it felt much more competitive and individualistic, somehow judgemental as well. I often felt anxious and pressured. I did not feel that we were a community of aspiring artists, just individuals who had something to prove to others and compete with each other. I did not enjoy that; I did not feel that it helped me develop as an artist— because, somehow, in my mind, I wasn't thinking how to make my work better—but I got caught in thinking how to make my work better than others as I was told it's a 'tough market' out there and that you must be original. This feeling of having to prove and, in some ways, sell myself was unhelpful and constantly in the way. I produce much better work when I do it for myself—but I couldn't get away from thinking it is for an audience.

I stopped working together for common goals because I do not want to be used while others push away their responsibilities on me. I avoided relying on one another in any way because I expected to be failed. I was happy with the progress others made until they surpassed my own, and then, I felt less than and somehow envious. The popular saying that 'there is no I in team'

became absolute, and it seemed that the team was not about us as a group but a bunch of 'I's', as illustrated below (Figure 25).

Facilitation of competitiveness can be also viewed from the perspective of control, as it is easier to exercise power oven one person than a group that shares common goal. Competitiveness has been recognised as one of the inhibiting conditions to development of teacher authenticity as it contributes to hostile relations that contribute to individual alienation Akoury (2013), Cranton, (2010), Carusetta & Cranton (2005b), Carusetta & Cranton (2005a); Rabin, (2013) and Rappel (2015).
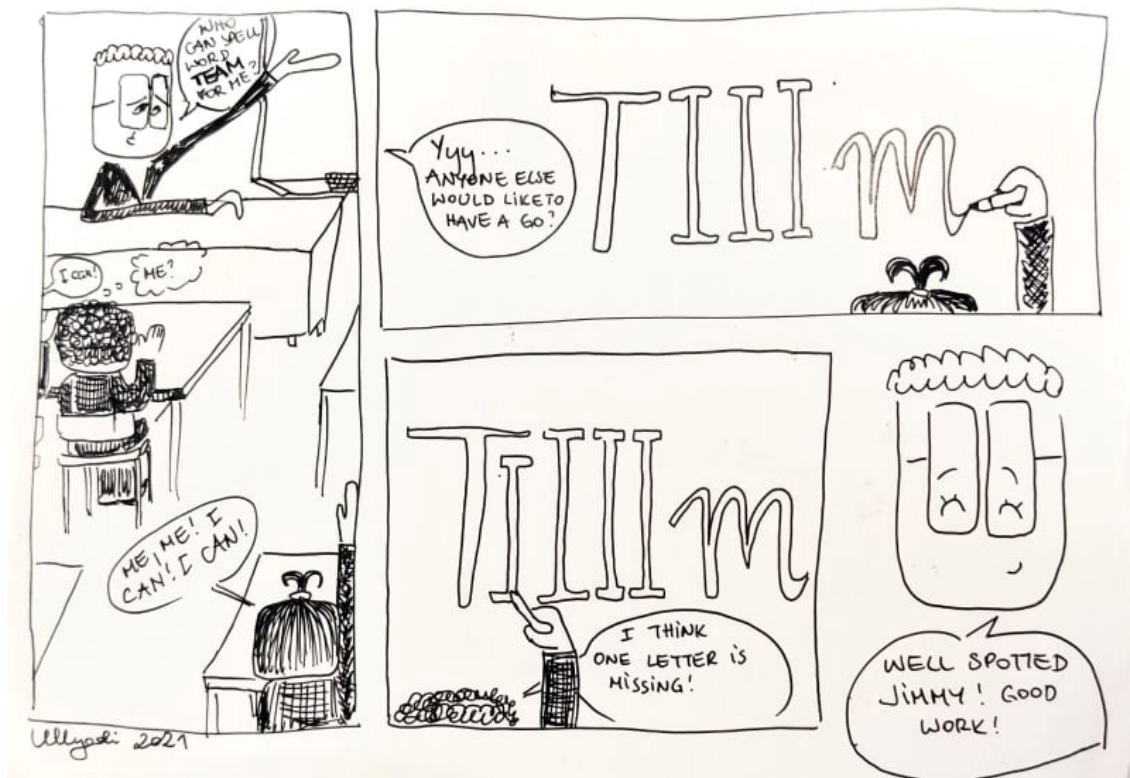

Figure 25. There is no I in team?

8.3 Transparency

This theme captures the concept of transparency as the most effortless way of being and learning from each other and, at the same time, the most difficult way of being in contemporary social realities, especially when focusing on education. The transparency here is not so much about saying all that is on your mind, but it is about sharing and pursuing things that might be useful to learning more about our realities and better understanding ourselves and others. Transparency reflects those instances where I experienced myself or/and others as open about their motivations, intentions and values, as well as where I experienced the transparency of the system that we were part of. In that context, it closely aligns with Cornelius-White's (2007) authenticity dimension of congruence, where self-experiences are communicated to the other with transparency.

It also captures instances where I felt as if another person was tuning themselves out of their own self-concept (Illustration 26), increasing their own transparency to the point of being barely visible, as a way to create space for me. Here, transparency seems closely woven in with the concept of presence for the other when emersed in the encounter.

This is also consistent with Cornelius-White's (2007a) approach to self-transparency in the encounter, where the other comes first and it is connected to the discussion of extensionality of congruence, in which the person sees congruence as desirable not just in their self or relationship, but in the systems that they see themselves as part of, hence seeking transparency

across all (Cornelius-White, 2007b). Transparency seems very useful for experiencing safety in relationships; here it is present in the subthemes of trust, openness and seeking truth. Illustration (Figure 26) shows how transparency can facilitate a space that dissolves introjected values, a space where the person can experience what matters to them; in connection to Rogers (1969, 1980),

Figure 26. Transparency as relational safety

it can be viewed as facilitating a space where there is the freedom to learn; freedom from ideas about ourselves, others, the whole and the world that might have been rigid or fragmented but accepted as true and whole.

8.3.1 Trust

When coding and drawing my data around the experiences of trust, I found it difficult to split it from the phenomena of acceptance. It seems that a condition that was always present when I experienced being trusted and trusting was acceptance. I have also identified a pattern of 'conditional trust' in my early educational experiences; this applied only to the successful execution of whatever it was I was committing myself to. In these instances, trust was conditional upon the other person's valuation of my inner resources and competence, which served as a reassurance that I could be trusted to achieve, to get it right and to succeed. Such conditional trust was followed by a difficult-to-resolve disappointment when I did not meet expectations, hence experiencing myself as useless.

Ryan and Deci (2002, 2020) propose that competency is one of the components needed for self-determination; one could argue that trust based on perceived competency is justified. However, based on my own experiences in learning and teaching, it needs to be more fluid than this; sure, I would never encourage anything that is dangerous, but other than that, trusting in the inner resources of the learners to choose what they need to learn seems to always result in some form of learner progression. This

essential nature of trust in the facilitation of learning has also been argued by Cornelius and Cornelius (2005), where the very concept of non-directivity is only possible when trusting the actualising tendency of the human organism. This is where transparency is connected to trust; here, transparency is a way to communicate that trust:

> *I vividly remember my poetry group facilitator from high school. Looking into her eyes was like looking at an open landscape; it felt peaceful, natural and safe. I still wonder how one smallish person could carry so much space for others! She was open, and it felt that she genuinely wanted to be there for and with us. You could see joy in her face as we entered the gloomy classroom. There were days you could see anger, sadness or pain, too. There were no taboos in that space, no rights or wrongs, no judgements, just endless curiosity of what is what and where it came from and why the way it did. There were tears, laughter, screams and long silences—nothing needed to be hidden, buried or concealed. For the first time, I did not need to hide any of me, and I also could really see people. I felt so connected to people who were so different. We were just teens, some of us prelabelled as troubled, others as star pupils, but in that space, none of that existed, and we were all true poets, real people. We belonged.*

I think it is important to know that, although the above description might sound idyllic or romanticised, that period in my life could be characterised as chaotic, confusing and self-destructive; that poetry club seemed liked the only

place where I did not feel judged as 'wasted potential'. I felt unconditionally accepted and valued by the group facilitator, which enabled me to trust her, creating a safe space for me to grow.

Therefore, the theme of trusted being is about those circumstances where I felt I was equally trusted to fail, get it wrong or lose; the teacher trusted that I would use all outcomes as new learning. Again, it also functions in a similar way when experiencing trust in my own becoming, in my self-directed learning not bound by my own estimation of my capacity to succeed but that is characterised by the freedom to make mistakes without them being perceived as a threat to my self-worth.

Although the concept of trust here is discussed in the context of relationships with others, I cannot separate it from the trust in my own being, and that, in and of itself, proved to be challenging:

> *At home, I could not be trusted because I was weak and sinful, at school, I could not be trusted because I was just a child and had no idea what's good for me, at university, I could not be trusted because students are lazy, disinterested and look for the easiest way out, as a teacher, I could not be trusted because unless I followed standardised practices to meet externally set targets, I wouldn't be a 'good' teacher, and as a PhD candidate, I cannot be trusted in pursuit of my own academic needs (self-interest?) because I might accidentally (or not!) hurt others. So I look at our current condition, the condition of the world I live in, and I wonder, can we be trusted?*

And yet, in retrospect when looking back at some of the more questionable decisions I have made as a learner, such as initially living school to work at young age (16) before achieving formal qualifications, prioritising social interactions over school achievements, or, in the context of this doctoral work, spending my first years proving to myself I can understand everything that others do rather than diving deeper into my own field, I appreciate all of those learning experiences that enabled me to find my own pathway and trust in my own direction instead of judging or fighting myself. This directly translated into wanting to support others in their learning as whole persons seeking ways of flourishing which can be conceptualised as a manifestation of the formative tendency (Rogers, 1980; Cornelius-White, Cornelius-White and Kriz, 2008).

In my practice as a teacher, moving towards a nondirective approach has been—and continues to be—gradual. In many ways it resembles the unnerving confusion experienced by teachers in studies by Cranton and Carusetta, where attempting to work in a collaboration with learners feels riskier and more unfamiliar. Furthermore, working within a system that follows the principles of more directive teaching, where the academic staff shares their 'expertise' and working with the adult students who went through, in most cases, traditional, teacher-centred schooling, made it more challenging for me to offer a nondirective learning environment built on trust, as learners seem confused by the freedom it offers. I was very conscious every time I graded an assignment, delivered a class on a predetermined topic or simply tell the learners what to learn or do rather than agreeing on it in a democratic

manner—I am taking their personal power away, and that feels uncomfortable. Nondirective and liberatory pedagogy challenges the existing expectations of learners regarding what the education is supposed to look like. In short, it is my experience that they are not prepared for this, often resisting taking ownership of their learning. In the traditional banking model approach, there is no need for trust because the relationship is not seen as essential for learning that is teacher-led/centred and content focused, knowledge-based and often externally motivated by competitiveness (Cornelius-White, 2010).

The experiences of working with adults stand in contrast to some experiences I had when working children in youth, where just as learners in Hannam's (2020) classrooms, there was a sense of excitement and energy when invited to direct their own learning. What all of my most significant learning experiences have in common is the presence of risk, that is, a positive risk that creates opportunities for growth and development. An example of a pedagogical practice that resulted in a shift in me as a result of the teacher taking a positive risk was in my high school, where the teacher promised not to report me for doing something considered dangerous, giving me the time to sort it out myself:

> *He trusted me even, doh, I was deceitful with him, and he most likely knew that; yet he kept his word and got into trouble as a result of that. He got into trouble because of my deceit, and that still hurts me. I still have a knot in my stomach thinking about it 24 years later. At the same time, I am grateful for that gift because I couldn't learn that any other*

way than by experiencing the cost of deceiving someone who cares

and accepts the consequences for their actions without punishing you

in return. The responsibility is yours to pick up; there is no escaping it,

no matter how good of a runner you are!

This is what I mean by modelling the behaviour of those in pedagogical roles; he took the responsibility for what was his without forcing it back on me. In that, I was left responsible for the consequences that my deception had on my teacher; there was nowhere to run after that, and I did not like it. However, this teacher's action was unique because it was a very clear example of a teacher giving the you space to make a mistake and leaving the door open after you made it. I was feeling guilty, but he continued to accept me and welcomed me back with care, not with further punishment or rejection. Our relationship afterwards became much more honest and open on my part because he continued having trust in me, and I trusted him in return.

In my own pedagogical practice, there were times when I resisted trying to convince my students to continue their course rather than take a break that they had asked for; I would support students' complex ideas, even if I was concerned that they would not be able to complete them. There were times when I was positively surprised with the outcomes and times when I initially wondered if it was the right thing to do as the students struggled. However, even those who struggled learned something about themselves and had more chances of adjusting and self-regulating. I agree with Bonnett that '*education should be a risky business: that in effect it must involve a degree of*

disturbance of the self' (2010, p. 28) because this is one of the ways we have opportunities to surpass ourselves.

8.3.2 Intentional openness

Openness here is about becoming open to experiencing and staying with what is happening within me when interacting with others, but more importantly, it captures those experiences that are about intentional openness to understanding others. It is intentional because it requires a commitment to stay open and attentive, even though it might feel easier or even safer not to. Openness has been discussed as a characteristic of authentic people: being open to experiencing, open to communicating and open to change (Joseph, 2016).

I see openness as essential to learning because it is the only pathway in constructing my own deeper understanding; it stands counter to judgment and immediate evaluations that are there to maintain what I already know. Intentional openness here is closely related to Rogers' reflections (1995, p. 11) on '*permitting myself to understand another person'* as the most useful attitude in building real relationships. Importantly, Rogers (1995) also argues for the importance of being open to experiencing oneself fully and accepting a full spectrum of organismic responses without discriminating between them.

At first, I identified instances where I found it useful to take the risk of staying intentionally open when my initial response was to be guarded or defensive, when I wanted to run or start fighting back. This is illustrated below

(Illustration 27), where the action of another person is perceived as somehow threatening either to myself (A) or to the relationship I am in (B):
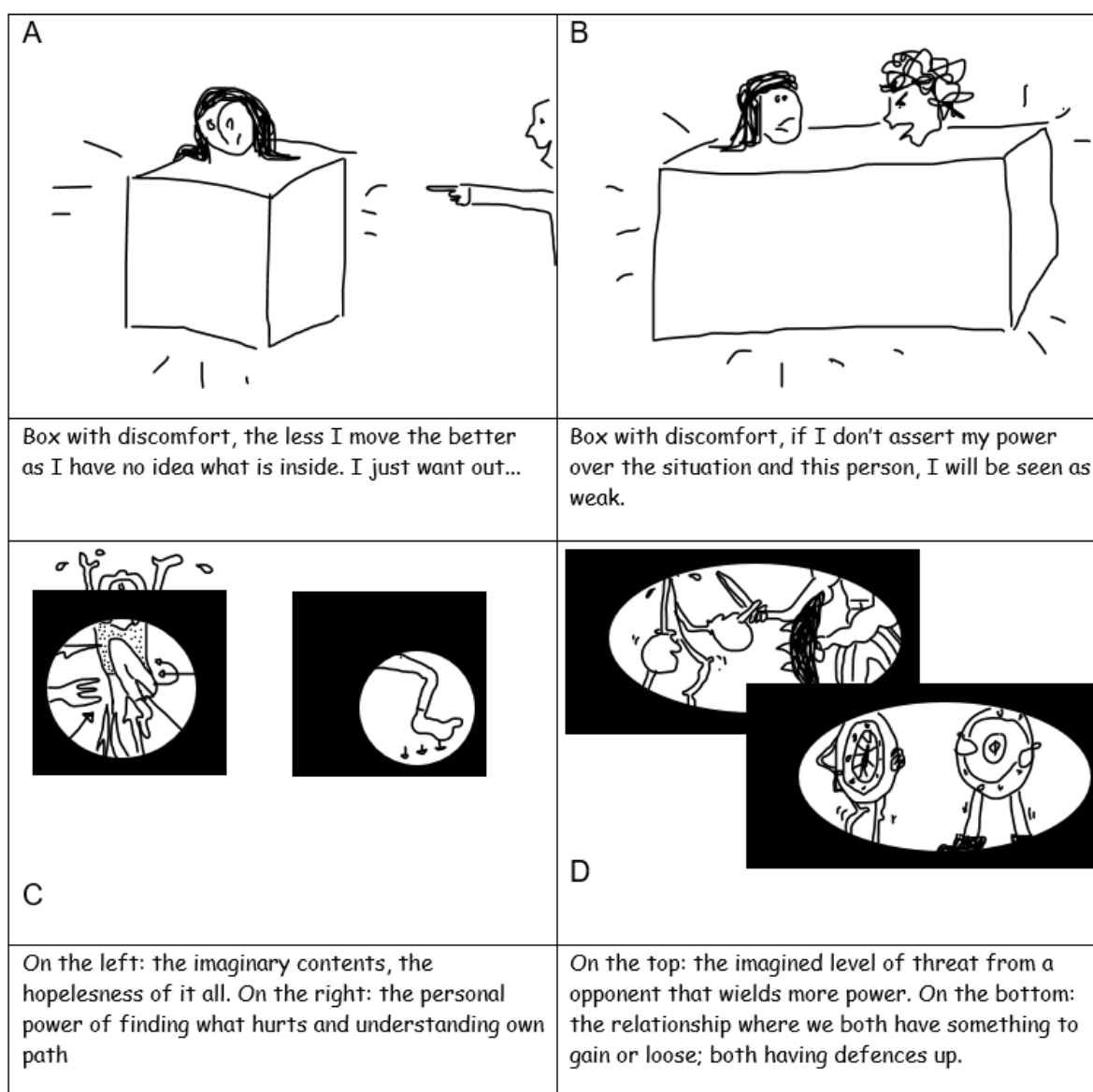

A	B
Box with discomfort, the less I move the better as I have no idea what is inside. I just want out...	Box with discomfort, if I don't assert my power over the situation and this person, I will be seen as weak.
C	D
On the left: the imaginary contents, the hopelesness of it all. On the right: the personal power of finding what hurts and understanding own path	On the top: the imagined level of threat from a opponent that wields more power. On the bottom: the relationship where we both have something to gain or loose; both having defences up.

Figure 27. Ideas vs perceptions

Illustration C represents situations like, for example, when I placed my poems on display and took them down a couple of hours later with feelings of discomfort (represented by the box), following what seemed to be some

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individuals laughing at them. Initially, I just wanted to forget about it all, judge those who were laughing and distract myself by watching a long string of episodes on Netflix after the kids went to bed. I surely wasn't keen on opening up the box to see what was lurking in my own depths (Illustration C) because it felt raw and somehow scary:

I let myself float in the darkness of my bedroom. That night, I learned that I was still waiting for the world to accept me, appreciate me first, before I can value the creative, chaotic, critical, expressive self's-of-me. I let all the self-judgements whisper out of my ears. I thought my gift was rejected again, but I never gave it away. Just an empty box of expectations. Disappointment was not real. I lovingly gathered my verses, reading them with my own ears.

My first learning was that I wasn't changed, not in the way I thought I was, and I wanted to understand why. In the journal extract above, I allowed myself to feel disappointment and sadness after hearing my need for UPR and my self-criticism fed by my past experiences. Consequently, I was able to understand myself better so that I could symbolise my experience accurately rather than using some old templates that no longer fit (Rogers, 1954).

Another example is from my teaching practice. I had a learner who often questioned my pedagogical approaches, implying I don't know what I am doing, eventually becoming challenging and increasingly critical of my Polish accent, stating I don't even know how to speak 'proper English'. I have

tried to be patient and understanding in the prior instances, but this struck a

nerve. I was still feeling very self-conscious about the fact that English was

my second language. I felt all my blood flow to my face, and I was getting

ready to fight her, to pass my own judgements of her and humiliate her in front

of the class so that she would learn not to do this again. For a spit second, I

imagined the damage I could unleash, and that allowed me to find some calm.

All of my being was still microvibrating with all sorts of emotions. I had the

choice of containing myself, appearing as if I was perfectly calm, hence

evidencing my strengths by letting her know that those comments had no

impact on me. However, none of those responses would be congruent, none

would be 'intentionally open'—they would only contribute to the already
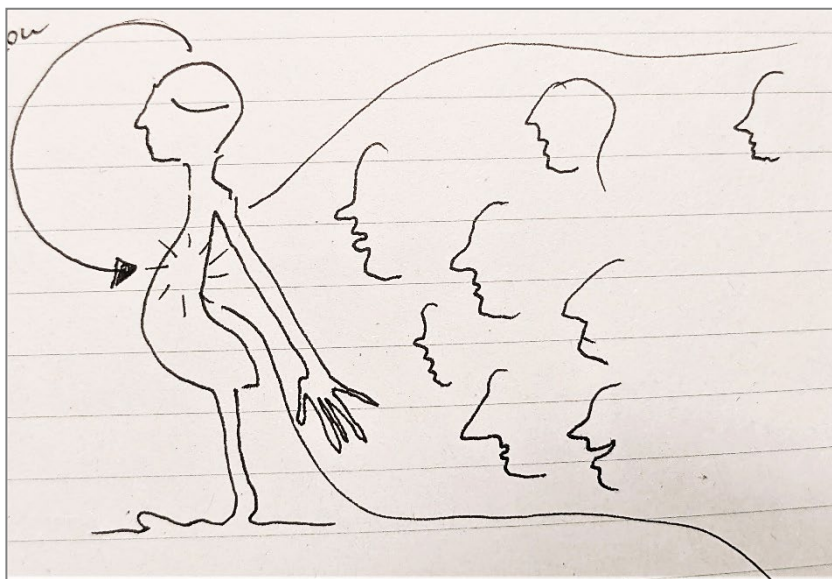
problematic power dynamics.

Figure 28. In to be out—my path to presence

Illustration 'In to be out (Figure 28) captures the usefulness of being

intentionally open to my own experiences and striving not to be threatened by

them but rather to accept them. When I do this, I am able to transcend myself and be present for others; I have to go in to be out. After being open and accepting of what was going on for me, I was able to shift my focus to wanting to understand her and give her a chance of understanding me.

I said, 'It seems really important to you to keep pointing at all of the things that you don't seem to like or maybe know how to participate in, like you are collecting evidence that there is nothing you want here. It feels like you want to start a fight and I would like to understand why. I actually felt hurt when you laughed at my accent. It is your choice to be here, just as it is for others here, so if this does not feel right for you, and you don't feel like we can make it work together so everybody can learn in a space that feels safe, then you can find another learning group that you want to be part of'.

She looked very confused when listening to me. She responded that she didn't think I cared what she said. 'I knew you would kick me out anyway', she added. This was the starting point of what became a very real and positive relationship for both of us. Illustration D (Figure 27) is a representation of the perceived power dynamics that could be applied both ways. I thought she was threatening and disrupting the group. She believed I didn't care and did not feel included in the group. We were both rigid and guarded, lacking openness to each other.

Openness has also been crucial for me in being able to follow my curiosity, especially when being curious about something that distracts me from being present, as in the example below and in the formation of my relationship with my supervisor:

I remember it began disturbing me that my supervisor very rarely shared things that were his own, like his opinions or evaluations, his own reflections or related personal stories. He seemed like a blank canvas on which I was painting, and the canvas would only question or reflect on what has been painted or how I was painting. It was not what I was used to in an educational setting—usually, I was barely allowed to make a mark. It took me a while to voice that, and when I did, he said he only says what he perceives to be possibly useful to me; but he will answer, even if he doesn't feel it will be useful if I ask. I still struggle with asking, but I know it is there.

That openness created a space for experiencing the connection between me and others. The findings from the studies by Cornelius-White (2004, 2007) as well as others like hooks (1994) Noddings (2005) and McCombs, all point to the importance of active caring for the learner as integral to liberatory pedagogy; both Rogers (1980) and Moustakas (1966) argue that demonstrating care is connected to commitment to knowing the other person because it would be very difficult to really understand another and not care about them.

This is consistent with my experience of working as a school counsellor; I loved the children with whom I worked, and that love was not really that different from the way I love my own children. The idea of teaching as motivated by love for others has been explicitly advocated by others like Freire (1998) or Darder (2002). Once I knew them as persons, once I was intentionally open to understanding them, it felt as if they could be my children. It was easy to love them. This does not mean I was in any way confused about the existing boundaries, but it did mean I carried them with me in my thoughts. Part of me really struggled in knowing that they were going back to situations that they did not have control over, even in the context of school itself. Being open means that there is no option of being indifferent.

Openness also emerged in relation to genuineness, both in my perception of my own teachers and in my interactions with my students:

> *We (me and my friends) always knew when the teachers seemed fake, when they just played a role, giving us dry or rehearsed responses in this funny manner as if they shared the same accent of patronisation, ha! ha! But then, there were few teachers … we dreaded living their classrooms; they seemed to be genuinely enjoying the discussions with us; their eyes were smiling, and they asked questions about our understanding in a way that was making us question what we knew or didn't know without feeling intimidated or exposed for not knowing; somehow, as if they were just curious with us, as if they weren't definitely sure what the answer would be.*

That genuineness was 'evidenced' by the insightful questions that the teachers asked—it reflected that they listened and really tried to understand where we were at. That openness was also reflected in being straightforward when I was stuck and when I was not engaging with learning; they continued seeing me even when I was not progressing. They were open in sharing their observations with caring curiosity. I knew it was caring because they would avoid any public displays that I could find embarassing. They would give me the space to talk about whatever struggle I might have and lay out my options instead of putting pressure on particular directions.

8.3.3 Seeking truth

One of my first personal understandings of what it means to be authentic as a human being was to be a seeker of truth, and this was important because I learned from my own experiences that there can be no social justice without the pursuit of truth. The understanding of what is meant by truth here is twofold; first, it is concerned with recognising what it is that I value and being open to questioning my own values as my subjective truths (Figure 29). For instance, I value self-understanding; does that mean that I value less those not open to learning about themselves? How does that then interact with me valuing my learners? Second, it reflects the pursuit of moving closer to universal truths, such as moving forward in understanding human nature. So although individual subjective truths are more like vignettes of what one might believe about themselves at any given moment, universal truths are

observed in motion because they can be characterised by a fluidity that we continue to struggle with comprehending (Figure 29).
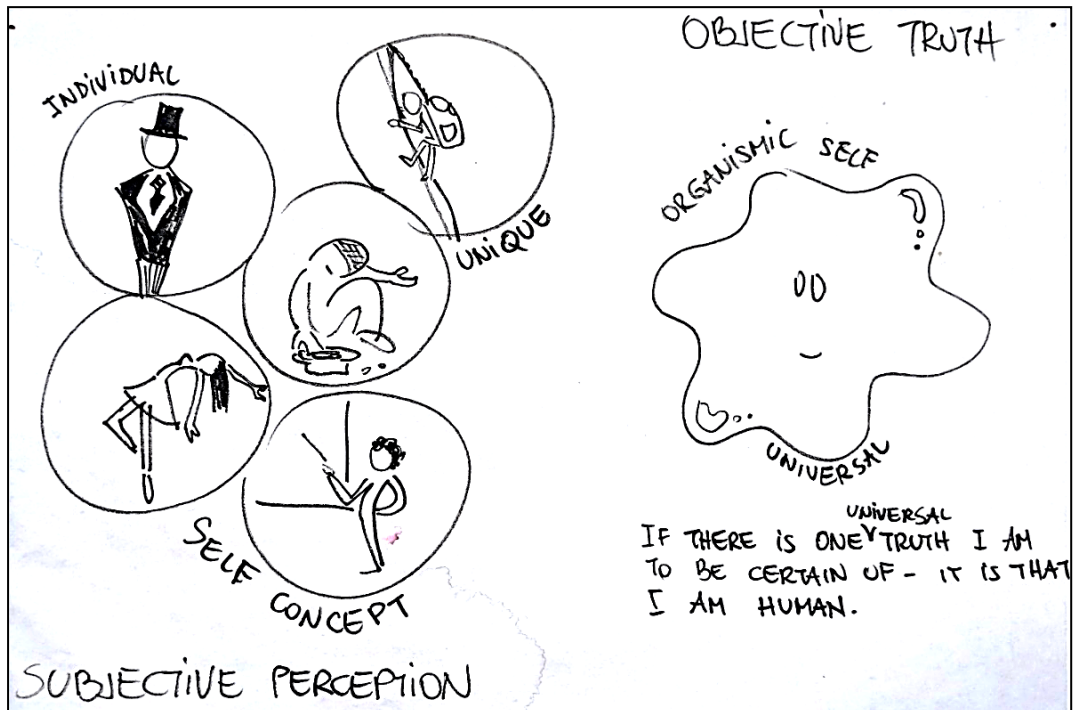

Figure 29. What do you mean by truth?

The combination of both pursuits outlines the values that I want to live by, enabling me to reveal the inconsistencies between my being and doing and my beliefs about the world. This is another form of being transparent and leaving myself open to being made aware in spaces of my own 'blind spots'. In my role as a pedagogue, this means that my intention is to remain equally open to recognising myself as a source of behaviours or attitudes that might be received as discriminative, unfair, judgemental, mean or punitive because I am open to learning what is useful and facilitative:

In one of the group discussions, when asked about my own reason for going to uni, I shared that it was during my first pregnancy, while scrubbing the floor in the Ibis Hotel, that I decided that I wanted to do something worthwhile with my life, that I didn't want to bring my kids into a world where I was just a cleaner. Then, one of my students said that their mum is a cleaner and that she is the main motivation for achieving their best. The discussion continued, but I was struggling to stay with it and started thinking about how this student must have felt (or any other) when I said 'just a cleaner' as not something that is worthwhile … I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me whole!

I could have just learned from this never to share personal stories because you never know how they might be received. However, while I was feeling guilty saying something that might have hurt others, I was also curious to understand where this devaluing came from. This exchange, along with other similar examples, brought to my attention that some of the values of the environment I grew up in, that I thought I resisted integrating as my own, were still within me. In my own self-concept, I thought I valued people based on my experiences of them, not based on their status or occupation. And yet, I just experienced myself harshly judging my own past as a cleaner, inevitably signalling to my students that I saw it as having a lower value. This reflection was unpleasant, but it became useful in starting to question my values deeper: how I arrived at that evaluation, how I justified it as my 'truth' and if it was something that resulted from my own experiencing or something I integrated from external sources.

I also learned that, in living in a world often experienced as oppressive to humanistic values, it can inhibit my ability to make constructive choices and can 'blurryfy' and confuse me; it is often easier to allow myself to get distracted, to shift my focus to *having* when *being* becomes uncomfortable. For example, using all the energy to *have* the best grades and prove one's own value rather than finding a new constructive way of *being* with classmates can be intimidating. Another example is having an appearance that challenges the standardised ways of presenting oneself rather than being involved in some form of action that truly liberates us. It is not difficult to lose touch with what really matters to me in the white noise of capitalism and the quick fix of temporary pleasures. In these instances, the pursuit of truth is even more important as I keep from straying too far from my own inner truths of what is of value and staying attentive to the inner truths of others so that we can find better ways of being together in the world.

8.4 Conclusion

This autoethnographic study has uncovered a consistency in the way all of the themes presented have been evaluated: how useful they were in fostering the learning that moves, transforms and liberates. In this sense, being an authentic teacher means simply being a teacher who is useful in the processes of meaningful learning, both to oneself and others. To know what is useful, one must stay open, curious and receptive. The organismic evaluation of experiences based on their usefulness to a person, group or even the larger environment must be considered alongside intrinsic motivation;

experiencing oneself as useful in the context of meaningful learning and the changes that follow this learning is rewarding in and of itself. It goes beyond self-determination and moves towards reality determination, experiencing oneself as an energy that shapes the world one is part of.

This is where as a learner my intrinsic motivation was find my own direction in learning, finding a path where there was hope that it is a path towards improvement in a way that I understood and needed improvement. In that sense learner's authenticity was driven by the enhancing dimension of actualising tendency. Whereas as a teacher my intrinsic motivation was to facilitate spaces for the learners to find their own paths, as this will also have a broader benefit in context of reality we are co-creating. This then suggest that teacher's authenticity is primarily driven by formative tendency, concerned with the enhancement of others and the existing reality (Cornelius-White, 2004; 2007).

8.4.1   Concerns and Recommendations

Training as a counsellor, psychologist or social worker requires a significant amount of compulsory learning about oneself through personal therapy or group work, which includes unravelling one's own motivations, values and beliefs in preparation for encountering others, with the purpose of reducing the risk of harm to self and others. Teachers spend as much time, if not more, with children and young people as their parents, but ITT in the UK is does not prioritise self-understanding, and personal development consists mainly of acquiring subject knowledge, learning/teaching techniques and

behaviour management strategies. The issues with teacher retention

contribute to teacher training moving away from universities and into school-

based provisions, further reducing the space for critical reflection, group

debates and collaboration.

There is no need for Gove's (2010) craftsmen that deliver instruction

but for 'teachers of tomorrow' that facilitate learning spaces that release the

actualising and formative tendencies of their learners. This study is just an

invitation for other teachers and researchers to pursue a deeper

understanding of authenticity/inauthenticity in education, in connection to

motivation, wellbeing, positive/negative teacher-student relationships, or

learning communities.

CHAPTER 9

9 Critical Reflexivity

9.1 Researching in the 'real' world

As a primarily qualitative researcher, I am conscious of the critiques of the interpretative methods that have been put out by quantitative researchers, who state that interviews are unreliable research instruments that lack objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I understand the distrust in qualitative methods where the data can be corrupted by the researcher's bias, dishonesty on the side of the participant or the researcher or poor implementation of research instruments. However, I would argue that the same applies to quantitative researchers and their research methods. Therefore, regardless of the research design, researchers have the obligation to be vigilant truth seekers committed to developing their competency when applying their own research methods.

9.1.1 Access Impracticalities

I had a very naive mindset to start with when planning my research project. I moved from wanting to do a mixed method study, which was rightly unrealistic given my circumstances and time constraints before aiming for a qualitative study with trainee teachers, but I could not access them until they completed their training, which defeated the purpose. I then settled for any

teachers working in the SFE sector, and even that was not straightforward. With the current hyperfocus on the issues of well-being in society, I thought that the concept of well-being would be familiar and welcomed as the subject of research in schools. It is only when I started researching and engaging with teachers in an informal way that I began to understand the complexity of the current educational apparatus and unhelpful structures within it.

None of the primary and secondary schools contacted through generic channels responded to the invitation. The University of Nottingham contact, while initially enthusiastic, only introduced me to one school that chose not to participate in the research. When attempting to get more support from the university, my emails were no longer responded to. This process brought forth my naivety and challenged some of my idealistic expectations; I initially thought that because my intentions were constructive, the schools would welcome engaging with this project. The school that participated was not in the group of the schools approached initially, and I was only able to get through to the headteacher because I already had a contact in the school.

Although the initial aim was for all the teachers working in the school to receive the invitation to participate, the headteacher suggested teachers that would be 'good for the research'. Following ethical clearance from the university, the relevant information and consent forms were sent via email to the headteacher. I received emails from the teachers directly expressing their interest in participation. This included a newly qualified teacher (NQT), a qualified teacher (QT) near retirement and a QT teacher midcareer leaving

the school. The selection was accepted based on the agreement that the teachers would participate voluntarily and that there would be no pressure or expectation for them to do so. The headteacher ensured that the participation would be presented to teachers as voluntary. The participants were all female, white British and working with children in reception up to Year 2 (ages 5–7). The fact that the teachers in the first study were identified or even appointed by the person in a position of power/authority undermines the nature of voluntary participation. This is especially the case considering I was not included in the part of initial communication between the gatekeeper and teachers.

I wanted to approach the teachers directly without what I perceived as 'interference' from the gatekeeper; however, recruiting teachers in this way would require additional time commitments that I did not have. It came as an unexpected outcome that another teacher was suggested by the participant in the IPCA study. Hence, the reflective lifeworld case study was conducted with a participant who was identified through a snowballing sample and seemed eager to engage in the research project.

9.1.2 Researcher's Trust

Researcher's trust applies in two ways: first, having trust in oneself as a competent researcher and, second, experiencing being trusted by others as a researcher. These two phenomena interact with each other and either enhance one another or inhibit the overall process. Being recognised as

trustworthy and,, in this case, a competent researcher, can contribute to opening oneself up to inner dialogue. What does it mean to be a trustworthy researcher? In my own experience, I was not confident to start with; it was a higher level of study for the new environment; the research process itself was new because I wanted to do it in a way I have not before.

Having support from my supervisors was crucial at this beginning stage when I was finding my feet. My supervisor's trust in my capacity to find my own way through this was challenging at first, but it led to new discoveries and recognition of my own limitations and boundaries. At the same time, I found it difficult to maintain my motivation when faced with access challenges and the sometimes very dismissive behaviours of the gatekeepers. This connected to the feelings of rejection and being unwanted; while I knew it was not personal, it did not stop me from experiencing it as such.

Examining my own trustworthiness and capacity for bias also took various forms. All emotions can be very helpful in learning (Cornelius-White & McCombs); however, in research, it is especially important to stay open to examining one's emotions so that they can be accepted and so we can let go of what feeds the bias (Vagle, 2014). For example, early on, I recognised I was angry with teachers, with myself as a teacher/pedagogue/mother. I was angry that we just carry forward pedagogies that we never found helpful ourselves. That anger and frustration was experienced as an obstacle; hence, initially, I strived to suppress it. Like Denzin (2010), I saw qualitative inquiry as

a possible way towards social justice, yet I did not accept my own anger at observed and experienced social injustices.

Being aware of the anger I was concerned it would compromise my research and my data, that it will bias the way I see and, more importantly, that my anger will leak into the interviews and lead to defensiveness of the participants who would experience me as a threat. That idea of being perceived as a threat also contradicted my self-concept of the one facilitating safety. So instead of opening up to understand it, to find place for it within myself, I leaned in the opposite direction, a place of numbness and passivity. I was not aware of doing that because I distorted it as acceptance.

However, acknowledging that the anger was there to start with contributed to a more careful consideration of my findings. I needed to make sure I was not judgemental, that this need to expose was coming from a place of curiosity and search for the truth of that participant. This is where supervision played a central role, and more importantly, that the established relationships I had with both of my supervisors would have a good balance of safety and challenge. Vagle (2014) notes that phenomenological pursuits require both being honest and yet gentle, especially for novice researchers. My supervisors were helpful in restoring that balance when I struggled.

Another example of having doubts over my understanding was when, before meeting my supervisor, I felt that I had found what I was looking for in the responses from the participant. However, because I was not really

checking for the meaning and asking clarifying questions but stopping at my own interpretation that could be shared by the participant but equally could be different, my data were not deep enough. This reliance on what I thought it meant, rather than being intentionally curious, would likely contribute to the possibility of bias in writing up my findings (Vagle, 2014).

Furthermore, there might have been another reason for staying on the surface. I remember my supervisor's question at the time: 'It's almost as if you were protecting them (participants) from something?' His perception was accurate, though he thought I was reluctant to reveal uncomfortable truths about the teachers, perhaps because of identifying with them. I was protecting them from myself. It had something to do with patronising experiences when applying for ethics, feeling that I am not being trusted to act in the best interest of others and feeling that I am a threat.

This process facilitated my own realisation of what it means to be the 'limitation' of my own research. Today, I know that I can trust myself precisely because I was aware that I could not trust myself and I continued working through it in supervision until I was satisfied.

Trusting my own methods

Initially, I started drawing my reflections following the reading and rereading of the IPCA interviews. I learned that my visual thinking process is helpful in capturing the meanings and initial interpretations because they are like photographs that can take me back to the framed moment and have much

better accuracy than words. Following these quick sketches, I first manually coded the printed interviews and then proceeded to imputing my comments, thoughts and summaries to identify the emerging themes.

Second, I used the MAXQDA programme to code the interviews. I started from the beginning to identify any differences in the process. While using qualitative software proven to offer me more structure and transparency, I still felt like I was guessing rather than knowing. I found it difficult to separate themes constantly overlapping and that depended on each other. At the end of this process, I arrived at the point where I felt I had exhausted the analysis.

The most surprising discovery was that the final themes corresponded to my initial sketches. It is possible that I was unconsciously influenced by my earlier drawings. However, my attempt at approaching the data set methodologically and trusting the guidance of conducting a study using IPA did not alter my visual thinking records. I found this very encouraging in support of embedding the creative analysis into my project. I am motivated to continue and expand the visual thinking practice as an equally valid form of analysis and possibly interpretation.

9.2 Phenomenologies and I

9.2.1 Perceived Challenges: PHENOMENA

I found it very useful use the structure developed by McCormack (2010) for reflecting on challenges in data collection for an IPA study (McCormack & Joseph, 2018):

Project size and time constraints

Honest assessment of personal rationale for choosing IPA

Equity and relational challenges

Neutrality and unexpected dynamics

Obsolete interviews

Monitoring personal biases and presuppositions

Environmental challenges

Nonreciprocal person-centred stance

Anxiety control and hidden agenda

Table 10. PHENOMENA table by McCormack (2010, p. 236).

I am going to adapt it slightly so it fits with my own research that includes IPA, reflective lifeworld research (RLR), as well as the autoethnography because all of those are concerned with a better understanding of the phenomena of teacher authenticity in the context of education.

9.2.2 Project size and time constraints

There is significant emotional labour involved all throughout the process of conducting research, from planning to gaining access to participants to the challenging task of 'collecting the data'. I have vastly overestimated my capacity as a result of the initial energy boost from excitement; I had to downsize my aspirations for a larger study. First, I have planned for ideal conditions, both regarding my research and the life outside of it. I found it very difficult all the way through to manage competing needs: my own needs as a researcher, truth seeker, creative spirit, mother, wife and friend and the needs of others that I love, care for or/and value. I found a difficulty in adjusting and letting go of initial plans as a result of the unresponsiveness of those whom I counted on, and dealing with this consequential disappointment affected my enthusiasm and initial drive. I was prepared for this journey to be difficult because of the volume of academic work involved, but I was not prepared for the resistance or lack of interest from those whom I thought the study might benefit. It took me a while to understand and accept the complexity in pursuing this kind of inquiry in education, especially in state-funded education, and the multilayered and, in many ways, understandable lack of trust that permeates it. Here, it is understandable because I am most likely not the first researcher who wants to find out about the realities of schooling, expose the 'truth' and promises that this will contribute to change and improvement.

Regarding my own autoethnography, I have also overestimated my capacity. At first, it was just a way of tracking myself alongside my other

projects. As I became more engaged with it, I wanted to capture everything. I wanted to input some creative aspects that could be beneficial in communicating my findings and making them more accessible. One of the most unexpected challenges was to know when to stop and when the 'data collection' phase was over; as with the research subject being your own self, there is always access and opportunities to go deeper, along the emergence of a new understanding that continues to change.

9.2.3 Honest assessment of personal rationale choosing phenomenological methodologies

Before engaging with the pilot study, I was concerned with some of the unofficial encounters I had with other teachers, where bringing forward a subject of authenticity or even the importance of the relational components in the process of teaching and learning resulted in the spontaneous activation of defence mechanisms. Guilt and blame are intertwined in an anxious dance instead of freedom of expression. In the search for the expressions of the participants, I was determined to implement a nondirective approach.

My initial research question was as follows: 'Are authentic teachers more likely to stay in the profession?' My justification for using well-being as a frame for the interviews emerged from the existing research in the field of psychology, which implies that there is a significant correlation between authenticity and well-being. The initial question was based on my personal experience of striving to be authentic, regardless of the circumstances and taking ownership of everything that goes with it. For me, consequences of

being an authentic teacher included: meaningful occupation, lack of 'professional respect' (read: no one fears me!), personal growth, low income, uncertainty, experiencing freedom, experiencing fear, meaningful encounters with others, painful encounters and so forth. My experiences in the SFE sector were mainly as a school counsellor and occasional experiences of teaching; most of my teacher experiences were from significantly less restricted environments.

The autoethnographic studies were initially intended as a strategy to expand self-understanding as a researcher and a way of unearthing one's own bias. However, as access to participants continued to be problematic and the depth of the content from the participants was guarded, autoethnography became a pragmatic choice. Progressing through the data collection, I also saw value in exploring my experiences as a learner and my perceptions of others in their pedagogical roles.

A reflective lifeworld case study was a spontaneously occurring progression from the IPCA study. The IPA methodologies were more applicable to studies involving a number of participants (REF), while RLR seemed more suitable to a case study of a single participant.

9.2.4 Equity and relational challenges

Qu and Dumay (2011) suggest that '*the research interview can be characterized by an asymmetry of power in which the researcher is in charge of questioning a more or less voluntary and sometimes naïve interviewee'* (p.

239). Although the power dynamics are present in the context of the interview, my intention was to avoid taking away any power from the participants. To achieve this, a person-centred approach was the best process.

In some ways, the participants might perceive me as the one who holds the power, has the knowledge of the subject I am exploring and has control over the interview process. On the other hand, I felt that it was the teachers I was interviewing who held the power. They were all white English women, most of them with many years of experience as teachers. I am a Polish PhD student with limited experience as a researcher. Access to the participants seemed difficult for those outside the schools, which contributed to me feeling very weary regarding my 'performance'.

Marx and Treharne (2018) explore the idea of researching 'up, alongside, down', where the power dynamics between the researcher and participant vary depending on the circumstances that apply when the consideration of power dynamics is not straightforward. It was my intention to be alongside my participant, and for that reason, for the interviews, I wanted to be nondirective as a way of facilitating a safe space for all involved where we could experience our personal power and minimise the occurrence of the need for power over the other.

9.2.5 Neutrality and unexpected dynamics

I was aware of being uneasy before this interview. There was something authoritarian about this particular teacher, something that felt cold and threatening. I did acknowledge that before, but I might have avoided

reflecting on how it may impact on the actual interview, as it could have made me ever more self-conscious. This uneasiness disintegrated instantly when I received this self-doubting, self-critical person that, despite some of her judgemental statements about others, did not seem to like herself most of all.

The interaction with the participant in the RLR study was also unexpected, as I have experienced her as closely aligned in her understanding of schooling to myself. The interview felt more like a dialogic encounter, while, on the one hand, it brought some rich data. It also inhibited the potential to go deeper because I was assuming that I understand her without checking with her often enough.

9.2.6 Obsolete opportunities

Obsolete opportunities are instances where I noticed I have missed an opportunity to go deeper into the experiences of the participant. For example, I have interpreted the example below at face value. she compares herself, she highlights being useful and making a difference; perhaps, she is also justifying her choice of resigning from pursuing her primary passion, convincing herself that it was/is worth it:

And I think that's just so much a nicer way of a thing to see in it. Because I've got friends who I think, like yourself doing the PhD or they're doing they're still at university do whatever or … and I just think, sometimes, you know I've got I can make a difference to 23 children plus a year … .

At the beginning, I explained that it is a nondirective interview where I would not have any set questions and was interested in the participant's perception of their well-being in the context of working as teacher. Perhaps,

this is the reason why the teachers felt like just talking and not really living much space for any form of dialogue until the very end. Setting the frame and structure of the interview needs to be a conscious process rather than a natural occurrence.

I have not acknowledged the existence of the 'frame' provided by the theme set, which, in all three of the interviews, was the experiences of well-being in the context of work. It did not seem to invalidate my first interview where the teacher was engaged with her own reflective process, which was congruent with what I would expect of a teacher who searches for their truth and attempts to stay congruent with their values. Looking at it now, I could have easily brought the participant back to the frame by simply asking how it relates to their sense of well-being at work.

While talking about well-being seemed to be somehow connected to authenticity in the responses from two of the participants, it did not generate the same responses in the last participant. Therefore, in the case study interview, I decided to frame the interview by asking about experiences of being able to follow their own values in the context of work, which led to a better result.

9.2.7 Monitoring personal biases and presuppositions

In my IPCA study, there was a need for clarifying questions and striving to really understand the meanings behind the statements. I concentrated my energy on just listening to the teachers as if I were occupying a frame of

reference of a 'counsellor in the first session with a client' rather than an educational researcher. My presence wasn't focused enough on *understanding* the meaning of words, facts or experiences shared by the participant. This made it more difficult to distinguish between my own meaning-making and that of the participants.

I spent a very significant amount of time with these interviews, and some of my reflections seem inconsistent. For instance, in my first evaluation of the interview with teacher 1, I interpreted the findings in a very positive light: a passionate teacher, creative, loves to spend time with kids, finds meaning in her occupation, reflects on her journey through life, and is adaptable and committed. Perhaps, seeing her in this way was also a reflection of my own nativity in my initial (mis)understanding that the choice to be an authentic teacher is readily available.

However, with every consecutive reading of material, I began to notice other patterns that were very different from the initial interpretation. I have noted a judgemental approach to kids who might be 'problematic' and other people who do not have as meaningful a job as her. Her 'phobia' of getting sick and falling behind on her performance. At first, I thought she did not comment on the system because this is the way she was taught and would be critical once the intense enthusiasm wore off. In the end, I have concluded that she did not critique the system because she was a part of it—she seemed to function well in a competitive, result-driven environment. This experience highlights even further the importance of monitoring one's own

bias. It also strengthened my conviction in the value of collaboration in research; I found, importantly, the joy of working with others to audit the emerging themes and meanings and how this adds to the trustworthiness of the research.

9.2.8 Environmental challenges

The interviews in the IPCA study were conducted on the school premises, which felt safe and convenient. I had to wait for the first participant, which contributed to a build-up of anxious feelings and reminded me that I am adding pressure of additional activity for the teacher who already spent a whole day at school. However, once we started, there were no disruptions. The interview with the third participant in the IPA study had a variety of environmental challenges because it was happening during school.

First, I had to wait for the teacher, and then, there was an issue with finding a suitable space. The teacher did not bring back the signed consent form, and I did not have a spare (which I should have!), which meant we had to get one printed before we could start. The interview started after a 20-minute delay. The room we found had a glass door, and we could both be seen by the staff and pupils passing by, which took away the 'intimacy of the space'. The most challenging part was that the pupils were popping into the room because it was a room where the resources were kept, which interrupted the flow of the exchange on a few occasions.

9.2.9 Nonreciprocal person-centred stance

In the first two interviews, I struggled with keeping my inquisitive researcher at bay. I kept stepping out of the participant's frame of reference, feeling frustrated with myself and suppressing myself with silence. My approach towards the interviews was to listen first and foremost as I would listen in my first counselling session. I would not interrupt. I would check if I had heard right. I would paraphrase. I would accept everything as it emerged into the space of the room. However, it was not a counselling session; it was an interview for research with the purpose of collecting data relevant to my research questions. At that time, I could not get my head around how I was going to be nondirective if I was interested in a particular subject, here being bound by the constraints of time and access.

9.2.10 Anxiety control and hidden agenda

What I failed to note was the impact of this inner ongoing debate of how to remain nondirective, objective, decrease bias, and follow the truth of the participants—on me as a researcher. I felt constrained by the fear of the numerous elements that could go 'wrong'. This anxiety was initially generated by the process of seeking ethical approval to conduct the study. As a result, I believe I unconsciously decided that the 'safest' pathway would be to just listen. As I was interviewing teachers used to 'teacher talk', mostly listening did not seem problematic.

There was a degree of fear in me before every first interaction with an unknown human being. This feeling would disseminate if I felt warmth and

kindness or if I felt their pain and vulnerability, but it expanded when faced with hostility, anger, superiority and arrogance. Naturally, it expanded when I felt threatened. Fear is a powerful emotion, and I understand it may have prevented me from being truly present.

9.3 Personal and/or Universal

Although these reflections signify personally meaningful learning, based on my interaction with others, I am aware of being one of many PhD researchers who had similar experiences.

9.3.1 Lockdown and solitude

Although the impact of the national lockdown because of COVID-19 presented as distressing for most and traumatic to some, my own personal experience does not fit into those categories. I found that this situation created the space for solitude that I needed, but I do not think I would have recognised, and even if I would, it would be hard to make that space myself. Being isolated from others made me realise how many of my anxieties and maladjusted behaviours were my responses to my experience of the social environment I was a part of.

It created a space for existing without the social context other than my family where I am free to be; however, I need to be because I feel safe and loved here. This opened up a lot of space for going inwards, which might be

because there were very little outside distractions that existed in social interactions. In this solitude, I have located my own centre that, in my understanding, is crucial to maintaining balance within oneself; and also, it seems very easy for me to lose its location within me in the noisiness of messy human interactions. Here, I mean the everyday social comparisons, gossips, cultures of blame/deficit or other forms of 'judgmentalism', collective frustrations, unhelpful commentaries and all other forms of interactions when you leave distracted out of connecting to your own values or from where you are responsible for distracting others.

What I mean by maintaining balance is the process of the intrinsic valuing of what matters (what I value) and creating the spaces for it in negotiation with what matters to others in my perceptual field (perceived reality) to arrive at the most optimal arrangement. Regarding doctoral work, this might be choosing reading time over attending the workshops that I am invited to or reading books that are strictly relevant to my research direction rather than engaging in reading that is outside of it, as proposed by others (however interesting). It might also be meeting a fellow student who is struggling and offering support when I can or taking part in building a learning community. Maintaining balance means staying in touch with my inner valuing and observing my own experiences so that I can adapt my decisions in a way that is experienced as conscious rather than impulsive or conditioned.

9.3.2 On the Meanings of Words

When I started this doctoral work, I experienced excitement every time I found a source, an academic journal or another thesis that referred to a person-centred approach, even if the understanding of it seemed flattened, superficial or fragmented. I thought that I could use those as opportunities to 'build bridges' and illustrate the potential of the Rogerian approach through expanding those understandings. I also remember very sceptical reactions from my supervisors, sometimes perceived by me as frustration, signalling to me I am not understanding something. Although my supervisors were patient and explained this to me, my understanding was partial. So often, I am humbled by the wholistic understanding that arrives long after the intellectual one.

When exploring the environmental or existential conditions within which we strive to function in the context of formal education, I often experienced frustration with the perceived incongruence between what is communicated in words and what is actually actioned. For example, it seems plausible to assume that teachers care for the children. Here, one might stop at this assumption. However, one might note that the act of caring can be conceptualised in very different ways, here depending on our understanding of human nature. If humans and, in this instance, learners are viewed as 'blank slatess' with a nature that can be both constructive or destructive, then caring would involve the various means of control and manipulation that would steer the learner towards the pathways identified (by the teacher or educational system) as constructive. However, in a person-centred

understanding when human nature is constructive, this form of action would be considered harmful to the learning process of the person because it would inhibit their own agency and signal a lack of understanding, acceptance and trust.

This led me to reflect on the initial meaning-making process signified in a word and how that meaning behind that word diminishes and fades away when it is disconnected from the body of knowledge it belongs to. I explored how the words become flat, soundless and meaningless when they are used without understanding or, worse, when the credibility of the word is assumed but not a contested meaning is used to support arguments that actually contradict the original meaning or purpose of the word. This form of manipulation in and itself seems like a betrayal. However, the loss of the meaning or betrayal behind using the words that sound promising but mean nothing is not the end of these repercussions. What I have come to understand is that the whole body of knowledge can gradually be discredited as a result and rendered as inconsistent, unreliable and, worse of all, presented as tried and failed.

I also learned to appreciate the documented continuity in the shaping of ideas and philosophies in the journey of seeking the truth. It is my perception that in education, there seems to be an abundance of assumptions and replications of practices without understanding or questioning them. The value placed on making new discoveries introduces an additional level of conditioning in the faced-paced neoliberal systems; new individual discoveries

seem to have more value than shared in-depth understandings. It seems to me that this is one of the reasons why old theories are being 'rebranded' and their sources not traced or omitted entirely because if what is a possibility today does not contain what was not so possible yesterday. In that 'rat race' of 'publishing or perishing', we lose something far more important than just crediting the 'right' researchers; we fragment the knowledge, discard its history and lose opportunities for learning from those before us that documented their efforts so we can take it a step further. It seems to me we make a lot of spot steps thinking we are walking forward.

Rogers was clear in his understanding that the truth we find is only complete until we can see behind it, and once we gather new understandings that seem even deeper and 'truer', they become the whole truth until they are contested again. Although the meanings might be infinite, as suggested by Dahlberg, it is my understanding that if we are consistent and systematic at both documenting and challenging our findings, we will arrive at a place of acceptable truth that will help us organise our realities in the most optimal ways. This is the reason I want to continue tracing and documenting how my work connects to an existing body of understanding, how the past made my present a possibility and how it can improve our tomorrow.

9.3.3 Integrating Creativity

There was no plan for any form of illustrations in my research proposal. However, as I started my PhD journey there was an increasing tension within me in response to an expanding awareness of how much knowledge I wanted

to assimilate and how difficult remembering and contextualising fast flowing input of new information was. First, I started drawing to remember some concepts, names of philosophers in connection to their ideas, to capture conflicts in understanding of positionalities and methodological inconsistencies. I was operating from a place, 'I can't explain it, I will just draw it' or 'if I can see it how it looks like, I can understand it'. I began sharing my spontaneous illustrations with peers and some of the academic staff which was usually received with positive regard. But I did not recognise them as part of my academic work at that time. Initially it was my understanding that this form of creativity did not belong in the academic research practice unless it applied to research in fine arts or related disciplines. That understanding was incongruent with my experiencing, where the illustrations were integral to my thesis and did not differ in value to linguistic formulations. This discovery presented a new set of challenges to overcome; is this work 'good enough' to be displayed in the thesis and who is to determine that.

I was very critical of my own drawings to start with, at times ashamed of my lack of skill to convey what is in my mind, to a blank piece of paper. The feedback and encouragement from others did not dissolve my self-judgements. I spent hours drafting and redrafting ideas to discard them at the end. This was part of invisible workload, but my understanding was that if I have critiqued it to the core and addressed flaws available to my awareness – I would be prepared for critique of others, I would feel safer. This inner struggle made it more difficult to introduce the idea in its full extent to my supervisors. It was difficult to justify spending my resources on the creative

elements when I already struggled with the time for essential reading and writing. However, the more I struggled the more convinced I was that the illustrations are part of my academic work. There was also a commitment from the start of my PhD to continue leaning into my discomfort as a pathway to personal growth. Looking through the illustrations included it is visually transparent that some illustrations took me hours while others merely minutes, some looked aesthetically pleasing, completed while others resemble doodles and scribbles. This in itself is an evidence of the increasing unconditional positive self-regard, I am safe to display my scribbled parts of self because I value them myself.

CHAPTER 10

10 Conclusions and Implications

10.1 Key Research Conclusions

The current dissertation was conducted to better understand the phenomenon of teachers' authenticity and its potential link to teachers' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction as well as authenticity as a pedagogical approach. Methodologically, a key aim of the present thesis was to examine subjective experiences in the search for both individual and universal core meanings surrounding teacher/learner authenticity. Collectively, the findings, although somewhat overlapping with existing research on teachers' authenticity, as presented in qualitative meta-synthesis (Chapter 5), offer new insights into authenticity, showing how this is not only a desired quality of the teacher but an active pedagogical approach that has impact on formation of constructive relationships that can enhance engagement with meaningful learning.

In this chapter, I present the most significant threads that became visible as an outcome of the studies comprising this thesis. First, I look at the connection between teacher or learner authenticity and experiential safety in connection to intrinsic motivation and openness to experience. Second, I

explore the impact of authenticity on the formation of constructive relationships that facilitate meaningful learning. Third, I look at the systemic challenges including harmful impacts of systemic incongruence on education. This chapter culminates with a section on potential future directions.

10.1.1 Authenticity as a path to experiential safety

The connection between teacher's/learner's authenticity and experiential safety has not yet been explicitly explored in the literature. Yet, this connection seems important since basic human need for psychological safety is essential to optimal functioning and openness to learning (Kriz, 2008). At first, experiential safety/unsafety emerged in my autoethnographic journaling and reflections on how experiences in education impacted my engagement and psychological wellbeing. I found the relationship between them to be mutual, authenticity seem to impact positively on experiential safety, and the safer I felt the more authentic I was becoming. The connection between psychological wellbeing and authenticity informed my IPCA study, where I tested my tentative hypothesis that by asking teachers about their well-being, I would hear about their authenticity. In retrospective, focusing on psychological safety instead of psychological wellbeing might have enhanced both the data collection and the analysis of IPCA.

The autoethnographic study portrayed a significant struggle with experiencing inner safety that was only magnified by an interpretation of the environment as hostile or threatening. To a degree, it did not matter how 'real' the threat was; it only mattered how real it was from the subjective

perspective of the learner/teacher. The difficulty lies in the inhibitive nature of fear, which prevents the individual from challenging their own preconceptions and opening up to experiencing that leads to meaningful learning. The attitude of the 'Kafkaesque clerk' (Plust et al., 2021a) and choice of compliancy, as well as defiance, that surfaced in the interviews with teachers was all connected to experiencing fear. It was evident that the function of control was to supress one's own experiential unsafety that was noticeable in teachers' expressions, such as being a 'control freak' or 'perfectionist'. Indeed, Kriz (2008) explored self-inflicted control activated by fear of chaos, helplessness, or unwanted change.

This finding was consistent across all the studies, where teachers report giving in to the systemic requirements even if they conflict with their own values out of the fear of being judged, blamed, or punished. The constant threat of being viewed as 'not good enough', not trustworthy enough to make constructive choices neglects teachers' and learners' needs for agency and competency that is known to sustain intrinsic motivation. Therefore, the controlling behaviours in the context of education are often experienced as threatening to the concept of self and contradict their commonly advocated function of ensuring safety (Moller & Deci, 2009). Furthermore, the control mechanisms are more efficient, when both the rewarding and punitive measures reinforce the conditions of worth attached to achievement and performance. This is where the teacher's self-concept might be threatened with external evaluation, for instance the self-concept as an 'good teacher'

can be threatened by external evaluation and complains around student's failure. Compliance here maintains psychological safety.

The Rogerian (1980) proposition of non-directivity and 'freedom to learn' in the context of education needed for authenticity to develop is often misunderstood and met with scepticism, as if it signifies complete anarchy and chaos. To the contrary, in the current study, I found that the more responsible freedom one has, the more defined and socially constructive their direction becomes. This is anchored in trust that one can keep oneself safe enough and be responsive to the need for experiential safety in others. This is where experiential safety comes from knowing and accepting oneself and recognising and attending to one's own psychological needs, and in the case of a teacher, in knowing one's own learners and facilitating environments where they can meet their own learning and developmental needs. Trust was explored in all of the interviews with the teachers, as facilitative to authenticity; whether this was placing trust in others, so they could take responsibility; or trusting oneself and being more aware of what one is responsible for.

Having punitive mechanisms of control in place by default implies that we cannot be trusted, but it also takes away the weight of responsibility from ourselves for creating our own safety and places it in the system. A wild predatory animal cannot be trusted not to attack a human, hence they must be caged or subdued, and when that animal breaks loose and attacks, the responsibility is not with the animal but with the one that failed to keep him 'safe' in the cage. This comparison only works if we understand our human

nature as in large parts orientated towards anti-social and destructive behaviours. This view stands in direct opposition to Rogerian theory as well as my experiential knowledge and understanding where we can be trusted to keep ourselves and each other safe enough to learn and develop in a constructive direction.

Furthermore, as specified in Plust et al (2020) the conditions of belonging, self-organising systems, and intentional critical consciousness that facilitate authenticity can now be viewed as facilitating experiential safety. If the expectation is for teachers to grow and learn with their learners and shape their practice so it meets the needs of contemporary diverse classrooms, teachers need to be trusted enough to make the changes needed for progression (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Cornelius-White, 2007; McCombs, 2001, 2013). Notably, being trusted does not mean absolute freedom but a freedom that one consciously accepts responsibility for, the choices made might involve some positive risks, but they also need to be safe enough to see potential mistakes as learning opportunities rather than irreparable ruptures.

10.1.2   Teachers' authenticity and the power of relationships

The experiential safety discussed above can be viewed as relational, whether it is in relation to ourselves or others. Relationships can either enhance or hinder the experiences of psychological safety needed for effective engagement in learning. Being authentic was seen as enabling the formation of trusting relationships in which learners were safe to learn in their own way.

All studies presented in this thesis suggest that the more authentic the teacher strives to become the more value they place on the importance of constructive and supportive relationships. As explored and evidenced here, teachers' authenticity aligns itself with Schmid's (2001) encounter attitude orientated towards supporting others in their enhancement through meaningful learning within positive relationships which has also been reflected in studies by Aspy and Roebuck (1972), Cornelius-White (2007), Cornelius-White (2010) or Moustakas, (1966).

Both IPCA and reflective lifeworld case study found that bearing witness to children's meaningful learning was elaborated as central in finding teaching to be rewarding and was intensified when teachers were recognising their relationship as facilitative to that learning. This can be framed in the context of the outcome of qualitative metasynthesis that unveiled a shared understanding among the researchers that authentic teachers are caring, congruent, open to encounters and critically conscious (Plust et al., 2021a). These qualities are closely aligned with the conditions of UPR (caring), genuineness (congruence), critical thinking (critically conscious) and empathy communicated through the dialogic encounters (open to encounter) found to foster positive teacher–student relationships connected to effective learning (Cornelious-White, 2007). The significant difference between the findings of Plust et al. (2020) and Cornelious-White's (2007) meta-analysis of teacher–student relationships was the intentional non-directivity in connection to teachers' authenticity (Plust et al, 2020). The nondirective approach was also identified as the most effective in promoting student and teacher engagement

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by the teachers in the case study and autoethnography. Teacher's authenticity in this doctoral study manifests as openness to examining own pedagogical decisions against the criteria of what is most useful to the learners. This means openness to learners' perceptions, needs, experiences and commitment to evolving own practice to align with their direction. It is also an intention to understand the learners, as far as possible, so they can better understand themselves.

One of the ways that a teacher's authenticity might manifest in relationships is in the congruence between the values communicated as important and those that are visible through relational actions. In this dimension, authenticity aligns itself with the teacher's integrity (Santoro & Morehouse, 2011), and it can be linked to the idea of morality and ethics (Taylor, 1991); but having integrity does not necessarily mean being authentic. Integrity can be automated; one can have a strict moral or pedagogical code that has been introjected (accepted as one's own) without ever being questioned or organismically evaluated, resulting in incongruence. An example of that was evident in the autoethnographic study where being hardworking and always busy was a condition of worth introjected as own value and carried forward in pedagogical practice. An external expectation to work at 120% all the time followed with guilt and a sense of uselessness if that wasn't the case. The negative impact on relationships with learners of leaving that unexamined was twofold; firstly, it impacted on the quality of interactions that became transactional and secondly, it resulted in more

controlling and judgemental attitudes towards disengaged learners. It was

only through opening up to the experiences of both inner discomfort and the

learners' responses that were challenging my self-concept that state of

incongruence was addressed. This tension between love for children and

demoralising practices has been captured in the IPCA study and reflective

lifeworld case study (Plust et al, 2021), where the very possibility of teacher-

learner relationship exists in a space of contradictory ideas of what is

experienced as useful to the learners and what is dictated to the teachers as a

'good education'. This contradiction between the values underpinning

education is also captured in work of Amsler (2011), McCombs (2010)

Thompson (2010) where the idea of education as 'public good' is contested.

10.1.3   Systemic Challenges

Initially, I wanted to know if authentic teachers would be more likely to

stay in the profession, but this line of inquiry proved difficult because I was

becoming increasingly aware that the very possibility of being authentic as a

teacher might not be conceived as possible in the context of UK education,

especially when it comes to SFE, because of the increasing pressures of

accountability and performativity informed by th (Ball, 2003; Ball 2018;

Perryman, 2006; Perryman & Calvert, 2020). The findings from the RLR case

study explored the role of distrust in relation to dependency and

powerlessness, where rigid structures, control and standardised learning

rendered both teachers and learners powerless and dependent on a system

that determined their worth based on student exam results (Ball & Hannam,

2020; Plust et al., 2021). This contradicts the very idea of education as a pathway to independence and empowerment.

It seems interesting that the empirical studies, with the exception of the studies by Akoury (2017) and Plust et al. (2021b), did not explicitly acknowledge the influence of broader socioenvironmental conditions such as forces of capitalism and neoliberalism that impact the very possibility of becoming authentic. It is as if the educational system itself has been in a state of incongruence, inevitably creating conditions contributing to alienation of its members. In that context, teachers' authenticity is a threat not to the system but to the external forces attempting to control it.

Perhaps one of the most significant outcome of the current study is the contemplation of psychological harm in education that results in or contributes to the incongruence and alienation of teachers and learners, manifesting as exhaustion, demoralisation, anxiety, disengagement, demotivation and other forms of distress. The harmful potential evident in this current study, is also reflected in frightening discourses of well-being–achievement 'trade-offs' that inform educational policies, in which prioritising one comes at the cost of the other (Clarke, 2020; Heller-Sahlgren, 2018). Sims and Allen's (2019) suggestion of supporting NQT to avoid schools with 'high usage and high loss of NQTs' as a strategy to reduce teacher attrition is also alarming. The prevailing threatening cultures of blame (Perryman & Calvert, 2020), deficiency (Thompson, 2010), fear (Plust et al., 2020) and accountability (Ball, Perryman) are employed as a means of increasing teachers' efficiency and

learners' academic performance. One of the interviewed teachers asked,

'*How can anyone be looking at a system like that and saying that sounds good for the child*?' (Plust et al., 2021). The findings also captured the connection between inauthenticity and a state of exhaustion, tensions, defensiveness and disengagement (Plust et al., 2021). This seems relevant in relation to burnout, which can be understood as an outcome of depleting teachers' intrinsic motivation by inhibiting the possibility of relatedness, competence and agency (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Tremblay et al., 2009). Many of the proposed solutions to those issues affecting both teachers and learners in the UK are based on punitive or coercive principles (behaviour hubs, financial rewards, accountability systems, etc.) that are known to contribute to demotivation and alienation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2013).

On first thought findings of the current dissertation seemed to signal that the more authentic teachers become, the more likely they are to leave the profession because the values driving education are in tension with the individual values of the teacher (Plust et al., 2021). This was connected to teachers becoming more aware of their own values (e.g., creativity, freedom to learn, emotions, relationships, agency) while being critically conscious of their role in enabling the system that implicitly opposed those values (Plust et al., 2021). However, progressing through this research, it became apparent that, although there are systemic issues that contribute to the distress of teachers and learners, there might also be distinct psycho-socio conditions within and between the individuals that inhibit their personal power needed to

activate the enhancement of the system. Teachers and learners are the system and it is both compliancy and defiance that sustains it. Compliancy of those that achieve well by the measures of the system as well as the compliancy of those that experience themselves as powerless within the system. Similarly, defiance of those within the system that are then expelled as threats rather than a helpful parts as well as defiance of those identifying themselves as out-of-system identified as threats to unite against, strengthening the system. It was a study by Hannam (2021) that challenged further my initial evaluations; he appears to be relentless on moving into educational spaces and testing the perceptual rigidity to see what else might be possible within the system. In the data collected and evaluated in this thesis there are significant differences between teachers' subjective experiences of psychological safety and reported attempts at following own values when they oppose the expectations. The NQ teacher did not critique the system at all and focused all the energy on keeping up with the demands, fearing falling behind. Teacher in the case study decided to leave the profession as she was becoming increasingly aware of its challenges that seemed insuperable, rendering her powerless (Plust et al, 2021). The autoethnography captured experiences where teachers accepted that they are part of the living system and choose to test and learn what that part might be capable of doing. If authenticity is about recognising oneself as a complex human organism, it seems that teachers' authenticity is also about recognising oneself as a living part of the organismic system of society or education.

Applying Kriz's (2011, 2013) idea of the organismic living system, to be motivated towards change, those that the system consists of need to be open to the experiences that might signal possible enhancement to the existing structure without threatening it. To take this further, the more open to learning teachers and learners are, the higher the chances of releasing actualising and formative tendencies of the system that they are part of to enable its change and growth from within. This is where teachers' and learners' authenticity, as grounded in a person-centred approach to non-directivity, becomes a pedagogy of liberation and transformation. Rogers said that 'when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change' and here I propose that the same applies to the organismic living system of education, where accepting it just the way it is, is the only way to change it. This is not a passive approach but an empathic one, to accept just as it is, there must be a commitment to understanding all of the complexity of 'what is'. No defences, no distortions, accurate symbolisation of experiences within it. Only then education can truly become a public good.

10.2 Future Directions

I started from the position of holding teachers responsible for their pedagogical choices, and the only leniency in that judgment was based on the assumption that some teachers do not understand the extent to which their actions can affect their learners. In my naivety, I thought that documenting the potential of becoming authentic would encourage other teachers to strive for authenticity in their practice. Progressing through my studies, I learned that

the evidence documenting the benefits of person-centred education was already in place. It was also through this research that I became conscious of the influence of the external forces of capitalism, colonialism and existing power structures on education today.

That critical awareness had an impact on my interpretation of the findings; I learned that educational communities do not identify as complex organismic living systems but as an educational apparatus with some cogs regularly oiled and maintained and others worn out and easily replaceable, all turned by some external forces. Authenticity is state of consciousness where learners and teachers recognise themselves as living parts of the organismic system and begin to learn about their individual capacities as well as collective potential. As such it implies taking responsibly for own part in the functioning of the organism, and that might not feel safe enough if own self-concept is rigid and shaped by introjected values. In fact, the experiences voiced by all of the teachers in my study evidenced threats of being judged as not good enough, being blamed for underachievement of their learners, being measured against others, being forced to engage in pedagogies that contradict their understanding of what is most useful to learning.

Future research informed by the findings of this thesis might involve application of the authenticity-facilitative conditions to the context of education and observing their potential impact on experiential safety and relationships in connection to meaningful learning. For example, introducing a year-long

personal development groupwork module based on person-centred approach as part of ITT or introduction of person-centred encounter groups in schools.

There is also potential in conducting a quantitative study that measures authenticity in teacher-learner relationship in connection to learning, motivation, and/or creativity. What I mean here is using the authenticity scale to explore possible connection between authentic/inauthentic teachers and inauthentic/authentic learners and its possible implications for openness to experience in learning.

Another line of inquiry would be to pursue a deeper understanding of the potential link between authenticity and formative tendency of the learning communities. This could involve a longitudinal projects setting up experiential learning groups for existing staff, both teachers and teacher assistants, with the aim of expanding consciousness around meaningful learning, finding own authenticity and personal power and then documenting its impact on the organismic system of school. In short would becoming more authentic activate teachers to search for new solutions to existing problems within education. This might require further exploration of the current realities in education as public good versus harm in education as a way of the commitment to wholistic empathic understanding of existing challenges and possibilities.

The studies included approached the phenomena of authenticity in depth, but the sample only explores it and larger scale studies as well as diverse samples could offer further insights.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. A systematic review and metasynthesis of qualitative research into teachers' authenticity

A systematic review and metasynthesis of qualitative research into teachers' authenticity

Urszula Plust, David Murphy & Stephen Joseph

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Appendix 2. '*Sucking results out of children*' reflective lifeworld case study of a primary school teacher striving for authenticity

'SUCKING RESULTS OUT OF CHILDREN' REFLECTIVE LIFEWORLD CASE STUDY OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER STRIVING FOR AUTHENTICITY

Urszula Plust, Stephen Joseph & David Murphy

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