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AUTHORING OUR CULTURE:
Using Narrative to Explore the Student-Learner's Understanding of Self within the Educative Relationship

Kathy Kipp

Supervisor: Aidan Seery

A thesis written in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy (Ph.D.)

September 2012
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university.

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SUMMARY

This study was interested in looking into the life and experience of ordinary teenaged secondary students and set out to discover their themes of self and the place of these themes within the educative relationship. This was neither an advocacy nor interest driven study in regards to the population, the interest being solely in recognizing the secondary student as a life with self and experience that could and should have an influence on the knowledge at play within the classroom. In regards to a contribution to knowledge, the research offers the connection between this ordinary population and their themes of self and the student-teacher-knowledge triad in both a theoretical and practice-based manner.

The literature used to guide the methods was based in the study’s two research questions: 1. what themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student-learner) of a personal narrative, and 2. what relevance do the emergent themes of self have to the student-teacher-knowledge relationship. Specifically, in regards to each element of the educative relationship and foundation in the methods used, there was a consideration of a learner profile (student), the nondirective model of teaching (teacher), and the narrated self (knowledge).

In regards to the methods, the multi-approach design of the research was qualitative in nature and conducted from an ethnographic perspective which used a narrative methodology to interact with a select group of student-learners. Specifically, the quasi-ethnographic approach provided the context with the research being conducted in a female Transition Year classroom for the course of a school year; the researcher assumed the mantle of teacher and the voluntary participants became the students. The narrative approach was both the process and the product of the study and was generated through a curricular intervention written purposefully for the research using Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) Understanding By Design. The student-participants were responsible for writing weekly narratives in response to classroom prompts; in addition, at the end of the course students created a reflective and analytical narrative based on their formative work. This study also has the methodological features of a case study in regards to the presentation of the data for analysis and discussion.
The data were analysed in three stages, with the first two stages being participant-led. The students performed a thematic analysis of their raw data and then created a reflective analytic narrative using the guiding lens of Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional viewing frame, a frame specifically interested in situation, temporality, and interaction within the narrative. The last stage of analysis was researcher-led and used the participant end narratives as the data for the application of Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self. The data, analysis and discussion were presented in two chapters with one chapter interested in the data across the cohort and one chapter dedicated to the presentation of a single participants’ story.

Preliminary findings from the data revealed that the major themes of self for this population were trust within the context of friends, love within the context of family, and pressure within the context of school. After applying the viewing framework and the indicators of self to this data, the key finding of the study in response to the first research question was in the articulation of this population as a relational, transitional, hopeful, stable, and experienced self ready to own and share her story. In regards to applying this finding to the second research question, the key findings were in the students articulating a relational self and the need for and recognition of an individual relation to the three points (student-teacher-knowledge) within the educative triad.

The main contributions of this research are to the theory of the ordinary teenaged female self as well as to the methodological use of a curricular tool for authentic voice data collection. In addition, this study contributes to practice in its recommendation for the acknowledgement of these themes of self within the educative relationship on both a communal and individual level and by the part of the teacher and the knowledge at hand.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When people used to ask me what I taught, I would reply, “Lives.” Such a response was whimsical, daunting, foreboding, and accurate. Coming from me, it is also contained a weighty sincerity. The response to this answer was shock, uncertainty, and a conviction that I did not hear the question correctly the first time around. The answer being searched for was a bit more pedantic. The people asking wanted to know that I taught high school English to freshmen and seniors, in both the honours and academic capacity. I taught reading, writing, and the novel they loved to hate when they were in school. I taught sentence structure and thesis statements, visual aids and documentation. These answers were what they were searching for, but the reality was, I taught lives. Not people. Not students. Lives. I taught bad days and good days, divorces and break ups, making the school play and losing the big game. I taught about getting up when you are down, about living the story of your life, about choice and consequence, and about self-respect and willpower. When I did my job well, I taught lives.

For ten years, as an American high school English teacher, I watched the pendulum swing between initiatives and strategies that whirred into a barely comprehensible — and impossible to articulate! — alphabet soup. I championed multiple intelligence instruction, curricularly aligned courses based on literacy strategies, integrated differentiated instruction, purposefully assessed for learning, and was mindful of my options for interventions. And in all this implementing and practicing of ideas, I consistently wondered, where were the lives? Where were Ryan and Justin, Jackie and Alicia? Where were the faces that stare back at you, the lives behind the data, numbers, and theory? Where were students in all of this and when do they get a say? Because after all, schooling?...teaching?..it is for their lives and about them, isn’t it? Yet when I dared express this out loud, it seemed as though I was in the minority, regulated to the position of naive dreamer interested in stirring the pot. So, instead of raising my hand to a chorus of impervious sighs in staff meetings, I turned to action-based initiatives rooted in this very premise.
I began to formulate this area of interest my first year as a teacher; I academically pursued this interest while working towards my Master of Education in Interdisciplinary Studies: Curriculum and Instruction. At that time, I engaged in action research to author a senior level English course that tested out my personal practice based theories in combination with Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's *Understanding by Design* (1998, 2005) curricular design model. The goal was to try to turn disenchanted observers into active learners through a purposeful and participatory emerging spiral curriculum. Reinvigorating students’ interest in learning and helping them maximize their personal potential were priorities in laying the foundation of this course.

After six years of teaching and reworking this course based on teacher and student input, it became clear that while I had opened a window as a teacher, it was now time to assume the mantle of researcher so as to open the door to my own metaphorical front porch. With a growing interest and belief in the statement that ‘we teach children not content’, it was now time for me to stand in the ‘skin’ and the ‘heads’ of Ryan, Justin, Jackie, and Alicia – the ordinary, everyday student – and take on the challenge of ‘situat[ing]...knowledge in the living context’ (Bruner 1996: 44).

1.2 THE RESEARCH

To this end and with this as the personal interest and motivation behind the research, the purpose of this study is to research student self as means of giving students’ life, voice, and presence within the classroom. The aim of the research is to focus on the student portion of the educative (student-teacher-knowledge) relationship with the hope of exploring how and why the student is a contributing, knowledgeable, and experienced member within this relationship.
Specifically, the research questions of this study are:

- **What themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student-learner) of a personal narrative?** and

- **What relevance do the student-learners' emergent themes of self have for the student-teacher-knowledge relationship?**

To clarify, 'themes of self' refers to the themes, or dominant ideas, that emerge from a personal narrative which is analysed primarily by the teller of the narrative, in this case, the student-learners who are creating them. The term student-learner (to be delineated and defined fully in Chapter 2) draws on the connotations of the word learner to acknowledge the student as an active participant within the classroom. In regards to this research questions' relevance to education, as the personal narratives are told by learners within a classroom setting and the interest is in the themes these learners identify, the question is solidly set within the educational context. Furthermore, as the second research question identifies the specific interest in the relevance of these identified themes of self to the educative relationship, the relation to education and educational practice is explicit.

In the search for answers to these questions, this study will look at literature surrounding the student-teacher-knowledge relationship as well as self and narrative. It will then join the theoretical to the practical by situating the research in a classroom created around an educative relationship interested in the notion of true 'selves'. Within this classroom, instruction will be based on a curricular intervention authored specifically for this study which will solicit two types of narrative data from the student-participants, weekly formative data and a final summative narrative reflection. In regards to the ‘themes of self’, the student-participants will take on the role of research co-contributor as they perform a thematic analysis and create a reflective analytic narrative (based on Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional narrative viewing framework) on their own data. The researcher will then analyze the data using Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self to provide a holistic commentary on the population. In regards to the ‘student-teacher-knowledge relationship’, with the acknowledgement of a purposefully crafted educative
relationship within the ethnographic setting, the findings from the first research question will be examined by the researcher to make recommendations towards the second.


Specifically, in regards to an educative relationship that acknowledges the personal selves involved, within the Irish context this study aligns itself most closely with the ideas put forth by Pádraig Hogan (2010, 1995) and the TL21 papers (Hogan et. al. 2007). In specifically connecting the two areas of interest – the student and the educative relationship – the popularity of student voice is evident throughout educational research and this study shares an interest with the working of Thompson and Gunter (2007, 2006), Ruddock and Fielding (2006), and Flutter and Ruddock (2004) as well as with the gendered notions of self of Knox (2006). In thinking about the role of narrative and self within this study, with the understanding of narrative as a way of making meaning and expressing the developing self, this study is situated within, once again, the works of Bruner as well as Polkinghorne (1996, 1988).

In regards to a contribution to knowledge, this study adds to the limited non-advocacy driven narrative research being done with students. This study is not interested in giving voice to a specifically defined group of students, but in listening to the voices that simply exist within the classroom. While many other studies are interested in bringing to light the experience of the ‘labelled’ student, this study makes no differentiation and is simply about exploring and understanding the experience, perspective and life which exists within the ‘ordinary’ self (C. Taylor 1989).

In addition, as this research is also interested in (and set within) the educative relationship, this recognition of the ordinary life and self of the student also offers a contribution to knowledge within this frame. In regards to the triad, much research is done around the
teacher and knowledge points, however work done around life as lived by the students and the possible repercussions of this within the educative relationship is minimal. By exploring the possibilities of the student self within this realm, this research aims to begin to fill this present gap by beginning to explore the relevance of this self to the teacher and to knowledge.

Additionally, this study contributes to knowledge through its method of data gathering, particularly in the area of student voice. Specifically, through the use of a curriculum specifically written to generate data, this research creates a new method for exploring student voice within the classroom. While many researchers use interviews to gather student data around the topic of voice, by creating a curriculum, this study allows student voice to naturally emerge within the classroom and throughout the course of the school year.

With the interest in self-identified themes of being and the connection of these themes to the educative relationship, this study offers a unique perspective on these topics and it is these gaps which are filled by this research.

1.3 THESIS CONTENTS

The research is divided into six chapters; this chapter has served to establish the motivation and interest in the research as well as the aims and philosophical grounding that guide the research.

Chapter Two presents key literature around the research questions, specifically focusing on the triadic educative relationship among student, teacher, and knowledge and the dimensions within this relationship that are of interest to the study. Specifically, the literature on the student component of the relationship is interested in student-as-learner and the ramifications of this mindset on the student-teacher/student-knowledge relationships. In regards to the teacher component of the triad, a survey of teaching models is presented with the want to focus in on a progressive constructivist model that cultivates humanism within the teacher-student/teacher-knowledge relationships. The chapter also examines the knowledge component of educative relationship by passing over debates on content choices to discuss the role of self-knowledge and the power of the narrated self
within the classroom. Lastly, the chapter looks at the current research in and around
narrative methodology. For the purposes of contextualizing this study, the chapter ends
with a consideration of narrative research in the educational setting, particularly looking at
the current use of teacher and student narrative

Chapter Three presents the methods of this study, first focusing on the underlying theory
and then detailing the actual practice of the study. In looking at theory and considering the
research questions, the study’s mixed-approach design is detailed as qualitative research
conducted from an ethnographic perspective which uses a narrative methodology to
interact with a class grouping of student-learners. Before presenting the practical
methodology, research ethics are discussed. In articulating the study, the design is detailed
chronologically within the chapter starting with gaining school permission to conduct the
study on a voluntary basis within the Transition Year and ending with the creation of the
data collection tool, a curriculum specifically authored for this study based on the
educative relationship literature findings. The two types of data collected, formative
narrative writings created throughout the school year and a summative autobiographical
portfolio created at the end, are also presented in detail as are the methods for data
analysis.

Prior to the two data analysis chapters, a Preface is provided to contextualize and
rationalize the need for a dual presentation of the data and analysis in counterpoint
chapters.

Chapter Four is the first of the two data analysis chapters and contains excerpts of the
students’ summative narrative writing. This chapter is dedicated to presenting a holistic
view of the narrative data collected for the purpose of seeking a collective answer to the
thematic based research questions. In the first portion of the chapter, the process of
selecting the data to be presented is discussed as is the three-stage process of participant
and researcher analysis. The narrative data are then presented in three topical/thematic sets.
Throughout each set, data and commentary are presented under participant headings. At
the conclusion of each of the three sets, a holistic commentary is offered using both
Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework for viewing narratives and
Jerome Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self. The chapter ends with key observations on the
commentary.
Chapter Five is the second data analysis chapter and is dedicated to the data collected from one student participant. This chapter showcases the richness of the data collected while seeking an individualized answer to the research questions. In the presentation of this student’s data, a majority of the formative data and all the summative data collected are ethnographically shared. Researcher commentary follows the data and utilizes the same frames as in chapter five, that of Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework for viewing narratives and Jerome Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self. In addition to researcher commentary, the student whose data are shared within the chapter offers her personal observations and reflections on this data analysis chapter. The chapter ends with key observations on this individualized data.

Chapter Six takes the study’s research questions and connects them to both the data and the literature to present the study’s findings, contributions and recommendations. Both the findings and the contributions and recommendations are organized around the research questions. The limitations of the study are also presented in this chapter as is a personal conclusion to this particular contribution to knowledge.

1.4 RESEARCHER NOTE

As this is a narrative study interested in self, a personal and narrative voice will be used when appropriate within this piece of research to help frame and tell the story of this story.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In *The School and Society* (1900) John Dewey discusses the formation and function of his University of Chicago Elementary laboratory school. Out of chapters on curriculum, social progress, psychology, and the life of the child, perhaps one of the most striking statements on learning and the environment of learning comes not from Dewey himself but, ironically, from a school supply store dealer remarking on Dewey’s want to find desks and chairs ‘thoroughly suitable from all points of view—artistic, hygienic, and educational—to the needs of the children.’ After great difficulty finding something to meet his wants for the needs of the children, Dewey deems, ‘one dealer, more intelligent than the rest [for his]...remark: ‘I am afraid we have not what you want. You want something at which the children may work; these are all for listening’’ (1900: 31).

More than a century later, the necessity of such a ‘working’ desk and its relation to the different components of the learning environment is worth reiterating. From where the students sit to where the teacher stands to what is discussed from their respective positions, there are many factors to be considered and many factors that influence the learning that does – or does not – take place within the confines of the classroom.

2.1.1 The Educative Relationship

Learning is relational, with individual learners searching for personal meaning from information and experiences and with strong student-teacher relationships providing a positive climate which natural learning and motivation emerge (McCombs & Miller 2001: 8). For the purpose of this study and the research questions, and with the understanding that the research context is a classroom setting that was purposefully constructed (see Chapter 3), it is necessary to examine the individual components and relationships at play within learning and the classroom (Hogan 2010, 1995), components and relationships holistically contained within the collective phrase, for the purpose of this research, *the educative relationship* (Seery 2011: 7).
Particularly, in thinking on the classroom environs, there is a consistent recognition of the key components of and relationships around Dewey’s desks exist among the student, the teacher, and the knowledge at play (Seery 2011; Petty 2004; Vassilopoulos & Kosmopoulos 2000; Cullingford 1991) with each grouping considered an equal, dynamic, and contributing participant; these relationships are implicit within the classroom and as this is a study interested in the contribution a student-learners life can make to classroom learning and being, it is the educative relationship that will guide the construction of the research.

![Figure 1 - The Educative Relationship](image)

The three components of the educative relationship are, then, the student, the teacher and knowledge and within this triad there exist three specific and co-existing relationships:

1. Student – Teacher
2. Student – Knowledge
3. Teacher – Knowledge

The first relationship pairing considers the relationship between the student and the teacher. It is inclusive of both the student and the teacher’s perception of the relationship, how they manage the relationship, as well as the influence the relationship has on performance, esteem, confidence, competence, etc.

The second relationship pairing is concerned with the relationship between student and knowledge. This relationship again contains perceptions, management and influence and
is inclusive of both the articulated and hidden curriculums at work in the classroom environment.

The last relationship pairing of the triad is between teacher and knowledge. This relationship is concerned with the teacher’s approach to knowledge as well as her perception, ability and management of knowledge.

In isolation, the multi-faceted components of student, teacher, and knowledge are both effective and affective within each relationship, creating and establishing an educative relationship – and a classroom – that is dynamic in its complexities and complications.

Considering the research questions (student-learners themes of self and the relevance of these themes to the educative relationship), with the interest of the study being directed at the student component of the educative relationship, specifically that of the reality of student life and what it can offer to the relationship to help support, maintain, and strengthen it as well as make it more relevant and personal, it is necessary to consider the relationship holistically as well as in the individual components. This exploration into the literature around the individual components of the educative relationship will then be used to form the research context.

2.1.2 The Educative Relationship Research Lens

The educative relationship is full of complexities, generalities, and specificities all of which impact the learning environment and the three ‘figures’ within it. Due to the multi-faceted nature of the triad – and each component and relationship within it – the literature section will only focus in on the facets deemed most pertinent to the philosophical stance of the study, the research questions that evolved from this stance to guide this study, and the intended methods for seeking answers to these questions. The literature in this chapter will then be used for the purposes of constructing the data collection tool (the curriculum for a course module).

Specifically, in considering the student component of the educative relationship, this study is interested in acknowledging and reinforcing the idea of the students as co-contributors within the knowledge environment. To accomplish this, the literature examined will
articulate the position of student-as-learner and support the construct and use of a learner profile. Within this articulation, the student-teacher relationship is considered as the student-as-learner approach recognizes and validates the voice of the student. In addition, this standpoint touches on the student-knowledge relationship as it recognizes the experience and self-knowledge the learner brings to the educative relationship.

In looking at the teacher component of the educative relationship, this study is interested in how a teacher situates herself within the educative relationship based on philosophical stance and corresponding teaching model. To accomplish this, the literature examined will survey the various teaching models for one that cultivates the student-as-learner position and allows for student entrance into the ownership and right to knowledge.

As for the knowledge component of the educative relationship, this study is interested in the space in, around, and through the articulated and hidden curriculum that is reserved and creates space for self. Specifically, this self-knowledge will be articulated through the lens of narrative construction. Within this narrative construction of self then the knowledge-student, knowledge-teacher relationships will focus on the relevance of self-knowledge and its link to learning.

2.1.3 Chapter Contents

Firstly within this chapter, a definition of student-as-learner will be undertaken for the purposes of articulating a grounding perspective in regards to the student/teacher, student/knowledge relationship and the responsibilities of the learner within the classroom. Next, the teaching models used to interact with both the student-learners and knowledge content will be surveyed with special attention paid to the non-directive teaching model; this model will be used to set the philosophical foundation for the specific instructional tasks of the classroom environment for this study, the environment in which the study’s data were generated. The knowledge portion of the triad will then be examined in regards to the knowledge of self. These three looks into the literature frame and build this research’s perspective and approach to seeking answers to the research questions interest in student-learners’ themes of self within the educative relationship. Lastly, current literature interested in role of the narrated self within the classroom and the educative relationship will be surveyed.
A novel is assigned to a class of fourteen year olds. It is a novel that the teacher is neither interested in teaching nor the students in reading, a familiar enough experience for anyone who has ever been a student or a teacher. It is the sort of novel that would be classified as dense, uninviting, and a chore by most readers, but due to some sort of groundbreaking theme, style, etc. it has been identified as part of the canon – as a part of the collective pool of knowledge that is considered culturally enriching – and therefore part of a mandated curriculum.

So, the teacher does what she can to create an engaging experience but, realistically and honestly, is more aware of the content skills to be tested on the summative assessments than on the potential opportunities for student engagement, ownership, relationship, and interest. And, for those students who are academically motivated, they jump through the required hoops to get the required marks; the unmotivated student, most likely, will promptly lose the book and the possibility and hope of any interest. But, aims and objectives will be met and standards of ‘learning’ will be achieved at the sacrifice of a student-teacher/student-knowledge relationship with substance, meaning and life-long impact.

While certainly exaggerated, this situation is familiar—to both teacher and student—and brings to mind Herman Hesse’s *Siddhartha* (1922: 113), a novel wrapped around the ideas of self-direction and life-long learning: ‘When someone is seeking ... it happens quite easily that he only sees the thing that he is seeking.... Seeking means: to have a goal; but finding means: to be free, to be receptive, to have no goal.’

Though Hesse meant this quote in relation to the title character’s quest for personal fulfilment and enlightenment – the achievement of Maslow’s self-actualization pinnacle perhaps – it is also purposeful in illustrating the conflict of Dewey’s desks as well as a conflict of semantics in education: that between student and learner. At first blush, these words – student and learner – appear perhaps synonymous or to be in a definitive relationship – as in a student learns – yet the argument can be made that that is not the case and ‘how one defines terms to a great extent determines the resulting character of
education' (Flinders & Thornton 1997: 2). A student can be seen as a collective body that is the product of society and the institutional wants and needs of education while a learner can be seen as an individual that fulfils the tasks of self. 'The basic question,' in regards to the conflict between student and learner, then, 'is are we preparing students for a life of tests or for the tests of life?' (Costa & Kallick, 2004: 1).

In light of the educative relationship, and the student component of the triad, the interest is in what student-as-learner looks like and how this stance impacts the student-teacher/student-knowledge relationship. To fully understand the relevance of this articulation, it is important to first clarify the difference between student-as-student and student-as-learner, before building a learner profile.

2.2.1 Student vs. Learner

For the purposes of this research, to be a student means to be one who 'only sees the thing that he is seeking', more specifically the novel to be read, the marks to be had, the end of the term, promotion to the following year, and the next step in the academic walk. To be a student means to acquire knowledge in a regulated format from prescribed curricula and regurgitate it with a pre-determined standard of success (Reece & Walker 2006: 78; Lipman 2003: 13). To be a student means to pass through the system in a standardized and measureable way, to read the canonized novel, complete the assessment both of and for learning, and continue on to the next scheme; ‘students are trained to believe that deep learning means figuring out the right answer rather than developing capabilities for effective and thoughtful action. They have been taught to... give answers rather than to inquire, to know which choice is correct rather than to explore alternatives’ (Costa & Kallick, 2004: 15). Thus, the qualities of a student are not inherent to individuals but created for individuals by an institutionalized public system that does not cultivate an enriched and personalized student-teacher or student-knowledge relationship.

This scenario is a reality that arises neither from the student nor the teacher, but from, as Costa and Kallick (2004: 1) point out, '...the current politics of education, [where] the key to school success is higher test scores.' With such goals being pushed on the societal institution of the school, the qualities that define a student arise. With test scores as a
priority, the student is pressured into adopting survival behaviours and filling up with knowledge that is not always sustainable past the assessment.

Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000: 16) speak to this disconnect by stating that to develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must:

(a) have a deep foundation of factual knowledge,
(b) understand facts and ideas in the context of a conceptual framework, and
(c) organize knowledge in ways that facilitate retrieval and application.

This is a statement that rings familiar to anyone who has ever sat in a ‘desk for listening’. Being a student is, at the earliest stages, about acquiring facts and then, as the years pass, applying those facts when called upon. The fault with this set of skills is also acknowledged by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000: 16) in the admission that, ‘...knowledge of a large set of disconnected facts is not sufficient. To develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must have opportunities to learn with understanding.’ However, learning with understanding is difficult to realize when there are few opportunities for personalization and transformation or relationship at any given moment within the school day. In the words of Dewey, ‘that is the isolation of the school—its isolation from life’ (1900: 75). That is also the isolation of a student, working within pre-defined boundaries that allow for seeing only that which he has been told to seek (Hesse, 1922) and without the development of any key relationships.

Both society and school systems have acknowledged the need to offer more than just retention of facts and a scaffolded pass through a prescribed curriculum. Jarvis, Holford, and Griffin (2003: 9) allow that ‘...learning has changed from remembering ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’ to seeking to understand and be critically aware of the things to be studied. Reflective learning has become much more prevalent because of the processes of change in contemporary society.’ Thus, it is recognized that, ‘being a good student may seem no more than a phase without inherent value, but learning can often be its own good. You learn...because of the sheer joy of knowing...of possessing knowledge...’, (Banner & Cannon 1999: 2). And, from the time of Dewey and his quest for the working desk, society has indeed changed. No longer riding the wave of the industrial revolution, the
technological revolution of the 21st century has aided and abetted the creation and cultivation of learners.

For the purposes of this paper and the educative relationship, to be a learner means to travel beyond the prescribed target, ‘to be free, to be receptive, to have no goal;’ to use the novel, the marks, the term, and the academic walk as a guide to greater autonomy. To be a learner means moving beyond the acquisition of knowledge to the internalization – ownership – of knowledge and the implementation of, ‘a “metacognitive” approach...[that]...help[s]...to take control of...learning’ (Bransford, Brown & Cocking 2000: 18) and build relationships with knowledge. To be a learner means to understand the necessity of a standardized system but to not be contained or constrained by it; learning lies within the students’ person, travelling beyond boundaries and standards to take up residence within the self (Reece & Walker 2006: 78; Lipman 2003: 13). Learning does not end when the unit of instruction does. To be a learner means to challenge the canon, to seek connections and commonalities, and to provoke a private ripple effect of self-understanding and personal freedom. And, to be a good learner means to, ‘... focus and concentrate on tasks in hand, generate questions about...learning, monitor and resolve problems as they occur, translate what [is learnt] into verbal and visual images, [and to] persevere...[through failure] at part of a task’ (Fisher 1995: 108).

Siddhartha (1922) also speaks to learning; to be a learner means to find wisdom, as wisdom is personal and experiential while knowledge is all that can be communicated through others. ‘Through studying and learning, you understand who you are, what you want to achieve, and how you can achieve it’ (Banner & Cannon, 1999: 2) as knowledge is acquired in the manner of a student. To then approach learning from the perspective of a learner, learning becomes, as Socrates inferred, a search for truth that is not contained within irrefutable borders. Learning lies in the self, in relationships with others, in knowledge, and in wisdom as well as in the lack of or disconnect to and with all these concepts. It is action and inaction, acquisition and transmission, proactive and reactive. Learning is not quantifiable, there is no right, no wrong, no measurable benchmark; learning is seismic. And learning is, through the eyes of Dewey an, ‘exclusively...individual affair’ (1900: 15).
2.2.2 Learner Profile

The literature and research promote and support this ‘learner’ mindset - it is a current step in education – however within this initiative remains the question of how best to cultivate and develop this mindset as well as how to define the traits of a learner. To extend this individual affair of student-as-learner beyond theory and into the concrete realm of the classroom, the development of learner strategies (Luckin 2010), learner contexts (Coyle 2007), and a learner profile becomes essential. The concept of learner profile is what is of interest in this study as it most closely aligns with the interests of the research questions as well as the methodology to be used.

Traditionally, a learning profile may be associated with the concrete, factual makeup of the learners in regards to age, gender, demographics, background, individual preferences and talents, etc. (Yukselturk & Top 2012: 2, Knauf et. al. 2009: 2068). However, a learning profile can additionally be about an environment and culture, about thinking about objectives and outcomes that are not based in the curriculum or the lesson but in the students. Instead of focusing in on an individual’s abilities and actualities, the term learning profile in this study refers to holistic learning goals and objectives for the learning population. A learning profile, then, is a set of ideals that can inspire, motivate and focus the work of schools and teachers, uniting them under a common language for a common purpose (International Baccalaureate 2008: 1). With the belief of students as natural thinkers, through this common language and practice of a learner profile, the teacher and school community can help students to focus and organize their thinking into reasoning (Stiggins & Chappuis 2012: 52), cultivating a learner mindset within the student-learner.

When considering that the procedures of instructional design must do the following things:

- Utilize a rational means of reducing the great diversity of individual learner characteristics to a number small enough to make instructional planning feasible,
- Identify those dimensions of common learner characteristics that carry different implications for instruction and that can lead to design difference that influence learning effectiveness, and
- Provide a design appropriate for those learner variations that can be shown to make a difference in learning results (Gagné et. al. 2005: 106),
the learner profile as defined above proves to be a useful tool to the educative relationship in creating a communal connection among the individual learners. A learner profile as defined for this study focuses, then, on expectations, habits, mindsets, objective and outcomes that can be present and essential in all lessons and classroom interactions. While a learning profile recognizes individuality, it also embraces the communal, recognizing in both capacities that it is the thinker – not the thinking necessarily – that is guided by criteria and standards, sensitive to context, and self-correction (Lipman 2003: 62).

In regards to the learner profile to be used in this study, the first considerations are of those mindsets that fit in with the progressive, constructivist, and humanistic beliefs that this research is situated within. With a strong belief in the classroom as a place of experience and care (Hogan 2010; Noddings 2001; Dewey 1938) as well as an environment guided by the student’s ability for self-construction (Montessori 1997; Lillard 1972) and reflexivity (Kauchak & Eggen 2012; Stiggins & Chappuis 2012), the want is for a learner profile to encapsulate these beliefs. Thinking in terms of student success in both the self-as-learner and self-as-self contexts, a holistic model can be built on both engagement and achievement, believing social, self-regulating, and critical thinking skills and dispositions represent ideal levels of both these goals (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh 2010: xxi). In addition, a reflective practice mindset that allows for discourse, experience, true reflexivity, self-accountability, a disposition to inquiry, interest serving, criticality and creativity (Ghaye 2011: 42) is favourable.

While not always referred to as a ‘learner profile’, such learner objectives, outcomes and mindsets can typically be found within the mission statement, vision, or foundational pillars, etc. of an education institution. In considering the learner ‘profiles’ available, instead of scoping the literature for the objectives of individual school or institutions, the preference is for established educational structures that align with the research interests of this study. Specifically, then, three types of educational approaches with formalized systems were considered in regards to their philosophic stance and named learner objectives: Montessori, Waldorf, and International Baccalaureate (IB).

Montessori schools are based on the child-centred educational approach and pedagogical principles and practise created and cultivated by Dr. Maria Montessori in the early 20th
Interested in the full development of the human being, the approach towards learning (and the learner 'profile') attached to a Montessori school and education is as follows:

Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities. (Association Montessori Internationale 2012)

In addition, and with a nod towards the educative relationship, the Montessori approach utilizes the beliefs of the 'prepared teacher', who is responsible for observing and guiding while helping children to develop self-confidence and inner-discipline, and the 'prepared environment', where beauty and order are as relevant as a mixed-age group setting, cognitively appropriate exploratory materials and the cultivation of a freedom to move (Association Montessori Internationale 2012; Montessori 1997; Lillard 1972).

In comparison, developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, Waldorf schools are based on a profound understanding of human development that addresses the needs – heart, hands, and head – of the growing child (Mitchell 2012; Barnes 1991: 52; Steiner 1972). Based on Steiner's understanding of human development, the Waldorf spiralling curriculum takes an artistic interest in cultivating social, emotional, and natural intelligence as it seeks to create learners (AWSNA 2012). Waldorf teachers strive to transform education into an art and seek to create learners based on answers to the questions of:

- How do we establish within each child his or her own high level of academic excellence?
- How do we call forth enthusiasm for learning and work, a healthy self-awareness, interest and concern for fellow human beings, and a respect for the world?
- How can we help pupils find meaning in their lives? (Mitchell 2012)

In addition, Waldorf education has as its ideal 'a person who is knowledgeable about the world and human history and culture, who has many varied practical and artistic abilities, who feels a deep reverence for and communion with the natural world, and who can act with initiative and in freedom in the face of economic and political pressures' (Price 2003).
Designed with similar goals of a developmental appropriate curriculum centred in the child, the Montessori approach favours the child leading the way whereas the Waldorf experience, while child-centred, is more teacher-led. While both share the progressive and humanistic viewpoint of this study, due to the way in which both philosophies need to be integrated from a comprehensive perspective – inclusive of much more than just a learner outcome or profile – the choice was made to utilize the learner outcomes/profile established by the International Baccalaureate system.

Due to its philosophical stance, international and 21st century ethos, accessibility, and mindfulness of the educative relationship, the learner profile selected as a guiding frame for this study is that of the International Baccalaureate (IB) school system.

The IB school system was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 and currently educates students aged 3-19 internationally in both a public and private capacity (International Baccalaureate Organization 2012). IB programmes promote the education of the whole person, emphasizing intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth through all domains of knowledge (International Baccalaureate 2009). The system does not merely aim to make young people knowledgeable, but also inquiring, caring, understanding and respectful. The organisation wants to educate students academically, but also wishes to equip them with certain attitudes and patterns of behaviour; IB students should know in order to act (van Oord 2012: 1).

The mission statement of the IB is:

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right (2012).

With this as the foundation of IB philosophy, the system has developed a learner profile that guides student habits, teacher instruction and methodological choices, and selection and sequencing of knowledge. This learner profile is inclusive of the educative
relationship, acting as a guide and a common centring point for the student, teacher, and knowledge; it is a profile interested in a vertical continuity of educational practice and values across its programmes (Cambridge 2010: 200).

Specifically, then, the IB learner profile is as follows (2008):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inquirers</td>
<td>They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinkers</td>
<td>They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicators</td>
<td>They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principled</td>
<td>They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-minded</td>
<td>They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-takers</td>
<td>They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 - The IB Learner Profile

(taken from http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/documents/Learnerprofileguide.pdf)
This learner profile is descriptive of not just what the students should strive for, but also what the teacher and curriculum should model. Students and teachers exposed to this learner profile and the IB curriculum must understand and ‘appreciate their own cultures and personal histories while remaining open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of other individuals and communities’ (Van Vooren & Lindsey 2012: 29). As said in the above discussion of what a learner profile is, this is a philosophical stance that provides a communal language and way of thought on what learning is and what a learner can look like. The profile is mindful of the humanness of the student just as it is progressive in its interest in pushing education and the concept of a global learner into the 21st century (Van Vooren & Lindsey 2012; Cambridge 2010: 208; Wells 2011). A learner profile, then, provides the student-learner a means for entering into the educative-relationship as a contributor with a defined agenda and communally recognized objectives.

This learner profile is not without critics (van Oord 2012; Wells 2011), specifically those against character education and the imposition of a moral system that has no input from the individual learners. Specifically, it can be argued that ‘the singular scope and canonical nature of the learner profile easily drifts into a breach of students’ ownership over their own self-formation’ (van Oord 2012: 7). In addition, when considering value education, critics argue that the IB learner profile lacks a base in theory (Wells 2011).

However, as the learner profile is a “provisional statement, an ongoing work in process whose value only increases because [the IB community] remain open-minded about its ideals and the role it plays” (IB 2012a) the belief of this study is that, due to its recognition of students as self, this learner profile provides the strongest starting point for a classroom journey into the narrated self.

2.2.3 Student-Teacher Relationship

In regards to the influence of a learner mindset and the use of a learner profile on the student-teacher relationship within the educative relationship, the greatest impact of the incorporation of such a mindset and profile is in the sense of purpose it provides to the students within the relationship as well as a the communal direction and language it establishes for both student and teacher (International Baccalaureate 2012; Van Vooren & Lindsey 2012). While supporting learner autonomy within the student-teacher relationship,
the learner profile provides a way to attract and keep student attention in learning (Kauchak & Eggen 2012: 176) as it establishes metacognitive thinking as a foundation for critical thinking (Nosich 2012: 3). The profile works to establish the interpersonal student-teacher relationship as central in regards to teacher modelling, fostering, and encouraging the profile as well as creating a learner-centred classroom (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh 2010: xxv).

2.2.4 Student-Knowledge Relationship

In regards to the influence of a learner mindset and the use of a learner profile on the student-knowledge relationship within the educative relationship, the greatest impact comes from their ability to promote ownership and investment of self within knowledge by recognizing there is a self to invest. The concept of student-as-learner and of the international IB learner profile begins with the knowledge of one’s self and expands to inclusion of and by all students (Van Vooren & Lindsey 2012: 26). With the recognition that learners are able to make dependable judgments about the quality of their own work (Stiggins & Chappuis 2012: 9), the internal control of learning, responsibility for learning, and situation of self within what is learned is prioritized. Fostering student ownership of learning through learner-centred instruction, the student-as-learner and learner profile mindset provides a recognition of and space for students constructing knowledge and developing according to self-organizing principles (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh 2010: 63). For the purposes of this study, the student-as-learner model and the IB learner profile will be used to create curriculum and inform instruction.

2.2.5 Conclusion

With the interest of this study in acknowledging, creating, and reinforcing the idea of the students as co-contributors within the knowledge environment, the student-as-learner mindset and the exploration of learner profiles offers a means of validating student self and voice within the educative relationship. The learner profile opens up the space for student life to enter into the knowledge realm, into the teacher’s scope of awareness, and into the holistic educative relationship. This learner profile will be used to create the curriculum to be used in the data collection portion of this study as well as to guide the teaching methods used to articulate the curriculum on the journey to find answers to the research questions.
In addition, while the section works as length to delineate the connotations of the word student and learner, the two words will be used interchangeable throughout the rest of the piece with the acknowledgement that the word student now holds the same depth as the term learner.

2.3 MODELS OF TEACHING

Standing in the door of any traditional classroom, an outside observer expects to see three things: 1. students, 2. a teacher, and 3. some sort of learning. It is hard to imagine a formalized classroom without students – seated at Dewey’s desks or otherwise – and it is equally hard to imagine that same classroom without a teacher. However, as many students past and present would be apt to say, it is easy to imagine a classroom where they have not learned. The responsibility for this wayward learning can be placed around the classroom, sprinkled around, among, and between the components of the educative relationship. Specifically, in regards to the teacher element and in light of the student-as-learner mindset, the teacher’s responsibility towards learning can be said to ‘let nothing else be learned than-learning’ (Heidegger 1968: 15).

With the formalization of learning and the creation of a classroom experience, teaching ceased to be simple as the learning tasks of education replaced those of everyday life (Bigge & Shermis 1999: 4). With this also came the challenge of balancing the facts that learning is individual while teaching is generically for, and about, a community of learners. Designing experiences and creating opportunities for learning within the classroom on the part of the teacher, then, becomes about acknowledging this duality and navigating through it. It is for these reasons that just as the student-as-learner profile enhances the classroom experience, so must the model of teaching used allow for classroom learning and the student-as-learner profile to take root.

In general, teaching and the teacher component of the educative relationship involves five task-based stages (Cangelosi 1992: 8):

1. Course design, long-range planning, and organization for instruction
2. Assessment of student needs
3. Unit-level design and planning
4. Conducting units and day-to-day planning and operations
5. Evaluating success and follow up

For the teacher, the student-as-learner profile can be useful in planning instruction, evaluating instructional resources, and in diagnosing problems in classroom instruction (Gredler 2001: 16). This partnership mindset works to direct the learning environment just as the specific models of teaching direct teacher behaviour (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun 2009: 24). ‘Models of teaching are really models of learning. As we help students acquire information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, and means of expressing themselves, we are also teaching them how to learn’ (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun 2009: 6) and providing for them a desk at which to work. While the curricular frameworks are generated outside of class, the models of teaching selected by the teacher are what generate the curriculum – evoking the student-as-learner profile – and direct the educative relationships within the class (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins 2002: 13).

With the understanding, then, that ‘the challenge of designing learning experiences is the central substance of the study of teaching. The quest for ways to help people learn more efficiently, and the design of the environments that make this learning possible’ (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins 2002: 11) is what generates models of teaching.

While there are various frames for categorizing teaching and teaching models with much overlap, the choice has been made to go with a frame that seems the most-inclusive and descriptive. Specifically, Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun (2009: 24 – 34; Reece & Walker 2006: 62) and Joyce, Calhoun, and Hopkins (2002: 27-37) categorize their selected models of teaching into four families:

1. The Behavioural Family
2. The Information Processing Family
3. The Social Family
4. The Personal Family
Within these four families reside various models of teaching, models that are designed to support the various models of learning and provide the framework for this segment. This section will state the general conceptual framework for each family, the models within each familial grouping and the major developers and redevelopers for each model as these authors lay them out. It will then develop the model that connects to the established learner profile and informs the curricular development and instruction as discussed in the Methodology Chapter (See Chapter 3).

2.3.1 The Behavioural Family

Developing from the behaviour theories on learning, the behavioural models of teaching share the common theoretical base that ‘human beings are self-correcting communication systems that modify behaviour in response to information about how successfully tasks are navigated’ (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun 2009: 34). These models centre on the behaviouristic notion that ‘human being are passive or reactive’ in regards to their environment (Bigge & Shermis 1999: 44) and can be used to ‘design materials and interactions that encourage productive learning and...avoid the environmental variables that can discourage it’ (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun 2009: 350).

Within the behaviour family, Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009: 33) identify five models of teaching as well as those who have developed and redeveloped these teaching theories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL</th>
<th>DEVELOPER (Redeveloper)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Learning</td>
<td>Benjamin Bloom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction</td>
<td>Tom Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jere Brophy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carl Engleman</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wes Becker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>Carl Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Smith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the purpose of this research project, in regards to the models of teaching to be used and mindful of the student-as-learner model and the concept of the educative relationship, the mastery learning model of teaching was used in the classroom that generated the data.

Specifically, the concept of time being individual and that a student’s time with a concept – for the point of mastery – must be unique was a driving force in instruction as students were given whatever time they needed to connect with a theme or prompt. In regards to the educative relationship, this teaching model is learner-centred, allowing for the student point of the triad to experience some form of ownership. However, as the knowledge component drives this model in regards to the necessity of content mastery, it is restricted in the allowance for the student as a co-contributor to knowledge as the knowledge has been pre-determined. In addition, when considering the established learner profile, there is limited latent opportunity within this model to engage in these mindsets.

2.3.2 Information Processing Family

Developing from cognitive learning theory, the information processing models of teaching refer to the study of how information is taken in, stored, and retrieved when needed (Cruickshank, Jenkins & Metcalf 2006: 75). This family of learning is concerned with ‘...the organization of information to be learned, the learners’ prior knowledge, and the processes involved in perceiving, comprehending, and storing information’ (Gredler 2001: 170). The information processing model of teaching then, based on a conceptual control of knowledge, ‘...emphasize ways of enhancing the human being’s innate drive to make sense of the world by acquiring and organizing data, sensing problems and generating solutions to them, and developing concepts and language for conveying them’ (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins 2002: 29).
Within the information processing family, Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009: 26) identify eight models of teaching as well as those who have developed and redeveloped these teaching theories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODELS</th>
<th>DEVELOPERS (Redevelopers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inductive Thinking</td>
<td>Hilda Taba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bruce Joyce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Attainment</td>
<td>Jerome Bruner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Fred Lighthall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Tennyson and Cocchiarella)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bruce Joyce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The picture-word inductive model</td>
<td>Emily Calhoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Inquiry</td>
<td>Joseph Schwab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Training</td>
<td>Richard Suchman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Howard Jones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mnemonics</td>
<td>Michael Pressley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joel Levin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synectics</td>
<td>William Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Organizers</td>
<td>David Ausubel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Lawton and Wanska)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 - Teaching Models (The Information Processing Family)

For the purpose of this research project, in regards to the models of teaching to be used and mindful of the student-as-learner model and the concept of the educative relationship, the inductive thinking model of teaching was used to articulate the curriculum designed to generate data.

While the inductive model provides for the opportunity for constructivist learning principles to be realized within the classroom, the largest qualification in regards to the theory as a model for teaching is the limitations of it in regards to instructional method and variety. In regards to the placement of this model within the educative relationship, it allows for student ownership and investment in the process of inquiry, as well as the use of prior experience in the interaction with knowledge. In considering the learner profile
mindset, it allows for a variety of opportunities on the part of both the student and the
teacher to interact with the established values.

With this as a consideration, then, the inductive model of teaching and the cognitive model
of learning it reflects were used within the generation of the data, to help guide the students
in the creation of their summative autobiographical assessment reflective response (See
Section 3.6 and Section 3.6.2).

2.3.3 Social Family

Having roots in both the cognitive movement and the humanistic learning realm, the social
family, as classified by Joyce, Calhoun, and Hopkins (2002: 32) functions to support both
the intellectual and personal development within a communal setting. In terms of cognitive
and academic growth, the models help students use the perspectives of others to clarify and
expand their own thinking, understanding, and conceptualization of ideas. In consideration
of affective growth, the social models '...prepare citizens to generate integrative
democratic behaviour, both to enhance personal and social life and to ensure a productive
democratic social order' (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun 2009: 261).

Within the social family, Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009: 29) identify five models of
teaching as well as those who have developed and redeveloped these teaching theories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODELS</th>
<th>DEVELOPERS (Redevelopers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner in learning</td>
<td>David Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Interdependence</td>
<td>Roger Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Margarita Calderon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Cohen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Inquiry</td>
<td>Robert Slavin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Aronson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Investigation</td>
<td>John Dewey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Herbert Thelan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Schlomo Sharan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bruce Joyce)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the purpose of this research project and mindful of the previous treatment of learning theories, no teaching model from this family was used. However, the theory was used and modified. Instead of creating specific cooperative learning groups within the classroom, the classroom was viewed – as a whole – as a cooperative learning group of which the teacher was a member. In other words, the classroom environment was one in which all members were equal contributors, guiding both instruction and discovery. While not a specific model, then, the foundations of the social learning family were utilized to cradle the use of all other models, in turn supporting the relational and communal nature of both the educative relationship and the learner profile.

2.3.4 Personal Family

Falling within the humanistic realm of learning theory and tying into the narrative constructs of identity, the individual, and selfhood (see Chapter 4), Joyce, Calhoun, and Hopkins’ (2002: 33) personal models of learning speak to the affective domain – the students’ feelings, beliefs, attitudes, personal values systems, and levels of self-esteem (Dell’Olio & Donk 2007: 37; Petty 2004). The family is concerned with ‘whole person learning’ where ‘significant learning combines the logical and the intuitive, the intellect and the feelings, the concept and the experience, the idea and the meaning’ (Rogers 1994: 37).

Within the personal family, Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009: 31) identify two models of teaching as well as those who have developed and redeveloped these teaching theories:
As Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun (2009: 322) delineate the personal models of teaching, they draw specific attention to the four ways in which they can be used:

1. As general models of teaching, even to design a school that has adopted a nondirective philosophy as the core approach to education
2. To flavour a learning environment designed around other models
3. To counsel students when we wish to help them learn to reach out to the world more fully and positively
4. To build curriculums in the academic subjects around students...Combined with other models, the person models can be used to design independent study courses

In regards to this study, these purposes become relevant as, per purpose number four, the research context was a course designed generally as an independent study of self (see Section 3.6). Also, where models from the previous families were used at specific moments and for specific purposes throughout the course of the module, the nondirective model of teaching, with its humanistic elements, was the model that guided the majority of classroom instruction and interaction.

As the humanistic model is interested in self-direction as well responsibility and self-assessment over teacher assessment (Petty 2004), this family of teaching models is considered the best suited to this study’s research questions and interest in the educative relationship. For the purpose of this research, then, which is specifically directed at the narrated themes of self of a teenaged population and the potential relevance of these themes on the educative relationship and the practical classroom, further exploration will be given solely to the nondirective model of teaching as it is has greater relevance and less potential for specifically skewing the themes of the data than the enhancing self-esteem teaching model.

**Personal – Nondirective Teaching**

With the foundations of this model of teaching in Carl Rogers nondirective counselling model, the nondirective teaching model revolves around the ‘belie[f] that positive human relationships enable people to grow and therefore...instruction should be based on concepts
of human relations in contrast to concepts of subject matter' (Joyce, Weil, Calhoun 2009: 326). This interest in self is reinforced by Rogers’ client-centered therapy, which states that clinically there is movement from symptom to self, environment to self, and others to self (Rogers 1951: 135). In this model, the role of the teacher is as facilitator and the aim is to develop within the students’ self-knowledge as well as a long-term personal understanding of learning (Rogers & Freiberg 1994: 153).

For Rogers and Freiberg (1994: 152) the goal of education is the facilitation of change and learning; ‘the only person who is educated is the person who has learned how to learn; the person who has learned how to adapt and change...’. With self-realization as one of the main tenants of the nondirective model, and with the teacher assuming the role of a facilitator, the nondirective classroom is one not of behavioural objectives (see Behavioural Family) but one of experiential learning (Rogers & Freiberg 1994: 188). Rogers also believes that the main aim of education is the fully functioning person; a fully functioning student will learn to self-actualize through thinking for themselves and through learning how to learn through self-direction (Heim 2012: 291; Rogers 1983; Rogers 1961). This self-actualization – a lofty goal – will come about only through an individual’s personal learning experiences and based on this, learners will continue to learn creatively through life (Miller & Mazur 2009: 284).

The nondirective teaching model, then, strives to promote an instructional continuum that is neither student nor teacher centred but person-centred where all ‘participants are co-learners in the educational journey’ (Rogers & Freiberg 1994: 189). Within this, instructional strategies, methods, and content perspectives‘...emanate from the needs and aspirations of the student – that is, taking each student as a partner in determining what he or she will learn and how he or she will learn it’ (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins 2002: 127).

This self-directed learning environment finds grounding in what Rogers identifies as seven educational priorities (Dell’Olio & Donk 2007: 39 adapted from Rogers & Freiberg, 1994):

1. Establishing and maintaining a climate of trust in the classroom
2. Applying democratic principles to classroom decision making
3. Promoting students’ positive self-esteem
4. Nurturing enthusiasm about intellectual and emotional learning processes
5. Promoting the concept of the individual as a lifelong learner
6. Nurturing the personal development of teachers
7. Helping students understand that ‘the good life’ can be attained as a result of self-discovery and personal growth

While none of these priorities concern specific academic growth or the acquisition, manipulation, and ownership of content knowledge, the understanding is that ‘an academic focus can clearly coexist within the environment Rogers is advocating’ (Dell'Olio & Donk 2007: 38). The focus is on the self on the student; in addition, and in the context of this study and the educative relationship being built, these priorities are in keeping with those values identified in the IB learner profile.

As this teaching model is based largely on the relationship created between the teacher and the learner, Rogers and Freiberg (1994: 153 – 158; Cornelius-White & Harbaugh 2010: xxv; Rogers 1961: 286) identify three teacher qualities (see Section 3.5.1) that will help to facilitate significant learning within their nondirective teaching model:

1. **Realness in the facilitator of learning**
   This asks the teacher to present themselves as a real person – as opposed to assuming the mantle of teacher – and to allow themselves a genuineness of emotion and feeling in regards to interacting within the classroom environment

2. **Prizing, acceptance, trust in the learner**
   This asks the teacher to accept the learner’s value as a person, being mindful of his/her emotion, ability, experience, and humanity.

3. **Empathic Understanding**
   This asks the teacher to assume the student’s point of view in regards to his/her feelings on the process of education and learning.

It is also necessary in regards to constructing the environment of learning that the teacher, in any teaching/learning encounter (Joyce, Calhoun, Hopkins 2002: 127-128):

- radiate warmth and confidence to students
- radiate empathy and understanding
help the students understand how their stance toward tasks and others can draw them toward self-actualization.

The counselling dimension of the teacher/student relationship adds in (Joyce, Calhoun, Hopkins 2002: 127-128):

- helping the students to clarify a general or specific problem
- helping the students take responsibility for changing their behaviour so as to solve the problem
- helping the students experiment and reflect on the results of their experimentation
- helping the students develop empathy toward others in their environment

Generally teachers would be familiar with the instructional aims of nondirective teaching in regards to the concepts of student-centered learning, problem based learning, experiential education, self-directed learning, humanistic education, reflective learning and active learning (Heim 2012: 290).

Specifically, in regards to the tasks of the nondirective model of teaching it is first important to note that this model is flexible in regards to it being defined by principles and mindset rather than sequential actions. The sequence of a nondirective interview, however, is as follows (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins 2002: 128; Rogers 1945):

**PHASE 1: the helping situation is defined**

This includes structuring remarks by the counsellor/teacher that define the student’s freedom to express feelings, and agreement on the general focus of the interview, an initial problem statement, some discussion of the relationship if it is to be ongoing, and the establishment of procedure

**PHASE 2: student voice**

The student is encouraged by the teacher’s acceptance and clarification to express negative and positive feelings, to state and explore the problem.

**PHASE 3: meaning making**
The student gradually develops insight: he or she perceives new meaning in his or her experiences, sees new relationships of cause and effect, and understands the meaning of his or her previous behaviour. In most situations, the student seems to alternate between exploring the problem itself and developing new insight into his or her feelings.

**PHASE 4: planning for action**
The student moves toward planning and decision making with respect to the problem. The role of the teacher is to clarify the alternatives.

**PHASE 5: report and reflect**
The student reports the actions he or she has taken, develops further insight and plans increasingly more integrated and positive actions.

As the learning is, in many ways, self-generated and self-directed in the nondirective model (Petty 2004), in regards to assessment of and for learning, assessment opportunities must also include the student, whether in student-generated standards, contracts or performance conferences.

In his article on the rise and fall of nondirective interviewing in Sociology, Raymond Lee (2011: 135) considers the following advantages of the model: 1. to some degree, nondirection is seen to have the same purpose as standardization. It removes the effect of the interviewer on the process of eliciting data, 2. A nondirective interviewing stance serves to soften the effects of social distance between interviewer and interviewee, and 3. It is capable of eliciting responses from interviewees that were unanticipated or serendipitous in some way. When considering the disadvantages of the model, it must be acknowledge that a model based in the person as opposed to the content may not always serve the purposes of a 21st century test-driven society. In relation to this, this model may be viewed through the consumeristic lens of present day, where the client/student is always right (Brinkmann 2011: 62), a viewpoint that can undermine certain features of education. These disadvantages are acknowledged, but this model is still considered to the best match for the research questions and interests of this study.
For the purpose of this research study, then, the nondirective teaching model ‘... can be thought of entirely nurturant in character, dependent for effects on experiencing the nondirective learning environment rather than on developing specific academic content and skills’ (Joyce, Calhoun & Hopkins 2002: 129). Due to its non-academic base as well as the reasons provided throughout this section, this was the main model chosen for the instruction that formed part of the data generating intervention, making up the teacher portion of the educative relationship.

2.3.5 Teacher-Student Relationship

Taylor and Fratto (2012: 4), in *Transforming Learning through 21st Century Skills*, identify the greatest teacher concerns as student apathy, motivation, and behaviour/discipline. As these concerns are not situated within the teacher-knowledge or student-knowledge strand, they can generally be placed within the teacher-student strand of the educative relationship. With these three concerns being based in the teacher-student relation and running parallel to Kauchak and Eggen’s (2012: 146) three traits to creating a positive classroom environment (accepting and caring teachers, safe and orderly learning environment, learning focused classroom) the choice of a teaching model that exists within this relationship is critical to addressing such concerns.

In regards, then, to the influence of the nondirective teaching model on the teacher-student relationship within the educative relationship, the greatest impact comes through the ability for the model to cultivate a relationship of mutual interest. As a model that communicates value to the student through the desired features of acceptance and caring (Kauchak & Eggen 2012: 146; Hogan 2010: Noddings 2001), the recognition of the students by the teacher as a valued person who can self-direct, self-reflect, and contribute their experience as knowledge is key to creating a positive educative environment. With research stating that students believe that teachers who care pay attention to them as human beings and are committed to their learning and holding them to high standards (Wilson & Corbett 2001), the nondirective model of teaching does nothing but improve and solidify the teacher-student dynamic as it morphs it into one of co-contributors.
2.3.6 Teacher-Knowledge Relationship

In regards to the influence of the nondirective teaching model on the teacher-knowledge relationship within the educative relationship, the greatest impact comes from the centre of interest being moved away from the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student towards the teacher as a facilitator of a student’s knowledge experience (Rogers 1983, 1961, 1951). There is also the recognition within this teaching model of the teacher as the owner of not only the professional knowledge of subject, curriculum, and pedagogy, but also of interpersonal (teacher/student, teacher/parent-colleague-guardian-public) and intrapersonal knowledge (teacher/self relationships) (Hogan 2010: 59-63). Specifically, the nondirective model allows for the teacher to practice, develop and cultivate their interpersonal knowledge through the creation of a care relationship with their students just as it gives space for the reflective, ethical, and dispositional space of intrapersonal knowledge (Collinson 1996). The nondirective model of teaching, then, expands the definition of the teacher-knowledge relationship by extending the definition of knowledge and being inclusive of teaching relationships.

2.3.7 Conclusion

With the first research question of this study being directed towards an uncovering of a student-learner’s themes of self and the second research question placing these themes within the educative relationship, the nondirective model of teaching compliments the learner profile in establishing the foundation for narrative data solicitation. Rogers’ approach to classroom provides the blueprint for the creation of an environment of care and directs the teacher in how to cultivate the self as self and the self as learner, two factors of interest to this study and its research questions.

2.4 SELF AS KNOWLEDGE

It is a simple question, with an answer even my five-year old nephew knows – why do we go to school? To learn. But what is it that is being learned? That ‘should’ be learned? Well, that is a question for the ages with an answer as varied as the people asked. The last point in the educative triad under consideration in this chapter, then, is that of the knowledge to be learned. Knowledge is what, presumably, brings student and teacher
together and creates the need for a formalized educative relationship. Without the ‘need’ for a standardized dissemination of knowledge, Dewey’s desk would become as irrelevant as the teachers standing before them.

The formalization of knowledge into systems, schemes, and relations works to create a curricula that provides a standardization in how one looks at, contributes to, and reports back on the world at large. What constitutes knowledge in the classroom is often predetermined by not only the powers that be, but also canonical legacies within particular fields. Classroom knowledge is often treated as a static and neutral commodity (Gleeson 2010: 3), a commodity that has the ability to be given and received without modification, interpretation, or dynamism. The curriculum, then, can be influenced by this view on knowledge, leading to the creation of courses that persist year after year, independent of the persons - both student and teacher - involved (Trant 2007: 121).

With this view, the knowledge handover becomes transactional with the teacher as the original owner of knowledge, responsible for giving it over and determining if the student has received it. This view considers the teacher to be the knowledge stakeholder in the classroom and identifies three types of knowledge as important to teaching:

1. Knowledge of Subject Matter
2. Pedagogical Content Knowledge

While there is validity and necessity to these three types of knowledge, a fourth knowledge type can be added to the list, a knowledge type that is as relevant to the student as it is to the teacher as it is to the classroom – the interaction with and pursuit of self-knowledge. It is this knowledge type that will be explored in regards to the interests of the research question and the other two strands of the educative relationship.

2.4.1 Self-Knowledge

With the belief that knowledge is ambiguous and the teacher is fallible, knowledge becomes not about pure acquisition but about the commonalities of human experience and the relationship within and among subject matter and self (Lipman 2003: 19). It is allowed
to nourish and strengthen the mind as it finds worth in becoming part of our self (Trant 2007:104). The knowledge provided through the experience of certain knowledge strands can also ‘offer ways in which human beings can understand themselves in a new ways and with different vocabularies, thus enriching their construction of self in the world’ (Seery 2011: 7). In determining the curriculum and content for instruction, often we are asking what knowledge is worth the most and how knowledge exposure can have longevity (Bruner 1960:11). This look into the educative relationship is interested in the role self-knowledge plays in these questions of worth and longevity, specifically how the narrated self can give insights into the relevant experiences of both the student and teacher.

While this research is only interested in establishing a working definition of self-knowledge as a means of introducing the narrated self (as opposed to entering into either the philosophical or psychological debate on ‘self’, the stages of ‘self’, the problems of ‘self’, and the role of body, mind, and soul in ‘self’), it can be said that the way in which one knows and experiences self is clearly different than the knowledge one has of others, of self through others, or of a third party piece of information. Self-knowledge, for the purposes of this research, is not about attainment in the Socratic sense, but about one’s understanding of the truth in reference to herself (Shoemaker 1963: vii). This knowledge of self, then, is set apart as it does not have to be based in observation and action but encompasses access to sensations, passing thoughts, beliefs, emotional attitudes, and intention without the need for observation (Vazire & Wilson 2012:2; Moran 2001: 9; Martin 1985: 4). This is not to say that self-knowledge excludes observation and action, nor that self-knowledge is faultless or limitless (Burge 1988: 649).

In considering what makes self-knowledge unique, this study acknowledges different forms of self-knowledge exist based on different forms of information, such as:

1. the ecological self is the self as directly perceived with respect to the immediate physical environment;
2. the interpersonal self, also directly perceived, is established by species-specific signals of emotional rapport and communication;
3. the extended self is based on memory and anticipation;
4. the *private* self appears when we discover that our conscious experiences are exclusively our own;

5. the *conceptual* self or ‘self-concept’ draws its meaning from a network of socially-based assumptions and theories about human nature in general and ourselves in particular. (Neisser 1988: 35)

There is also an awareness of the Kantian command to ‘know yourself’ in the moral sense, to know goodness and to know your heart (Kant 1991).

While not an exhaustive list of perspectives on and around self-knowledge, this layered definition of self-knowledge generally speaks to the type of knowledge that is introspective in nature, self-knowledge which is not available to the ‘public’.

In contrast, Charles Taylor (1989:36) speaks to the existence of self only in conversation and states that within these conversations the language of self-understanding is based. This self-knowledge is that which is shared and semi-public; *this self-knowledge is narrative in nature* (Dauenhauer & Pellauer 2011). And, narrative knowing creates a certain type of self-knowledge as it forms the narrated self (Polkinghorne 1996: 91).

### 2.4.2 The Narrated Self

When the educative relationship dismisses the relevance of personal experience, its blinds itself to the ways students (and teachers) learn, negotiate their place in the world, and construct identity (Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998: 231). This dismissal also dismisses self-knowledge and the potential for narrative self-construction – the *articulation* of self-knowledge for self and others – within the classroom. However, one of our key means of sharing experience and the self-knowledge that comes from it is through the construction of narratives of self.

While this concept will be examined later in this chapter, first, to understand the concept of narrated self it is necessary to acknowledge what is meant by the term narrative. Narrative refers to the concept of storytelling as a means of sense making (Altman 2008: 1; Bruner, 2002: 31; Cortazzi 2001: 384). The ability to reflect on fact, on action, and ‘redescribe’ our experiences with the addition of consciousness (Butler-Kisber 2010; Bruner 2002;
Ricoeur (1983) allows for a narrative telling to act as a means of personalized fact gathering. Self develops through this evaluative and emotional process (Fivush 1994: 136), thus, the narrated self is the self created in the process of the reflective telling, the narrative knowing. Narrative and self are inseparable in that narrative is simultaneously born out of experience and gives shape to experience (Ochs & Capps 1996). And the process of narrative, the act and the art of it, offers an opportunity for fragmented self-understanding (Ochs & Capps 1996: 22).

Bruner (1986: 11), who in *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* introduces a narrative way of knowing self, presents narrative as a mode of cognitive functioning with a distinct way of ordering experience and constructing reality. Within this telling of self, then, self-knowledge is refined as narratives provide a systematic knowledge of the ‘relationships among life events, happenings, motivations, purposes and actions’ (Polkinghorne 1996: 91). Narrative provides an ‘interpretative history’ as the story of self is interpreted and formulated (Giddens 1991:76).

The self at interest in this study then – the narrated self – is what is formed through this ordering and construction, creation and interpretation. Specifically, within the process of creating a narrative as a means of self-sharing, self is revealed through retrospective. This means that the narrative is not an account of life-as-lived, but a process of attribution and interpretation that is affected by:

1. memory as reconstruction of past events,
2. the smoothing processes of gestalt type configuration, and
3. the use of culturally available plots (Polkinghorne 1996: 88)

The narrated self, then, is reflective of these three elements, these three self-modifiers (Polkinghorne 1996; Ochs & Capps 1996: 23; Ricouer 1992; Bruner 1986). As a product of memory, narrative finds shape in the needs of the present, reassuring self and others with coherence and closure. Temporally, the narrator makes sense of experience by offering chronologic perspective and condensing, linking the past to the present to the possible future. In terms of point of view, the narrative follows known cultural plots as means of contextualizing, legitimizing, and resolving ‘themes’ of experience (Fleming 2003: 1) for self and others.
Specifically, Bruner in *Acts of Meaning* (1990), adds to this by clarifying that:

Narrative requires...four crucial grammatical constituents if it is to be effectively carried out. It requires, first, a means for emphasizing human action or 'agentivity'—action directed toward goals controlled by agents. It requires, secondly, that a sequential order be established and maintained—that events and states be 'linearized' in a standard way. Narrative, thirdly, also requires a sensitivity to what is canonical and what violates canonicity in human interaction. Finally, narrative requires something approximating a narrator's perspective: it cannot, in the jargon of narratology, be 'voiceless'. (77)

Through this, narrative adds a sense of consciousness and specific self to actions, moments, and events. The teller exercises metacognition as they select the means and mode of the telling, giving meaning to life events through the context and significance of the narrative (Gallagher 2007: 224). In addition, this reflective process allows for ethical and personal development within the narrative crafting (Hutto 2007: 4). The narrated self, then, becomes constructed through these means and modes and with the teller's acknowledgement that such is his or her experience of life and self (Schechtman 1996: 95).

And while criticality exists against these position of narrative, the narrative self, and the belief in a self with narrative possibilities (Strawson 2005), this view is one that sits comfortably within the philosophical beliefs underpinning both the learner profile and nondirective teaching model discussed earlier with the chapter.

Essentially, then, in terms of the narrated self, the narrative told '...constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character' (Ricouer 1992: 147–48). And it is the 'character', the person and self constructed within the narrative, that will be sought after in the methodology of this study, in the narrative data that will be collected from the student-participants in the hopes of opening the door for their selves to enter into the educative relationship.

### 2.4.3 Knowledge-Student Relationship

In regards to the influence of the narrated self and self-knowledge on the knowledge-student relationship with the educative relationship, and considering the affect of this on
the knowledge-student relationship, the strongest impact is in what Emily Style (1996) refers to in her article ‘Curriculum as Window & Mirror’. In it, Style states that the curriculum, or knowledge, needs:

‘...to function both as window and as mirror, in order to reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student herself or himself. If the student is understood as occupying a dwelling of self, education needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see her/his own reality reflected. Knowledge of both types of framing is basic to a balanced education which is committed to affirming the essential dialectic between the self and world. In other words, education engages us in ‘great conversations’ between various frames of reference’ (35).

The knowledge aspect of the educative relationship has not just the job of allowing students to refine, acquire, and apply knowledge but to also view and situate said knowledge in terms of their own life and the life of others. By acknowledging experience, self-knowledge, and allowing opportunities for the narrated self to be a part of the stories of curriculum, the impact on the educative relationship is of ownership and interest, and a lasting sense of ‘mine-ness’ (Zahavi 2007).

### 2.4.4 Knowledge-Teacher Relationship

In regards to the influence of the narrated self and self-knowledge on the knowledge-student relationship within the educative relationship, the largest impact is on the ‘voice’ (Hogan 2010: 59) this view allows teachers to have on their relationship (and, consequently, the students) with knowledge. By allowing for self-knowledge and the narrated self to come to light as pedagogical tools, the teacher allows for Hogan’s original and vibrant voice to be a part of the educative relationship; knowledge becomes human, living and breathing and personal, as opposed to a stagnant entity ripe for transmission. In regards to knowledge within the educative relationship, Godoñ (2004) states:

What one understands is gathered into the totality of one’s self-understanding and it is in that context that its significance gets decided. Any attempt to bypass this natural occurrence in human experience, by putting something newly learned directly into educational practice, can quickly lead to a deformation of learning itself. This means that a teacher who tries to use new knowledge in educational practice should first reflect on it in the context of the possibilities and limitations of her own teaching. Whenever the teacher neglects to consider herself as the first subject of the knowledge that she teaches, the whole process of putting the knowledge into practice risks distortion or failure. (590).
Thus, the teacher’s responsibility towards both herself and the selves of the students becomes clear in regards to cultivating an educative relationship that embraces both the standardized canon and the lives seated at Dewey’s desk for working.

2.4.5 Conclusion

With the first research question of this study being directed towards an uncovering of a student-learner’s themes of self and the second research question placing these themes within the educative relationship, the interest in self as knowledge and the uncovering of the narrated self works to, once again, direct the educative relationship in a very particular and person-centred direction. It is this literature that informs the construction of the curriculum, specifically the writing prompts that will be used to elicit the student-learners self.

2.5 NARRATIVE

On the first page of J.D. Salinger’s (1951) The Catcher in the Rye, the ever cynical Holden Caulfield sets the tone for his narrative by making it clear that he is not going tell his ‘whole goddam autobiography or anything.’ Not only do Holden’s words build a picture of a less than phony teenager in search of self, but his fragility and status as ‘one who seeks’ is also revealed through the events he replays, the setting he travels through, and the relationship he shares with others as well as himself.

While Holden is touted as the quintessential fictional representation of the teenage voice, Jerome Bruner makes the claim that, ‘Anybody (at almost any age) can tell a story’ (1986: 15) and this research is interested in the reality of the teenaged voices housed within Dewey’s desks, the stories they tell as individuals, and the effect these stories can have on the educative relationship. And whether that voice starts with Holden’s anti-Dickens’ declaration or with a teacher’s prompt into ‘what you did last summer’, the self and life revealed through the told narrative is at the heart of this research.

In conceptualizing life, then, ‘...we tend to think narratively...Narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about
themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future' (Connelly & Clandinin 1988: 24). And it is for this reason that all things ‘narrative’ are vital to this study of experience and self.

2.5.1 Narrative’s Duality

For the purpose of this research, narrative is a term that works as both a specific method of research inquiry (narrative inquiry/research) and as a philosophical proposition in regards to self and identity (narrative self); it is the launching point for the story of self as well as the phenomenon of self disclosed in the telling. ‘...Stories—especially those of the self—are now analyzed as much for the ways in which storytellers and the conditions of storytelling shape what is conveyed’ - the method of narrative inquiry - ‘as for what their contents tell us about the selves in question’ (Holstein, J. & Gubrium, J. 2000: 103) - the narrative self offered in response to the guided exploration.

Generally, narrative inquiry, a term used interchangeably in this chapter with the phrase narrative research (Clandinin 2007: preface), and examined in regards to its value as a methodological selection (see Chapter 3), describes the process of getting at the product of the narrative self (see Section 2.4.2). It is a means of inquiry built around making sense of either the telling (past tense) or living (present tense) of research participants stories with the research priority of studying experience as the catalyst for use (Kitchen 2011; Clandinin 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Kramp 2004; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Polkinghorne 1995, 1988; Connelly & Clandinin 1988; Bruner 1986;). Narrative research, ‘...requires the use of story in every phase of the research...[and] develop[s] based on the assumption common to all approaches to narrative research that the story is a fundamental unit that accounts for human experience’ (Pinnegar and Hamilton 2011: 54). Accordingly then, narrative inquiry is purposed to ask and allow for the processing of the specific human experience the study is interested in.

The narrative self is the storied self in the philosophical and is what narrative inquiry elicits. This ontology of self is ‘about the interface between what might variously be characterized as the macro and the micro, the exterior and interior, the peopled social world and the individuals within it, as well as other people’s views of ‘who I am’ and how I see myself’ (S. Taylor: 3). It is rooted in the theory of narrative identity (Polkinghorne
1996; Bruner 1990, 2986; Ricoeur, 1992, 1984) which suggests that in order to make time human and socially shared, we require a narrative identity for our self. In essences, we make sense of ourselves and our lives by stories we can (or cannot) tell. The narrative self is the product of this telling.

For the purpose of this study, these two facets of narrative – narrative research/inquiry and narrative self – intersect within the prompting and creation of the data set (see Section 3.7.1 & 3.7.2) as well as within the justification, creation, and implementation of the framework for analysis (see Section 3.8).

This brief literature review is positioned here to connect to the literature on the educative relationship as it informs the narrative elements of the research, connecting the research approach to the philosophical revelations discussed in the ‘knowledge’ component of the educative relationship, and subsequently informing the framework for data analysis. This chapter will specifically look at the narrative research that exists within the areas and topics of interest to this study. This section, then, acts as bridge between the methodology and the presentation of the narrative data and analysis.

2.6 NARRATIVE RESEARCH

Within the methodology section (see Section 3.3.4), narrative as a method for conducting research was defined generally and, specifically, the selection of it as the major method of research for this study was justified in regards to this study’s intentions as well as the literature reviewed in the educative relationship chapter (see Chapter 2). In this section, narrative as a research tool will be specifically explored to further establish a definition, reveal the current scope of inquiry both in and out of the educational setting, and to place this study within the context of current practice.

2.6.1 Narrative Inquiry

As a qualitative research method, narrative inquiry, as stated in the introduction to this chapter, asks the research participant to share a story of self within the parameters of specific research questions and with a certain facet of self as a guiding frame (self as gender, self as ethnicity, self as familial role, self as self, etc.).
Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) identify three purposes of narrative inquiry, or ‘uses of narrative texts’, purposes that are reiterated by Gubrium & Holstein (2009):

First, narratives can be used for exploratory inquiry and pilot study purposes, in both basic and applied research studies, to gain insight and gather information into the workings and realities of a secondary object, i.e. a particular social group, and to inform the construction of future objective research tools.

Second, the use of narrative texts can be for the specific purpose of researching the story itself in regards to the more formal aspects of construction, language, plot development, linguistics, etc. as opposed to the actual lived content.

Third, narrative texts can be used for philosophical and methodological inquiry purposes, focusing on deep knowledge and insight into narrativity and the resulting selves it enlightens. (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber 1998: 3-7).

Considering these three purposes within the context of this study, while there are some features of this research that are exploratory (first use) in regards to gaining an understanding into the lives and selves of the secondary school teenager, by far the purposes of this research and the use of a narrative text within it are philosophical (third use). The design feature of this research that work to categorise this study as a philosophical inquiry into the narrative text include the research questions (see Section 3.2) as well as the allowance for an emerging curriculum (see Section 3.6) based on the depth and topical honesty of the selves being shared through the narrative classroom exercises.

Along with this, this study is one that is concerned with experience-centred narratives (as opposed to event-centred narratives), and ‘assumes that narratives:

1. are sequential and meaningful,
2. are definitively human,
3. ‘re-present’ experience, reconstituting it, as well as expressing it, and
4. display transformation or change’ (Squire 2008: 42).
In this manner, once again, this study falls within the above third classification of narrative texts, looking into the deep self for the purpose of enlightenment.

Further to this, and expanding upon the first and third uses, narrative inquiry is interested in capturing the experience of the researched and studying it for the purposes of making meaning out of human action. As Clandinin & Rosiek (2007) state:

Beginning with a respect for ordinary lived experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only a valorizing of individuals’ experience but also an exploration of the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which the individuals’ experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted—but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. Narrative inquirers study an individual’s experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others. (42)

In narrative inquiry, then, there is the understanding that stories are, ‘human attempts to progress to a solution, clarification, or unravelling of an incomplete situation,... express[ing] a kind of knowledge that uniquely describes...actions and happenings [that] contribute positively and negatively to attaining goals and fulfilling purposes’ (Polkinghorne 1995: 7-8). In this study, the clarification sought is that of the themes of self of the teenaged population and the possible affect of these themes on the educative relationship.

Accordingly and for the purposes of this study, this survey of what currently constitutes narrative research is not concerned with examining the process or rationale behind the methods being used but about looking at what narrative self is being sought through the inquiry and how the evoking of identity through story leads to a disclosure of perceived meaning and new insight into lived experience.

2.6.2 Narrative Inquiry in an Ethnographic Design Setting

Housed within the anthropological discipline, a narrative produced within an ethnographic design setting as a narrative type is due a small consideration at this time as this study identifies itself as using narrative within a quasi-ethnographic methodological approach (see Section 3.3) and will be drawing from research that generally shares this feature. Additionally, this form of narrative inquiry is of interest as the ethnographic context, and
the relationships formed within such context, is significant in regards to the nature of the data collected.

As narratives are more than ‘...reflections of experience....[and] comprise the interplay between experience, storying practices, descriptive resources, purposes at hand, audiences, and the environments that condition storytelling’ (Gubrium & Holstein 2008: 250), the contingencies of what, when, where, why and how the narrative is crafted, as well as what the narrative is about and whom is being asked to share his or her narrative, are embedded in the research context. These are the important ethnographic dimension as the participants – in this study, the girls – are not writing without contingencies, they are bound by socio-cultural forces, particularly those that surround the educative relationship. The ethnographic features, then, of this and other studies influence the inquiry methods, in turn influencing the research participants’ stories and articulated experience of self and life. I

Hollingsworth & Dybdahl (2007: 157), in speaking on issues of relationship, identity, and power in narrative inquiry, are quick to point out that most narrative inquiries emphasize the ethnographic nature of their studies in regards to the trust relationship formed between participant and researcher. It is this trust relationship, built over an extended period of time, which allows for a deeper sharing of experience and the belief that narrative inquiry and narrative data are able to produce insight into life as truly lived. However, with such a relationship, and the understanding that participants, ‘may want the ethnographer to observe particular objects or events in order to illustrate their narrative’ (Davies 2008: 210), the narrative self revealed within the context of such a relationship requires consideration. The trust relationship essential to narrative revelations received within ethnographic settings, while fostering confidence and a certain comfort with self-truths, may also lead to an overly skewed shared self on the part of the participant. As with Humphrey’s (2012) ethnographic study conducted with social work students, this relationship is of particular interest when the study is conducted within an educative environment, with students as participants and a teacher-student dynamic being incorporated into the ‘insider’ research. Specifically, the trust relationship that was forged for the purposes of this research was housed within a teacher-student relationship, a relationship historically characterised by specific tensions and power relations. As one particular tension within this relationship is that of both a real and perceived inequality in the power dynamic, the narratives that were sought may lose authenticity as they could
have become driven more by what the participant perceived the researcher wanted than by the actual needs and truths of the participant’s experience. This dilemma was addressed within the methodology section (see Section 3.5.1) but is worth mentioning again at this time as tensions of this sort can influence the narrative self revealed as in Humphrey’s (2012) study and are a by-product of the ethnographic features of this study.

In narrative inquiry, the researcher ‘do[es] not stand outside the lives of participants but see[s] [them]selves as part of the phenomenon under study’ (Clandinin et al. 2010: 82). In an quasi-ethnographic narrative inquiry, then, this phenomenon is even more compelling, and this methodology, one that is context reliant (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl 2007: 156-157), becomes context dependent in regards to the eliciting of self. As Grubrium & Holstein (2009: 21) state, ‘Method needs to take account of what [is said] and how [it is said], but also should be sensitive to the narratively contingent conditions of assembling an account.’

Ethnographic research situated within the educative relationship is oftentimes thought of as ‘action research’ in regards to it as action disciplined by enquiry combined with a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in a process of improvement and reform (Hopkins 2008). However, as with Humphrey’s study (2012), this study was an ethnographic study of the educative relationship by a researcher-outsider assuming teacher-insider privileges.

### 2.6.3 Narrative Inquiry in Education

Looking at narrative inquiry within the context of this study and surveying the applicable and current research is purposed, then, to identify the space this study inhabits as well as the contribution to knowledge it aims to make.

Narrative is an invaluable research tool within the field of education as it treats experience as both multifaceted and nuanced, building an understanding of the classroom in regards to the *specific* lives that inhabit them (Korhonen, Komulainen & Räty 2011; Lee, Mott & Lester 2011; Ludhra & Chappell 2011: Tierney & Fox 2010; Thompson 2009; Symonds 2008; Beattie et al. 2007; Chan 2007; Flutter & Ruddock 2004; Brooker & MacDonald 1999; Anderson 1998; Davidson 1996) – in contrast to the *collective* lives of the generic ‘teacher’ and ‘student’ that may inhabit quantitative research. This value of lived
individual experience to and within the classroom has roots within Dewey’s progressivist educational philosophy, specifically his *Experience and Education* (1938). Dewey speaks to the organic connection between education and experience, considering the external factors that shape personalized individual experience, the influence such experience has on shaping the internal compasses of those poised to both teach and learn, and how classroom experiences and the educative relationship should influence and set the conditions for positive growth and experiential learning. Dewey’s interest in the student experience resonates today within current research interests (Attenborough & Stokoe 2012; Finn & Zimmer 2012; Lewis et. al. 2011; Stone 2011; Cotton, Stokes & Cotton 2010; Krause & Coates 2008; Pitkethly & Prosser 2001).

Philosophically, Bruner compliments Dewey’s constructs of experience by introducing the idea of a narrative self into the classroom. Bruner (1996: 42) links to Dewey’s notions by stating that only in the narrative can one construct identity and find a place in one’s culture. He argues that, ‘schools must cultivate [this construct], nurture it, [and] cease taking it for granted.’ In this same tradition, ‘In *Teachers as Curriculum Planners* Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin provide a narrative built upon the premise that experience is the primary agency of education’ (Eisner in Connelly and Clandinin 1988: ix). This work furthers the link between experience, narrative, and education by considering the classroom and curriculum as a situation of experience and of the personal by considering, ‘Education... [as] a narrative of experience that grows and strengthens a person’s capabilities to cope with life...’ and the teacher’s need for ‘an understanding of people with a narrative of life experience [as]....Life’s narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations’ (27).

In regards to narrative inquiry as a research method in an educational setting, then, its purpose is to investigate Dewey’s experience, Bruner’s philosophical narrative self, and Connelly and Clandinin’s classrooms and curriculum’s of narrative life. By respecting lived experience and the story of self as an vital source of knowledge and understanding, narrative inquiry as told by the research participants can further the examination of experience within the educational setting (Pinnegar & Hamilton 2011; Clandinin & Rosiek 2007; Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Connelly & Clandinin 1988; Bruner 1986, 1990; Dewey 1938).
Accordingly, in the case of the educational setting, the stories specifically solicited and the experiences sought, both in and out of the classroom, are typically those that fall under the headings of teacher and student.

2.6.3a Teacher Narratives

While this study is interested in student narrative as a means of exploring self-knowledge within the educative relationship, because this research is situated within the educative relationship, the teacher narrative is also of interest.

With the role of knowledge mediator, content provider, and, as Dewey asserts (1938), purveyor and manufacturer of student classroom experience, the teacher, their narrative and their narrative self is a powerful medium for understanding the function of experience within the educational setting. As Cortazzi states (1993: 5), ‘to improve education systems, curriculum reforms and classroom practice...we need to know more about teacher’s perspectives’. If the argument is being made in this study that the voice of the student is necessary in regards to creating a classroom where there is an equality among experience, then it is necessary to recognize where the bulk of narrative research is situated within the educative relationship - on the teacher, the nature of their knowledge, their training, and their voice as not only an educator with profession knowledge but as a person with personal knowledge and experience (Craig 2011; Keyes 2011; Kitchen 2011; Forrest, Keener & Harkins 2010; Beauchamp & Thomas 2009; Elbaz-Luwish 2007; Gregory 2007; Clandinin et. al. 2006; Lyons & LaBoskey 2002; Ritchie & Wilson 2000; Cortazzi 1993; Clandinin & Connely 1988).

As the adult voice within the educational setting, teacher narratives and the inquiry work being done around them as the point of departure are plentiful and diverse, connecting to the teacher component of the educative relationship as discussed in Chapter 2. The research behind the narratives is interested in catching the experience and subsequent story of who teachers are within all the evolutionary steps of the profession and from varied thematic perspective.

Elbaz-Luwish (2007) looks at research that elaborates on how the personal lives of the teacher – their lived experience – influences curricular choices such as how content is
elaborated and supported, what knowledge is treated to an in-depth study and how values can influence the perspective taken. Particularly relevant to this study is the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1988) – (see also Section 3.8.4) who ‘understand how spirited teachers may revolutionize their practices through reflection on their own experiences and new ideas, and how they can transform new ideas into powerful curriculum programs through this reflective process’ (xv). In addition Narrative Inquiries into Curriculum Making in Teacher Education (Kitchen, Parker, & Pushor 2011) takes a ‘second generation’ look into the work of Connelly & Clandinin, confirming the relevance of the teacher narrative in the knowledge component of the educative relationship.

Work around teachers’ lives, life stories, life histories and identities can ask for teacher voice and experience around attaching life as lived to areas of professional concern, the realities of the classroom, how one is called to the teaching profession, membership to the profession of teaching as a collective, or how life as lived impacts teacher persona. Connelly & Clandinnin’s Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research (2000) also speaks to this premise of teacher identity and the storied nature of it. In ‘Interacting Narratives: Creating and Re-creating the Self’ Beattie et. al (2007) specifically addresses this theme in a narrative research study into eight experienced educators’ aesthetic and spiritual lives. The purpose of the research is based in the belief that classroom practices are an extension of self and the research inquires into how this aforementioned aspect of teacher life links to teacher knowledge and practice. This area of teacher narrative research is also of particular relevance to this study as this research is housed under these same research interests but on the student side of the educative triad.

Teacher narratives can also be found around the topics of the diversity, social, cultural, and historical implications on practice as well as on the battle for systemic change (Burn & Bell 2011; Keyes 2011; Elbaz-Luwish 2007; Gregory 2007; Mogadime 2006; Watson 2006). A gap that does seem to exist within the current literature around teacher narrative, however, appears to be that which is interested in the intersection between teacher and student narratives. While Clandinin et. al. (2006) offer a look into this world in Composing Diverse Identities: Narrative Inquiries into the Interwoven Lives of Children and Teachers, this is a niche to be explored, particularly in the context of this study’s interests.
In regards to what these narratives are looking to reveal, the research purposes are varied but share the common direction and interest of this study of creating educational environs populated with individual lives.

2.6.3b Student Narratives

With an understanding of the teacher narrative and the purposes it serves and affect it has on the individualized classroom and wider educational setting, a survey of the student narrative work being done within the larger grouping of teenaged narratives is necessary in regards to this study’s research objectives and aims.

As this study is interested in the narrated self of a student-learner population, then, there is a particular relevance to the type of narrative work being done in and around students. While the breadth of literature is not as expansive as that offered on the various evolution of teacher self and identity, there is a small but consistent interest in student narratives and the insights that can be gained by allowing for student voice.

In surveying the literature, narrative inquiry into student experience and lived lives looks to the actions, experiences, and phenomenon in and around student life. In this regards, then, there is an interest in what meaning is being made by the students in their telling of self and how this meaning is, can, and could be relevant to education and educational experiences in the larger sense. In examining the literature on student narrative it seems the leading research purposes are agenda or advocacy driven, categorical or classification narratives. Specifically, current research done on student narratives appears to be driven by gender, ethnicity, economics, geography, minority status within the classroom, or special needs designation, etc. purposes.

In looking at gender driven student narratives, considering the population of this study, a look into current teenaged female narrative shows a predominance of studies interested in teenaged females in conjunction with some other qualifier – such as sexual identity (Sosulski, Cunnigham & Sellers 2006), eating disorders (Ross & Green 2011; Tierney & Fox 2010), at-risk designation (Jones 2011), SEN designation (Connor 2009), or minority status (Ludhra and Chappell 2011; Chan 2007; Xu et. al. 2007).
Specifically, in considering one of these areas to illuminate what is currently relevant in more depth, Connor's (2009) is interested in the narrative experience of 'students of colour' whom are designated SEN. Working to give voice to a previously unheard population, Connor's research questions are concerned with both the general experience of the labelled student as well as how these experience offer insight into the power relationships among disability, race, and class. Using focus groups to stimulate conversation, memory, and reflection, data was collected in a variety of forms and reviewed and interpreted with the participants into thematic threads (450), which is of particular interest to this study's intentions. With the findings geared towards enlightenment into the lived realities of such labelled students, Connor’s ‘believe[s] these narratives make a significant impression on the consciousness of the reader’ and that ‘such stories potentially hold much power to influence a personal disposition that, in turn, ultimately influences a person’s actions toward making changes in educational research, practice, and public policy.’

Ludhra and Chappell’s (2011) used narrative to explore the lived experiences of South-Asian girls living in West London. Specifically interested in the girls’ social, cultural, and religious identities, the study used semi-structure interviews to interact with this population of interest. Additionally, the study allowed for the girls’ input into the research process by asking for sincere reflection on their participation in the study. Within their narratives, the girls spoke on how they established friendship groups, their perceptions of White peers, and the positive role of their mother (109). Of particular interest to this study, is Ludhra and Chappell’s articulation that for many participants of this group, their involvement in this study was the first opportunity to make their thoughts on these topics explicit. Additionally, their research brings to light the ability of narrative research to empower those involved to acknowledge the reality of individual life within the grand narrative (108).

In regards, to the research interests of this study, both of these studies offer particular insights into the possibilities and realities of narrative inquiry within a student population. In addition, they speak to the reality of experience students carry with them to their desk as well as to the benefits of allowing for student contribution, voice, and life within the educative relationship.
2.6.3c Using Narrative to Explore the Student-Learner’s Experience of Self and Learning

Just as ‘it is...natural to draw as distinction between a teacher’s self as part of the professional role and the teacher’s self as a person...’ (Cortazzi 1993: 135) so must this be done with students, not only to validate their voices, but to allow them, as both the professional student and the private life, to enter into the educative relationship with a sense of security, duality and, union.

The research focus of this study revolves around experience-driven – as opposed to specific event driven – narrative, narratives that touch on a range of topics in varying depth and with varying weight in regards to eliciting the narrative self. Experience-driven narrative, then, are assumed to be ‘individual, internal representation of phenomena – events, thoughts, and feelings – to which narrative gives expression’ (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou 2008: 5).

With an interest in the experience-driven narrative, Chan’s (2007) research interest is in examining students’ experience and perspective on curriculum, specifically curriculum that has been designed to recognize the multi-cultural population within their school setting. While this study is narrowly focused on students’ cultural identity in regards to the aforementioned propagation of student narrative study, this research is similar to that of this study’s interest as Chan, ‘... view[s] student identity as a continuing narrative construction’ and believes that, ‘for students, who they are and the stories they choose to live by are critical parts of their daily school lives.’ (170). Using Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimension narrative inquiry space as a frame, this study ask students’ to share their own stories around:

Student experiences of curriculum [as] events may differ significantly from teacher or parent perceptions of their experiences. Teachers bring experience gained through prior experiences of teaching and learning about what they deem appropriate for students of ethnic-minority background. Students also carry with them ideas about what to expect and how to respond, gained through their experiences of interaction with peers, teachers, and family members (180).

While this study is interested in the tension multi-cultural curriculum may cause in the formation of identity, its findings reveal a gap between teachers perceived effects of
instruction and students' narrated realities. This finding is relevant to the research of this paper as the interest here is in the reality of the student experience of life, a reality that is under-explored and under-told in the literature.

In considering a study that uses curricular constructions to elicit narrative and study identity, Birkbeck and Walmsley (2006) work with an undergraduate student population. While their study is concerned with an older student population than this study, specifically fourth year Bachelor of Social Work students, Birbeck and Walmsley's (2006) interest in values education and instruction leads them to a curricular assessment similar to that used for this study's research purposes. Designing an autobiographical narrative assessment to 'increase awareness of the social context in which one's identity is formed and its impact on practice' (116), the reflective questions asked of the students were in the same strand as this study's; specifically, students in Birbeck and Walmsley's (2006) study were asked:

1. What experiences are crucial to an understanding of your life?
2. What people are central to an understanding of you?
3. What did you learn about the art of living from your own life?
4. Who is the person you bring to the practice of social work?
5. What are the important themes to your life?
6. What are the organizing ideas (principles, values, goals) to your life? (118)

Leaving out the questions specifically geared towards the students' pursuit of a degree in social work, the remaining questions, in comparison to this study, are similar in regards to the reflection being asked for around questions of self and identity. In contrast, Birbeck and Walmsley's (2006) study was looking for a self-contained autobiographical narrative in response to these questions. However, with their stated belief that:

An autobiographical narrative is a process of conscious self-construction that encourages students to locate values in life experience and to define particular episodes, experiences, or moments as key to self-understanding....Through reflection and writing, the stories told by families and peoples about themselves are validated and the themes and values embedded in these narratives can become more evident to the student.... Its effectiveness as an important learning opportunity for students is rooted in the extent to which trust develops between the faculty member and student before the assignment's submission. (115-124)
it is evident that the research aims and objectives of both studies are similarly motivated and situated around experience and self.

Philosophically, the research interests of both these studies are similar to that of this study. While Chan (2007) believes in student life as a vital part of the educative relationship, Birkbeck and Walmsley (2006) use of participant reflexivity calls on their participants to consider their experience as a means of constructing self. While both studies are interested in populations different from that of this study, there interest in the students’ role and possibilities within the educative relationship are compelling.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This study, directed firstly by the research questions, is also about what is made possible by a certain kind of educative relationship. In the case of the literature presented and the specific focus established under each point of the relationship, there is a clear interest in the type of educative relationship that can be achieved by teachers and students through an incorporation and recognition of both their ‘selves’ and the relational nature of this knowledge endeavour. With the choice of the IB learner profile as the context for the student, the nondirective teaching model as the context for the teacher, and the interest in self as knowledge, the literature has directly this study towards a particular educative relationship with a specific philosophy on learning and self. This educative relationship, then, creates the context in which the methodology of this study is housed.

In addition, based on the research presented, it is apparent that ‘...it is only in narrative inquiry that story is a metaphor for knowing, phenomenon to be explored, direction for the process for analysis of experience, and guide in determining how to represent understandings and meaning-making from the inquiry’ (Pinnegar & Hamilton 2011: 60) Looking at the research questions of this study, and positioning it within current research, the choice of narrative is valid and necessary. In regards to constructing a narrative for inquiry and creating a frame for analysis, this study, unlike most studies, does not use interviews, archival documents, or ethnographic observation as the data set (Riessman 2008: 183) nor is it interested in a defined population. However, the interests, aims, and purposes of this study are repeated throughout the literature in regards to validating the student as a contributing member of and to the educative relationship.
CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the purest moments in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* comes, quite appropriately, in the final chapter of the novel when the main character, Scout, stands on Arthur (Boo) Radley’s front porch and completes her *Bildungsroman* by finally owning the lesson her father Atticus continually puts forth: ‘You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it’ (Lee 1960: 39).

Atticus’ lesson – and Scout’s journey to own the enduring wisdom within it – can be held as a fictional mirror to Gardner’s call ‘...to place ourselves inside the heads of our students and try to understand as far as possible the sources and strengths of their conceptions’ (1991: 253). Between this fiction and theory, with a firm footing in practice and the reality of the classroom, is where I have stood in my teacher’s past and where I have situated my researcher’s present. And it is for this reason that this will be a study of narrative, a study of self, and a study of life all wrapped up in the familiar day-to-day routine of a 4th year secondary school Transition Year elective.

3.1.1 Chapter Contents

In regards to articulating my personal context in a research setting, this chapter will present the methodological approaches taken in this study. First, evolving from my teacher’s past and refined through the literature, I will present my dual research questions. Then, I will explain the theoretical framework used to support this study. From there, the methodological framework of the study will be offered, specifically exploring the determinations of the study as well as the evolution of it; within this section, specific attention will be given to the curriculum that was written to frame the research and solicit the data. The means of data creation and collection and analysis will then be presented as will the research ethics. Finally, a conclusion on the design of the study will be offered.
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With a passion for teaching that had been cultivated in ten years of a learner filled classroom, my research intention was to unravel the individual strings that formed the roped community that confronted me on a daily basis. To allow these students, these lives to ‘cease to be a mass and become the intensely distinctive beings that we are acquainted with out of school, in the home, the family, on the playground, and in the neighbourhood’ (Dewey 1900: 33) it was my belief that I needed to give them a voice. And with this voice, it was my belief that I was also giving over the ability to articulate and validate the existence of a student’s life and self both in an out of the classroom.

Much research, it seems, approaches the classroom from the perspective of those who stand in front of it; specifically in regards to what teachers are doing and how and why they are doing it. My research intent was to switch places with my students, to put them in the position of expert and take a seat in their classroom as they spoke on life and learning. I wanted to hear the students’ stories, the story of who they have been, are, and will be in the most natural contexts, that of self and that of self as learner. I wanted to empower Dewey’s individuals to become more than inmates; I wanted to allow them to become contributors in a fashion that was active and tangible, personal and authentic, in a way that allowed for distinction. I wanted to acknowledge that student voices are varied and treat them as valid and reliable on the subject of self and learning. And, I wanted it all to be a product of the setting most familiar to the student-learner/student-liver, the classroom.

To this end, I developed two research questions to encompass all of these wants.

1. **What themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student-learner) of a personal narrative?**

2. **What relevance do the student-learners’ emergent themes of self have for the student-teacher-knowledge relationship?**
These research questions, as they attempt to investigate my priorities as both a researcher and a teacher, also attempt to parallel the previously articulated aims of Gardner, Dewey, and Atticus Finch by taking a seat in the classroom as opposed to standing in front of it.

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The use of research and theory to frame the approach to data collection is grounded in my general research goal – to look at life and the educative relationship from the students’ perspective and acknowledge their presentation of self as valid, reliable, and necessary – and refined through the lens of the identified research questions. Considering the research questions, it followed that I would be engaged in qualitative research conducted from an ethnographic perspective which used a narrative methodology to interact with a select group of student-learners. This section provides a rationale for the theoretical framework of this study, specifically discussing the qualitative, ethnographic, narrative, and case study features.

3.3.1 Qualitative Approach

When determining whether or not to take a quantitative or qualitative approach, it was necessary to consider that the research premise and resulting questions revolved around students creating a narrative that reveals:

1. what they know about themselves in the contexts that mean most to them,
2. how they have come to know this about themselves, and
3. how and why this personal knowledge is (or could be) significant.

With this criteria as a starting point, the want to delve into a teenager's understanding and expression of him/herself as a self, the want for the revelation to be an exercise of authentic voice and true life, and the belief that the most appropriate setting for such a narrative exercise is within the classroom, the basic research focus can said to be on understanding human behaviour within a localized setting.

As qualitative research and analysis can loosely be defined as being a study of the words detailing human phenomenon, interaction, discourse and motivation within a concentrated
sample (Lichtman 2006: 8-9, Kellet 2005: 99; Richards 2005; Suter 2012: 55), it was a natural fit for a study such as this. This study is not about categorizing or hypothesis testing, as one would find in a quantitative study, but about provoking thought about what exists on the parameters of quantifiable data, about provoking theory (Freebody 2003: 35). General theories have been developed about learning and then blanketed over a classroom of learners, but in this study theory will be created by the learners to blanket themselves. And, as this is a study attempting to examine and validate the unique and varied lives that fill the classroom, it is a research mandate ‘that those who study it must collect rich and diverse data...’ (LeCompte & Preissle 1993: 158), a staple of qualitative research.

In regards to the compilation of data in qualitative research, ‘the researcher is the principal data collection instrument; whereas in quantitative research, scientifically designed data collection tools are developed’ (Anderson 1998: 123). As the environment for this study is the classroom, and as the data being collected are being generated by a curriculum that I, as teacher-research, both authored and taught, it is also evident that this study is qualitative in nature.

With the main intent of the research, then, to gain an in-depth perspective of the intersection between self and self within the educative relationship as determined and told by the students, qualitative research is the general methodology through which all other approaches will find focus.

3.3.2 Mixed-Approach Design

As Anderson (1998: 119) states, ‘Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them.’ The first challenge of this study came in the mixed-approach design dictated by both the qualitative nature of the research and the focus of the research questions.

As ‘the three conditions [for selecting a method of research] consist of (a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events, and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical
events.' (Yin 2009: 8), three traditional research approaches were selected to frame the collection of data:

1. the ethnographic approach (methodological context)
2. the narrative approach (methodological process and product)
3. the case study (methodological feature)

Combining these methods with the research questions, the study’s approach was designed as an ethnographic narration using the general lens of a case study. Both the ethnographic approach and the narrative approach are weighted equally in regards to their intentional selection as a research method and their influence on the design and data. Based on the general nature of the research, the setting in which the research was conducted, and the data analysis intentions, there are also features of a case study within the research, but this not intended as a case study.

Figure 7 – Mixed-Approach Design

3.3.3 Ethnographic Approach

The situating of the researcher within the research context, and the unique interplay this can have with the data generated and collected, is a general feature of a qualitative study and a specific feature of ethnographic research. As I am conducting this study within the parameters of a ‘normal’ Transition Year classroom and as I have assumed the mantle of teacher-researcher for this study becoming a part of the research environment, it is necessary to address the first point on this study’s multi-approach design, the quasi-
ethnographic features that surround the context – and frame the perspective – of the research.

Ethnographic educational research is an approach with measured anthropologic roots that is used when the research aim is the consideration of a cultural group within its natural setting (and participation of the researcher within this setting) for the purpose of increased awareness and understanding of the connections between the norms, values, beliefs, life priorities, etc. of said group (Hymes 1996: 3-15). While this study is narrative in nature and not ethnographic, it does employ specific ethnographic methods in regards to design (Wolcott 2002: 40 – 46) but is restricted by the limitations of the specific classroom, timeframe, and a lack of comparative ethnological perspective (Hymes 1996: 15).

In regards to ethnography as a methodology, as a way of studying human life, LeCompte and Preissle (1993: 3) define four features of ethnographic design:

First, they qualify ethnographic research as *phenomenological*, ‘represent[ing] the world view of the participants being investigated and [using] participant constructs...to structure the research.’

Second, they emphasize the *empirical* and *naturalistic* character of ethnographic research through the use of ‘participant and nonparticipant observation...to acquire firsthand, sensory accounts of phenomena as they occur in real world settings....’

Third, they speak to the *holistic* nature of ethnographic research and the need for it to ‘construct descriptions of total phenomena within their various contexts and to generate from these descriptions the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour toward and belief about the phenomena.’

Fourthly, they insist that ethnography is *multimodal...use[ing] a variety of research techniques to amass data.’
In regards to LeCompte and Preissle’s (1993: 3) four features, this research study generally fulfills this definition of ethnographic design, and can therefore be considered quasi-ethnographic, in the following ways:

First, in consideration of the study as phenomenological, the study qualifies in the most general sense. Under layers of data that are guided by purposeful intervention and with the understanding of the articulated manipulations of the research setting, the core of this study has a phenomenologic intention. As the study asks students to narrate and analyze their life and life experience, and provide structure to their revelations along with an analysis, there is a sense of the philosophic roots to phenomenology in regards to a first person account of experience. However, this is in the weakest possible sense.

Second, as this study is being conducted in a classroom setting, with the intention that both the students and I, as teacher-researcher, interact with the ideas of self and learning and record our observations for the purpose of data generation, it is a study that is both empirical and naturalistic. In addition, it is acknowledged that the ‘naturalistic’ setting of a classroom is a site of power-relations, to be addressed later on in this chapter.

Third, as the intention of this study is to look at self in the main contexts of student life, school and home, and strives to identify relationships and patterns in regards to ‘causes and consequences’ emerging from said relationships, it is holistic.

Fourthly, as this study uses a variety of research methods and instructional strategies in the creation and collection of data (writing, images, poetry, songs, etc.) it can be seen as multimodal.

My two-fold existence in the classroom – that of teacher and that of researcher—also carries with it certain ethnographic features as first described by anthropologist Ken Pike (Alasuutari 1995: 67) and loosely and generally construed from there. As a teacher, my perspective on the environment can be considered emic (that of an insider) in regards to the natural ebb and flow of classroom machinations and posturing. As a researcher, my perspective can be considered etic (that of an outsider) as my purposes exist outside the
natural parameters and expectations of a classroom setting. Taking this further, as an adult teacher-researcher who is not on staff at the schools I am working in, my perspective is also etic when considering the sample population of 15-16 year old secondary students. However, in regards to the setting of my existence, while I am interacting with the students within the natural setting of the classroom and in the familiar persona of teacher, my purpose in the classroom is not to observe and record student behaviour and interaction, a fact that gives the study a decidedly less ethnographic slant.

It also should be noted that the sample population – the students themselves – are also cast in the role of ethnographer within this study. As they narratively record details of self, the students are generating data from an emic perspective, from within the cultural setting of self (Freeman & Mathison 2009:153). And, as a ‘good ethnography entails trust and confidence,...some narrative accounting, and...is an extension of a universal form of personal knowledge’ (Hymes 1996: 14), the students, as ethnographers, are engaging in a sort of phenomenological approach to themselves ‘...rel[ying] on retrospective reflection—thinking about the experience and what it means, after the fact’ (Anderson 1998: 122-123). This fact allows for an empathic understanding of the population, their norms, values, beliefs, and life priorities. It also allows for the building of a student-owned perspective on life and learning, affirming the validity of their voice and necessity of a narrative perspective. The students, in many ways, can be seen as ethnographers of self, narratively recording detail aspects of life and reporting on the details for the purpose of moving knowledge from the specific to the general.

‘Ethnographic studies of learning and knowledge in education ask the question ‘what counts as knowledge and learning in classrooms to teachers and students” (Freebody 2003: 76). This study, then, based on the research questions, generally qualifies as ethnographic as it is looks at teenagers, specifically the cultural group of Irish Transition Year students (within selected secondary schools) and links abstract concepts to particular data (Hammersley 1990: 114) for the purposes of understanding life and learning from their perspective (norms, values, beliefs, and life priorities).

3.3.4 Narrative Approach
With the onus of this study being the desire to give students a voice in regards to their experiences of life and learning, the most suitable methodology for qualitative data collection done from an anthropologic ethnographic perspective is the narrative approach. This, then, comprises the second point of this study’s multi-approach design and relates to the nature and purpose of the data as well as the means of data collection; the data for this study takes the form of weekly written self-narrations on the part of the student-participants for the purpose of relating their reality of self and self-understanding.

Traditionally, the word ‘narrative’ is associated with the concept of storytelling, an act that permeates life and living, from the books we read to the conversations we have (Butler-Kisber 2010: 63). The art of creating narrative is familiar and lacks artifice as we frame our origins and beliefs in story form, ‘...we represent our lives (to ourselves as well as to others) in the form of narrative’ (Bruner 1996: 40).

Through the telling of stories, humans make sense of experience, shaping their experience and creating a dialogue between ‘what was expected and what came to pass’ (Bruner, 2002: 31; Cortazzi 2001: 384). The ability to reflect on fact, on action, and ‘redescribe’ our experiences with the addition of consciousness (Butler-Kisber 2010; Bruner 2002; Ricoeur 1983) allows for narration as a means of personalized fact gathering. By using a method of narrative inquiry, then, data collection becomes ‘human centred’ and the stories become a, ‘...document [of] critical life events....reveal[ing] holistic views....and reflect[ing] the fact that experience is a matter of growth, and that understandings are continually developed, reshaped and retold...’ (Webster & Mertova 2007: 14).

Considering the choice of a narrative approach in regards to the methodological design of this study, it is important to consider that the foundation of the research questions are built on the concept of student voice and the recognition of the validity and right of student voice (Hymes 1996: 109) in regards to both self as self and self as learner within the educative relationship. In conjunction with this, ‘Most narratives are told about things which...matter to the teller and audience. Therefore, a careful analysis of...narratives...should...give researchers access to tellers’ understandings of the meanings of key events in their lives, communities or cultural contexts’ (Cortazzi 2001: 384). Then, as this study is concerned with the students’ construction of meaning and self from life as narrated, the narrative approach works as both a familiar means of communicating and
transmitting knowledge and as a way of framing moments of and for reflection. This concept will be more specifically discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter (see Section 3.8.3).

Specifically looking at the research questions and referring back to the literature presented in Chapter Two, narrative as a choice of methodology is also particularly relevant to the research and research questions as, firstly ‘in the field of education, the work has focused mainly on teacher education, looking at the ways in which teachers’ narratives shape and inform their practice’ (Webster & Mertova 2007: 27). This supports the need for the finding and relating of the other side of the teacher/student relationship – the student narrative (Cortazzi 2001) – and for providing a structure that works within the articulated intent of the study. In regards to the second research question and its look into the student-teacher-knowledge relationship:

用水力，它 issued not only to look at human factors but also to consider human factors within a range of learning theories. Narrative reveals the need for different strategies at different times in the story of learning. For instance, the types of strategies required at the initial skill practice stage are different from those required at the deeper learning and expert stage....Narrative acknowledges that time is critical in the learning process, that deeper learning and expert strategies take a long time to develop and cannot be condensed without risk of simplification or reductions. (Webster & Mertova 2007: 22)

With these concepts then framing the narrative portion of the methodology and inquiry, asking students to create a narrative of self and self as learner can be seen as a classroom task that exists within the status quo and as a natural extension of self. Considering that a ‘concern for the narrative brings to the forefront features of the learner’s thinking and learning needs that may have been neglected through more traditional research methods’ (Webster & Mertova 2007: 16) it is also the appropriate method of inquiry for the task of seeking answers to this study’s research questions.

3.3.5 Case Study Approach

The third and final point in the study’s three-point methodological design is the case study. While this methodological feature does not have the same weight in defining and
structuring the study as the first two, the research does have certain features of a case study that necessitate consideration.

Generally, a case study examines a specific experience within its real-life setting and ‘...is concerned with how things happen and why’ (Anderson 1998: 121 - 153). Specifically, Robert Yin (2009: 18) gives a two-fold definition of a case study:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that:
   - investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
   - the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and

2. The case study inquiry:
   - copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables than data points, and as one result,
   - relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result,
   - benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis

In regards to this, Yin (2009) also presents the idea that the case study may be explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive and will take the design of either single- or multiple-case studies.

Considering the research questions, this study is neither causal (explanatory case study) nor is it looking to match data with a pre-existing framework (descriptive). This then allows for the general features of this study to be termed as exploratory – or meaning making. Also, as the data will be presented and analysed in two chapters, Chapter Five focusing on the collective voices of the student and Chapter Six focusing on an individual’s experience of self, the research findings will deal with both single- or multiple-cases.

Whereas in ‘experiments, the researcher creates the case(s) studied, ...case study researchers construct cases out of naturally occurring social situations’ (Hammersley &
Gomm 2000: 3). As this study is set within the classroom and is interested in telling the stories of the single-cases of self and learner within that classroom (Suter 2012: 366), it can generally be seen as a natural social situation.

Based on the setting (classroom), participants (students), and focus of the research (narrative, self, educative relationship), this, then, is a study that fits within both Anderson and Yin’s definition. The study also has some general features of both an explanatory and descriptive study.

3.3.6 Conclusion

In reflecting on the theory used to frame this study, it is important to reinforce that the narrative features and want for the study have guided the selection and imposition of the ethnographic and case study elements. These theoretical considerations were also key in framing the methodological realities of the study.

3.4 RESEARCH ETHICS

Before moving on to the specific methodological design of this study, it is necessary to present the research ethics used to support both the participants involved with this study and its general design.

As both a teacher and an educational researcher, it was my goal to conduct this study with the highest possible standard of ethics and integrity. To that end, the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) issued by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) were used to maintain ‘...an ethic of respect for the following: the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research, and academic freedom.’

All participants in the study and all parents/guardians were informed, in writing, of the nature of the research project, its goals and aims, and the type of personal data product being generated (see Appendix A). Written consent was obtained by all participants and parents/guardians and all parties were informed that they could withdraw from the study at
anytime. Special emphasis was placed on the fact that all information obtained would be reported with anonymity and confidentiality, at both the individual and school level. Participants and parents/guardians were informed that the data obtained from this study would be used for the definite purpose of a PhD dissertation. They were also given notice that the data could appear in academic articles as well as conference presentations (see Appendix A for all materials mentioned in this paragraph). At the end of the study, after having submitted all pertinent data, participants (both those in the group data analysis of Chapter 4 and the individual participant Chapter 5 will be based on) were shown how their data would be used in the study and additional consent was sought at this time.

The schools involved in the study were also informed, in writing, that all information obtained from this research project would be reported with anonymity and confidentiality so as not to identify the school. General progress reports were sent to school officials throughout the course of the study and the schools were made aware that at the conclusion of the project, the research findings, mindful of anonymity and confidentiality, would be shared so as to benefit the school community as a whole.

3.5 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

With the theoretical elements and ethics in place, it was necessary to begin articulating a practical design that would help flush out answers to the research questions. Using the articulated educative relationship interests of the IB learner profile, the nondirective teaching model, and the knowledge and experience of self, as well as my classroom experience, I crafted a methodological framework supported by the research. This section first explains the proposed framework for the study and the considerations that went into its development. It then contextualizes the study by relating the specific factors of the Irish Education system (the Transition Year) that made this study possible. It then describes the process of actualizing the study within the school setting and the ramifications of this on the proposed framework for the study. The design used for the creation of the Transition Year module is explained and the framework for module's curriculum is provided. The data creation and collection process is then detailed as is the process and methods for data analysis. Lastly, a conclusion is made on the frame as a whole for this study.
3.5.1 Proposed Research Design (as determined by researcher)

After developing a purposeful and directing set of research questions, sufficiently identifying that an ethnographic narrative method of data collection was to be used, and considering that the onus of the study was interested in giving voice to the student-learner, determinations were made in three categories in regards to the proposed framework for this study:

1. Research Setting
2. Participants
3. Researcher

The rationale for the determinations within each category will be given below as will the difficulties created by these determinations on the study. The tensions that were then created by the set parameters are also related in a sub-section of this heading.

3.5.1a Research Setting

Firstly, in the formulation of the research setting it was necessary to consider the literature around authentic narratives and the research questions concerns of the themes of self and the educative relationship. The first consideration in soliciting a true narrative from the students, and not one that just gave service to the tasks of a classroom request, was that an environment of trust, care, and commitment needed to be fostered for the narration to take place, one in which a rapport could be established and comfort felt (Dell'Olio & Donk 2007: 308; Anderson 1998: 126; Hymes 1996: 13). By developing a rapport, the students would be able to experience my commitment, belief, passion and care in regards to their welfare and feel comfortable engaging in a relationship that asked for an honest sharing of self (Cortazzi & Jin 2006: 43). With this as the foundation, the hope was that a sense of trust would naturally develop, a trust that would allow for authentic findings from ‘real’ people (Butler-Kisber 2010: 69) and authentic answers to the research questions.
To establish care, rapport, and trust as a basis for narrative sharing and response, the appropriate environment—research setting—needed to be found. Identifying that trust and rapport are seemingly relational and key in allowing for both compassion and criticality in a trust relationship, different ways of relationship building were considered (Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998: 233). The existence of a classroom power dynamic was also taken into consideration and an acknowledgement of student concerns with issues of respect, differential power, and the exercise of authority were acknowledged (Lynch & Lodge 2002: 152). The research questions and the different aspects of self being studied—self and self’s connect to the student/learner—were also looked at in regards to the nature and setting of the relationship being established, as was the fact that the students would take on researcher responsibility within the course of the study. With these factors in mind, the most common setting for students, that of the classroom, was chosen as the most comfortable, natural, and suitable research setting (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 57; Pollard 1985: 227). In this setting, the relationship between student and teacher would be familiar to the students and would support the research’s interest in the educative relationship. In addition, it would be a relationship—if cultivated properly—that would lend itself to the establishment of rapport, trust, and care. In regards to the students assuming the mantle of researcher, an environment built around these tenants would support the legitimacy and collaborative nature of this role and the intention for this to be a balanced interaction and not one that is ‘tokenistic’ and limited (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 53; Flutter 2007: 351; Symonds 2008: 63).

With this relationship established and a general determination of the research setting established—that of a classroom—the need to specifically determine the research setting emerged. First, simply putting students together with a teacher would not create an environment of trust and care. Certain factors allow for the emergence of these qualities (in any relationship), factors such as: honesty, connection, consistency, personalization, fairness, openness, recognition of personal experience and follow-through (Robinson & Kakela 2006). Specific to the educational relationship, Ennis and McCauley add the factors of shared expectations, persistence, commitment, and voice to the trust relationship (2002). In my classroom experience, the realistic attainment of these factors can be dependent on the length of time the relationship is in existence for as well as the person/people in the relationship.
Considering the variable of time first, in regards to the research setting and the determination of specific parameters for this study, the length of time given to the formation of the student/teacher relationship was controllable. In my past experience as a teacher, teaching on a daily basis, rapport could be established, trust given, and care felt by, generally speaking, midterm. For the purpose of this study and the research setting, then, it was determined that the research needed to take place in a classroom setting for an extended period of time.

Considering the variable of the person/people in the student/teacher relationship, in regards to the research setting and the determination of specific parameters for this study, it was evident that while I would have minimal control over the student aspect of the relationship (see Section 3.5.1b), I would be able to control the teacher aspect if I were to be the teacher. In regards to this, then, the determination was made to create a research setting where I would go into the schools and into a classroom setting for an extended period of time.

With these parameters determining the walls of the research setting, the next task was to determine what would define the interior of the research setting and what difficulties these determinations would have on the study as a whole. The questions that followed in regards to the creation of the substance of the research setting were: if I were to assume the role of teacher in a traditional classroom setting:

- who would I teach?
- what would I teach?
- when would I teach?
- where would I teach? and
- how would this teaching generate data?

The first question, *who would I teach*, will be specifically explored in Section 3.4.1b as I look at the parameters established for the research participants. However, generally, based on my experience in the American secondary system, I determined that the students most suited for such a project would be students with both experience and maturity, students in the senior cycle of secondary school. It was my belief that these students would have the greatest sense of ‘this is where I have been’ and a clear understanding that on the other side
of that statement is a ‘this is where I am going’. I also felt that they would have the age behind them to have sufficient experience – both in the academic and personal contexts – to comfortably narrate. For these reasons, I thought they would be the most willing to offer up their personal narrative as well as the analysis and reflection I would be attaching to them.

The difficulties surrounding this parameter were more practical than anything else and once dealt with in the initial setting up of the study, were insignificant in regards to the study as a whole.

In regards to the second question, *what would I teach*, a few key elements were considered in the formulation of the answer. Firstly, my training as a teacher in the area of secondary English, my M.Ed in Curriculum and Instruction, and my past experience in curriculum writing and development were taken into consideration. The research questions and the literature on teaching, learning and the educative relationship (see Chapter 2) were also considered as were the generic prior experiences of the students who would end up being a part of the course. With all of this in mind, I determined that I could, using my curriculum training, create a module specifically designed around the research questions and the literature of the educative relationship that utilized narrative writing as the main form of ‘assessment’ (see Section 3.7). Thus, the course would not be content based in the traditional view of the word, but ‘skill’ and ‘thematic’ based in that the unifying tasks of the module would be the act of writing (skill) about self (theme) in a variety of contexts. Based then on these instructional tasks required of the student – narrative, autobiographical, and creative writing – the course would fit into the English content area and could be offered (depending on the schools’ willingness to host such a study) as either a stand-alone module or one that could be integrated into an already existing English course. Either way, the heart of the course would be based around provoking the kind of thought, experiences, and learning necessary for narrative revelation and the emergence of themes of self.

Difficulties with this second parameter immediately arose in the form of data manipulation. As a teacher teaching a self-authored course, I would be creating the experiences, the lessons, *the everything* that would be guiding the students in the authoring of their narratives. In some respects, then, these would be *their* narratives but from *my*
point of view, a fact which allows for the argument of tainted data. However, within the research setting, there is also the understanding that articulating ones’ narrative is a process, that the generation of any story comes from a provoking concept, a trigger of self and memory (see Chapter 2). This allows then for a central point of provocation – a lesson – that is shared by all engaged in the study but allows for an individual response. The challenge was, then, to create a course that would elicit the type of data that would address the research questions without been prescribed. As the person in control of those moments, it was my job then to responsibly select classroom experiences that would dutifully link to the literature, the research questions, and the students. So, while recognizing this difficulty and its affect on the data, I was also mindful of it in regards to the role I was assuming.

In response to the third question, that of when I would teach, I determined – as previously established earlier in this section – that the greater the interaction between myself and the students the more likely that an environment of trust – the environment necessary to collect authentic qualitative narrative data – would be created. Based on prior personal and teaching experience and the earlier explained determination of the research setting regarding time, I thought that to attain this environment a group of students would need to be followed for the course of a school year as this would allow for the development of the appropriate and needed environment of trust. Mindful of the reality of what I would be asking of the schools and what they would allow, I also felt that it would be appropriate to meet with the students on a weekly or biweekly basis. This timeframe would allow for frequency of contact over an extended period of time (the school year) which would allow for relationship building and a guiding of tasks as well as the opportunity for the participants to work freely outside of the classroom on the creation of their personal narratives.

The difficulties created in the study by the answers to this third question once again pertain to the generation of data, however this time in regards to the frequency of data generation and the amount of data collected over the course of the study. With students writing, minimally, once a week for the course of a school year and, hypothetically, every day they were a part of the study, the amount of data generated was enormous and while somewhat regulated it also took on a life of its own. However, it must be noted that while such a wealth of data is a difficulty, it also allows for a more authentic – and less prescribed – unfolding of the narrative self.
In creating the research interior, it was also important to figure out the most practical of questions – *where would I teach?* With my training providing for a qualification in secondary education and with the research questions directing me towards a more mature student, the most general answer to this question was within a secondary school. Specifically, it was my hope to teach in a variety of schools so that the participants and the data solicited would reflect that range of voices that exist for students within the secondary population. This is discussed in more specificity in Section 3.5.5 of this chapter.

The biggest difficulty with this component of the research setting was the ability to find the reality of what I was asking for amidst all the complexities: for Irish secondary schools to allow a non-staff teacher with American qualifications to come into their classrooms and teach their students a self-authored curriculum for the course of one full school year. Because there was a ‘largeness’ to what I needed, I was prepared to be flexible and allow for the schools to dictate certain elements of the research setting (see Section 3.5.6). With an awareness of how much I was asking for, these difficulties defined my level of preparedness in meeting with schools (see Section 3.5.4) and in authoring the curriculum (see Section 3.6). Once two schools agreed to be a part of the study, however, this biggest difficulty was surmounted only to be replaced with key tensions that persisted throughout the course of the study (to be addressed later on in this section).

The last question in regards to the research setting and the realities and practicalities of it was *how would the research setting (and the already defined parameters of it) work to generate data.* As this is a narrative study, generally the setting was constructed to allow the students the opportunity to share their voices on the topics of self and learning, a sharing that would supply the data. Specifically the setting, utilizing the familiar tasks of the classroom, allowed for reflection on and consideration of the story of self through particular instructional tasks (as chosen by the teacher-researcher) thought to inspire the articulation of narrative. These tasks then manifested into a recording of the narrative by the student in a journal-like fashion. These journal writings, once wholly assembled, would then become the data used for analysis in regards to the research questions.

The difficulty created within this component of the research setting arises from the concept of narrative. Typically, narrative accounts are seen as fluid and verbal whereas the data
format in this study was written and, as it was generated in weekly sessions over a series of months, carries with it a certain sense of disjointedness. Writing can somewhat limit the sharing of information (due to comfort or ease of expression) and also provides a greater ability to self-edit. These factors naturally affected the data and, in some instances, perhaps prohibited the generation of data by certain individuals in the study. In regards to the disjointedness created by weekly writings, the fluidity and development of a single narrative was perhaps prohibited by this stop-and-go effect. However, the participants were able to revisit and revise data as well as explore areas of self that may not have been treated at first blush.

With all of these parameters in place defining the research setting, and with an awareness of the difficulties and tensions embedded within these parameters, it was also necessary to make specific determinations on the participants in the study and the parameters for the researcher as teacher.

3.5.1b Participants

In regards to student participation, there were three key determinations made in establishing the framework for participants in the study.

The first determination, as discussed earlier, was concerned with the age of the student population to be sampled for the study. Students in senior cycle were identified for the previously mentioned reasons of maturity and a greater experience within both the school system and in life. They were also identified as the key population for the practical reason of my qualification as a teacher being for secondary students.

The main difficulty created by this determination in regards to the study was in the availability of students within the senior cycle to participate in such a study. Within the senior cycle, both 5th and 6th year students are enrolled in courses geared towards preparation for the Leaving Certificate Test (see Appendix B6). With such an intense focus on course content and curriculum, the addition of any sort of added module would be problematic in regards to the time available to the students and their ability to invest in something non-test preparatory.
A second determination made in regards to the sample population was that, as they would be minors, participation in the course must have both pupil and parent consent (see Section 3.4). Considering the parameters of the research setting and the practicalities involved in gaining consent, two possible determinations were then made regarding how the participants would voluntarily enter into the study. First, if the module was to be a part of an already existing class, then, after explaining both the process and the product of the study, students would be given the option to either volunteer to be a part of the study or to just be a part of the course without any involvement or obligations to or with the research. The second possible determination in regards to allowing for voluntary participation would be a stand-alone module made up entirely of the voluntary students. As this determination would be influenced by course timetabling and available classroom space, the determination for this parameter was made by the schools housing the study.

While there were no difficulties in regards to acquiring consent from students who were voluntarily enrolling in the course, the fact that the student population making up the data sample is voluntary can be seen as problematic (in both possible situations). In regards to the authenticity of the data in representing student voice, the fact that the voices represented in the data would be voluntary lessens the variety within the sample. Students volunteering to be a part of a research study that involves writing may have certain similar characteristics, thus representing a more limited student voice. However, while this can be seen as limiting the range of the data, it did provide for a depth of data that may not have been present if the population was randomly selected as all students involved in the project had a sense of interest and investment.

The third determination in regards to determining the number of participants in the study, and in consideration of the research questions, the parameters of the research setting, and the nature of the voluntary engagement in the study was that the ideal number was flexible. With the study being interested in the depth of narrative and the voices shared, it was determined that each school could contribute anywhere from 8, a third of the class, to 24, a full class, of participants.

Difficulties created by this determination revolved around the amount of data collected (see Section 3.5.1b) and the question of what would be enough data to answer the research questions.
With all of these parameters in place defining the participant, and with an awareness of the difficulties and tensions embedded within these parameters, it was also necessary to make specific determinations regarding my role as teacher-researcher.

3.5.1c Researcher

As researcher in the study, the key determination made in regards to the positioning of myself within the practical framework was previously discussed in regards to my assumption of the role of teacher-researcher (see Section 3.5.1a). Subsequent determinations in my professional conduct were additionally influenced by the schools in which I assumed the role.

Generally, in regards to the schools’ influence on the research setting and my role within it, the participating schools formalized and contextualized the relationship between myself and the student participants – the relationship between participant and researcher. Specifically, as a teacher within their school, I followed the same guidelines as all other staff members. From requiring the students to address me as ‘Ms. Kipp’ to taking attendance and reporting infractions in the behavioural and dress codes, my responsibilities and obligations to the school policy determined certain classroom procedure. These parameters and boundaries were necessary and significant in establishing consistency between the classroom I was creating and the classrooms the students were typically members of. They also helped the students to view their time with me as ‘real’ in regards to their expectations of a school classroom and experience. While specific to the schools in which the study took place, these parameters and boundaries were anticipated and did not alter any feature of the research.

This determination did not create any difficulties but is important to mention as it established the parameters and boundaries for the participant/researcher, student/teacher relationship. However, as it solidified certain relational featured, specifically the view held by the students of classroom roles, it did cause a lasting tension throughout the study.
3.5.1d Tensions of the Research Design

The design of the project was not simple and was governed by three key tensions reflective of the second research question (Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 35; Hammersley 1990) that carried throughout the execution of this study:

1. Teacher/Researcher
2. Teacher/Student
3. Student/Research Participant

It is within these tensions that ‘account [is] taken of the functions of particular narratives, the cultural conventions and the context within which they occur;...the speaker’s motive and intention’ (Cortazzi 2001: 1984) in regards to the construction of meaning for the participant and researcher alike.

The first tension in this study existed between my identity as a teacher and my role as a researcher. This tension was immediately present in the formulation of methodology for this study and permeated the various tasks surrounding the articulation of the research questions.

As a teacher, specifically an American secondary English teacher with ten years classroom experience, my first step into any research or methodological area carried with it the biases, inclinations, and habits that were formed in my previous career and my proclaimed identity. As the research setting was a classroom setting, I also carried with me certain expectations, mannerisms, and habits in interacting with the research population, the students. Certain choices made throughout the study (i.e. abandoning the day’s planned curriculum for a timely topic) were made based on my understanding of the teacher/student relationship as opposed to the researcher/research participant relationship.

The second tension in this study came from the expectations and understandings of the student/teacher relationships as shaped by prior knowledge. Conducting this study within a well-established institutionalized relationship that has an established hierarchy, system of empowerment, and knowledge roles (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 77) works against creating a study interested in students as co-contributor. Manipulating this dynamic and
adding to the tension on a broad level were the expectations, rules, and guidelines of the schools in which the study was being conducted. Within the classroom, then, a general understanding of the traditional nature of the student/teacher relationship and the role of power within that relationship influenced the interactions, perceptions, and roles. Based on the nature of this study, and the fact that the students and their lives as self and learner were the core of the course, this traditional dynamic, as prescribed by the school and the setting, shifted. The students were accustomed to functioning under the compliant behaviour more typical of traditional schooling – providing the teacher with what the teacher wants or expects (Eisner 2002: 89). However, there were no pre-ordained answers or concrete body of knowledge to regurgitate; there were no established parameters of right and wrong. This shift created tension within the student-knowledge portion of the educative relationship.

The third tension in this study existed within the sample population, the students. As voluntary participants in a study that was purposefully explained to them, the students were ever aware that they were also research participants generating data. This tension came across in the artefacts created for research purposes and, in fact, reflects certain sub-tensions in this student/research participant conflict.

Specifically, within the conflict of student/research participant, creating tension and skewing the research, were the tensions of:

1. Self/Student
2. Freedom of Narration/Perception of Story’s Intent

First, to frame a discussion of these two tensions, a reminder of the context of narration asserts itself as ‘how the narrative audience is regarded, in the context of other features of the sociocultural context of interaction, may determine whether a story is told; what kind is told and how; and hence, how it is received’ (Cortazzi & Jin 2006: 30).

In regards to the tension of self/student, just as I carried with me my identity as a teacher, the participants carried with them their identity as student (Thomson & Gunter 2007: 329). Within that were their own habits, expectations, reactions, and preconceptions about what can and will occur in a classroom. Specifically, when asked to write about themselves, to
treat themselves as the content and curriculum, the participants felt the tension between their more typical – traditional – classroom role of student and the reality of their self, a self they were not used to putting on full display in a classroom environment. Being asked to go beyond the familiar role of student, as so-called receptacles of knowledge, and to become traders in it caused the participants some stress as witnessed by their general queries of, ‘Well, what would you prefer us to do?’ when given a task purposefully designed to be vague in order to allow for the entrance of self. This tension, however, plays a key role in the research, specifically delineating the difference between students and learners, and it was essential for the participants to experience this tension in order to understand and experience this dichotomy.

Also, in regards to the data being generated (a process which will be discussed specifically in Section 3.7) the participants were generally asked to write on a weekly basis on a given prompt, and specifically asked to write whenever the mood struck them and about whatever they felt compelled to write on. While this would be a regular classroom task of which they would have a great familiarity, there was also an awareness that it would also become data to be used for academic purposes. Specifically, the students articulated this tension on occasion, peppering their writing with phrases such as ‘I’m not sure if this will be helpful for your PhD’ and ‘Is this what you are looking for?’ This concern for the research was a tension that, at times, perhaps limited the participants’ view on how free they could be in their narrations. I attempted to deal with this tension by repeatedly assuring them that whatever they wrote would be correct, but then the first tension, that of student/self would arise.

Starting in an ideal place, my theoretical aspirations were tempered by these key tensions and modified by the practicalities demanded of a study being conducted in a real life setting.
3.5.2 The Research Context

With the key methodological frames in place, the participant and researcher roles articulated, and the understanding that data collection was to be done using a curricular vehicle, as a product of and teacher in the American education system I next began to familiarize myself with the Irish School System to see what real space of practice my idealistic methodological notions could practically inhabit. Based on this familiarization (see Appendix B6 & B7) the decision was made to house the study and prepare the curriculum for the Transition (4th) Year of the Senior Cycle at the secondary level.

3.5.3 Transition Year Module Template

With the knowledge that this project would have to be ‘sold’ to the potential secondary schools, their administration, their parents, and their students as well as the knowledge that there needed to be a foundation for the project as a legitimate course of instruction, I first created a Transition Year Module Template.

The purpose for creating a template (see Appendix A2) prior to authoring the module specific curriculum (see Section 3.6) was twofold. First, there was a clearly articulated generic Transition Year template in existence on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA 2011) website. The existence of this template allowed for me to generally provide structure and substance to the module in a nationally approved and mandated fashion. Second, as the creation of this template was specifically for my meetings with prospective schools, I wanted to have something both tangible and flexible to share with them; a template allows for input whereas a curriculum does not.

3.5.4 School Contact

The schools identified for contact were to, ideally, represent a broad demographic. I was interested in looking at fee-paying, non fee-paying schools, and vocational schools situated in either an urban or rural context and with a range of economic designations. I was also interested in looking into all-boys, all-girls, and mixed gender schools. The schools for
contact also had to have a Transition Year and be willing to host a teacher-researcher for a year.

With this criteria in mind, as well as my lack of familiarity with the area and the school system, my supervisor recommended schools to fit this profile. In April 2010, five schools were contacted in total – via letter and email – in regards to setting up a meeting where I could, in essence, 'pitch' my research. The information provided included an introductory letter outlining the project as well as the NCCA Transition Year module template (see Appendix A1 & A2). A positive response was received back from three of the five schools and two of the three agreed to house the project after a series of meetings.

With two schools prepared to accommodate the study, it was necessary to begin to flesh out the realities of the study within each of the schools. To profile these two schools, School A is an all-girls, fee paying secondary school located in Dublin whereas School B is an all-boys, voluntary non-fee paying secondary school in Dublin.

At the completion of the study, and with a review of the two research questions, it was determined that the data presented for analysis would be solely from School A as it provided the greatest depth, breadth, and wealth in resources of and for the thematic self in the context of the educative relationship.

3.5.5 Actual Research Design (as determined by participating schools)

As this research study was not designed to be carried out in isolation, the schools in which it was housed were a major voice in creating the practical framework that was to be carried out. After being presented with the ideal format for the study (weekly or biweekly course taught by the researcher to a volunteer student population) as well as the research aims and objectives, each school had modification requests based on student population, other Transition Year courses offered, etc.

At School A, the research course was offered as a weekly Transition Year English module elective and given the title 'Creative Writing'. As the course was timetabled for the entire year, students attending this module would take this course in addition to their other required courses. To allow a standardized dissemination of information to all students, I
gave a ten minute presentation highlighting the aims of the study and the anticipated course work was given in early September to all Transition Year students during their weekly assembly session. After this presentation, students who were interested in enrolling in the course were asked to return all the necessary paper work (parental and personal consent forms) to the Deputy Principal. Based on other class sizes within the school, the course maximum was set at 24 students and as the number of students interested in the course was greater than that, the Deputy Principal randomly selected those who would be enrolled.

3.5.6 Modification of Course Curriculum

After establishing what would be the working procedures, timeframe, and student population within each school, it was necessary to modify the course curriculum.

As the framework for the research project established at School A basically mirrored the stipulations laid out in the ideal framework, little to no modification of the course curriculum was needed at this time. It was determined that any modification would be done after meeting the students and seeing what the personality of the class would be. Once the students were met, the most typical modification was the use of modelling and examples that were considered girl friendly.

3.5.7 Conclusion

The purposeful creation of this study and the manner in which it has unfolded are meaningful both in understanding the realities of the study but also in articulating the particularities of context surrounding the data generation and collection.

3.6 TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION – MODULE CURRICULUM

Possibly the most important dimension of this research, a dimension that adds to both the richness and the complexity of the data, was the manner through which the data were generated – a curricular experience specifically authored for this research project. Within the authoring, the features of the educative relationship discussed in Chapter 2 were foundational.
This section first provides a general background in the curricular ideology and design theory used to create the study’s data collection tool, the Transition Year module. It then offers a brief glimpse into the particular curriculum framework that was used to create the module as well as detailing the module itself.

3.6.1 General Curriculum Theory

Firstly, the term ‘curriculum’ is one that has many understandings, facets, articulations and determining criteria, defined both by what it is as by what it is not (Kelly 2009; McKernan 2008). The intention of this section is not to enter into this debate, but to state the definition, ideology, and model that is reflective of this study and the philosophical stance of knowledge and self as articulated in the literature review (see Chapter 2).

The curriculum, generically, can be thought of as what schools teach either explicitly through the intentional selection of module materials, planned experiences, and the course of study – the intended curriculum – or implicitly through the organic experiences, relationships, and dynamics of a classroom – the operational curriculum (Eisner 2002: 33). Curriculum, then can be seen to embody ‘the planning and implementation of educational experiences through carefully orchestrated procedures made from a judicious selection from the culture’ (McKernan 2008: 3). These ‘definitions’ speaks to the concept of a total curriculum, one that incorporates content decisions as it allows for humanity and the enhancement of human well-being (Kelly 2009: 9; Pratt 1994: 5).

A curricular ideology is more than a model, as it provides a value base from which content decisions are founded (McKernan 2008: 27). Eisner identifies (2002) six general curricular ideologies from which to frame a module: religious orthodoxy, rational humanism, progressivism, critical theory, reconceptualism, and cognitive pluralism. In regards to my specific ideologies and the ideologies used to frame this specific course, my curricular ideology generally falls under the progressive heading. This ideology is rooted in the writing of John Dewey and the American tradition of the ideology (ideology which, cognitively, is consonant with the ideas of Piaget and Vygotsky) (Eisner 2002: 47-86).

Generally, progressive curricular ideology believes:
1. in the child as an active participant in the learning process,
2. that mind and emotion are connected and the recognition that how students feel about what they are studying influences how they think about what they are studying, and
3. that the curriculum should be developed with the whole child in mind, thus the creators of it are best as teachers who have actual contact with the individuals in classroom (Eisner 2002: 67-73).

Specifically, Dewey (1902) elaborates on his progressive notion of curriculum and the teacher’s relationship with both the curriculum and the child in *The Child and The Curriculum*:

‘[The teacher’s] problem is that of inducing a vital and personal experience. Hence, what concerns him, as teacher, is that ways in which that subject may become a part of experience; what there is in the child’s present that is usable with reference to it; how such elements are to be used; how his own knowledge of that subject-matter may assist in interpreting the child’s needs and doings, and determine the medium in which the child should be placed in order that his growth may be properly directed. He is concerned, not with the subject-matter as such, but with the subject-matter as a related factor in a total and growing experience’ (201).

Here Dewey links ideology to practice, the value of education to the articulation of an education. While there are certain limitations to the progressive child-centred ideals, the evolution of progressive pedagogy throughout the 20th and 21st century has allowed for a general meeting between student-ownership and standardization of outcomes as evidenced in certain curricular models.

While ideology permeates the curriculum from the standpoint of a value foundation, the model for articulating these beliefs and values is what will begin to shape the articulated course of study. Traditionally, there are three types of curricular models that frame the learning opportunities of the classroom: the staircase model, the spiderweb model, and the spiral model. The staircase model of curriculum is linear and based on the concept of skill building whereas the spiderweb model is weblike, ‘provid[ing] the teacher with a set of heuristic projects, materials, and activities whose use will lead to diverse outcomes among the group of students’ (Eisner 2002: 142). The spiral model (Bruner 1960) is a loose combination of the first two design models, asking students to revisit conceptual material
at higher levels of skill and thought while also leading to diverse and individualistic outcomes. In ‘spiral curriculum’ design, ‘big ideas, important tasks, and ever-deepening inquiry must recur, in ever-increasing complexity and through engaging problems and sophisticated applications...’ (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998: 135)

For this study, and with a consideration of the literature on the educative relationship, a modified version of Jerome Bruner’s Dewey inspired ‘spiral curriculum’ was chosen. Evolving from Bruner’s controversial statement that ‘any subject can be taught to any child in some honest form’ (Bruner 1960: 52), the spiral curriculum respects the ‘thought of the growing child’ and asks as a ‘criterion for any subject taught in primary school...when fully developed, is it worth an adult’s knowing’ (Bruner 1960: 52). Essentially, it revisits the same thematic and conceptual ideals with an ever deepening sense of acknowledgment of the learner, and their ability to engage with, interact with, and own knowledge. ‘Instead of knowledge being understood as a fixed commodity, which is then transferred to the learner, the active and developmentally rich learner makes sense of that body of knowledge in terms of their current concerns, preoccupations and state of mind’ (Scott 2008: 91).

In accordance with the spiral design model, Bruner also speaks on narrative constructions of curriculum and ‘curriculum...[as] ontologically committed to the teaching of narrative’ (Scott 2008: 100). Bruner states that ‘...it is very likely the case that the most natural and the earliest way in which we organize our experience and our knowledge is in terms of the narrative form. And it may also be true that the beginnings, the transitions, and the full grasp of ideas in a spiral curriculum depend upon embodying those ideas into a story or narrative form’ (1996: 121).

Modifications to Bruner’s design model evolved from the framework chosen for the course module. In regards to specific curriculum design, and the creation of a scheme of work, I utilized the framework I was not only most comfortable with but also most confident in regards to creating a classroom experience that would embrace the students as learners and lives. To this end, I used the curricular model my action research Masters was based around, Understanding By Design (2005; 1998) by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Their premise of creating curriculum from the ‘learners point of view’ (1998: 4) and their utilization of a spiral curriculum model, along with their essential concept of enduring
understandings and progressivist undertones supremely matched the goals of this study and the interest of the research questions.

3.6.2 Understanding By Design

The Understanding By Design (UBD) format created by Wiggins and McTighe (2005; 1998) is one of the first detailed curriculum models since the 1970's and has been positively received internationally (Marsh 2009: 34). This framework for curricular design is organically linked with both Dewey’s progressivist thinking and Bruner’s spiral design and Wiggins and McTighe offer a ‘set of tools (templates and filters) to make the selection of curriculum priorities more likely to happen by design than by good fortune’ (1998: 12).

This curricular frame utilizes a ‘Backwards by Design’ construction where ‘we operationalize our goals or standards in terms of assessment evidence as we begin to plan...’ (Wiggins and McTighe 1998: 8). Essentially, first the desired results of the curriculum are identified, then acceptable evidence pertaining to these desired results is determined, then the planning of learning experiences and instruction can commence (Wiggins and McTighe 2005: 18). Essentially, the UBD format is ‘nothing more than good instructional planning that ensures alignment among learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments’ (Kauchak & Eggen 2012: 125).

![UBD Stages Diagram]

Figure 8 – UBD Stages

More specific information on the UBD model is available in the Appendix (see Appendix B8).

Advantages and Disadvantages to UBD model

As with any model, there are both advantages and disadvantages. In Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum, Marsh (2009: 34) details the advantages and disadvantages of the UBD model as the following:
Advantages of the UBD model:

- It provides a sense of ownership for teacher-planners.
- There is a strong alignment between the use of outcomes and objectives.
- It is systematic, outcomes-based approach to planning.
- It encourages teachers to check prior misunderstanding before commencing the planning process.

In regards to the task of the curriculum being created for this study, the advantages are perfectly aligned with using a curriculum as a data collection tool for both the formative and summative stages.

Disadvantage of the UBD model:

- The design-backwards approach is very prescriptive and linear.
- It has too much emphasis on outcomes and insufficient detail on selecting learning experience or how to use them.
- Many of the concept are not new – they are new titles for concepts developed much earlier (from Ralph Tyler’s objectives model, 1949, and Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy of objective, 1956).

In regards to the listed disadvantages, they are insignificant regarding this purpose of design. The linear design is, in this study, an advantage as this prescriptive design lends credence to the curriculum as a diagnostic tool that can be replicated. Also, as I am the only teacher working with the curriculum, detail in regards to articulating the curricular aims through learning experiences is not necessary as there is no need for regulation and consistency of experience across a number of classrooms. As for the last disadvantage, there is strength given to the UBD format as a curricular model in its Tyler and Bloom foundations due to its acknowledgement of institutional memory, history and legacy.

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With the three design stages of the UBD framework understood, its advantages and disadvantages as a curricular mode, and the connection of this frame to the research questions and this study's interest in the emerging themes of self, the Transition Year module for this study was created.

3.6.3 Authoring Our Education – A Transition Year Module

The full curriculum used within this study - including lesson plan, resources, and assessments – may be accessed in Appendix B. Within these resources, all three stages of curriculum design can be seen in depth and the validity of a curriculum as a tool for data collection can be achieved in totality.

However, in regards to summarily linking the authored curriculum to the research questions, the bones of the curriculum can be understood at a glance within the UBD framework:

Figure 9 – Curricular Design Stages
STAGE ONE

Key Design Question: What is worthy and requiring of understanding?

The two enduring understandings of this curricular tool are:
1. The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
2. Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

STAGE TWO

Key Design Question: What is evidence of understanding?

The acceptable evidence of the six facets of understanding within this curriculum are:
1. Formative Assessment: Weekly Writing (done in response to weekly lessons and writing prompts)
2. Summative Assessment: Autobiographical Portfolio (based on formative writing and including both reflective and analytic tasks)

STAGE THREE

Key Design Question: What learning experiences and teaching promote understanding, interest, and excellence?

(in conjunction with Carl Roger's non-directive teaching model)

Topics for Instruction: Self vs. Self, Self vs. Others, Self in Ideal vs. Self in Real, Knowledge vs. Wisdom in Self
Instructional Strategies: Experiential Instruction, Cooperative Learning, Dialogic Inquiry
Instructional Resources: Personal stories, Poems, Inspirational Quotes, Games, Film Clips, TV Shows, Internet
3.6.4 Conclusion

The creation of a curricular intervention to allow for the generation of student narratives was a feature of this study that added to its intricacy and complexity. This tool and curricular interaction contributed to the cultivation of the trust relationship between researcher and participant which in turn affected the depth and richness of the data collected. It also allowed for a connection between the generation of data and a practical and functioning educative environment which is generally seen in action research but not with this kind of design. In soliciting answers to the research questions, this curriculum as a tool was flexible and focused, allowing for the voices of the individuals to seep through the frame.

3.7 DATA GENERATION

The data for this study in regards to both creation and collection fall into either, to borrow two terms from general educational assessment and practice,: 

1. the formative data (process data/assessment for learning), or 
2. the summative data (product data/assessment of learning) category.

In terms of answering the research questions, the formative data constitute the narrated or ‘telling’ part of the first research question and was done throughout the school year, while the summative data connect to the ‘reflection and analysis’ portion and was completed as the end assessment of the course. The second research question will be specifically addressed within the findings, contribution, recommendations and conclusion chapter (Chapter 6) and is dependent on the analysis of both data sets (Chapter 4 & Chapter 5).

Both forms of data – formative and summative – are written in nature, taking the familiar form of in-class or home journal responses to teacher-generated prompts. There is little written on the strengths and challenges of collecting data in the written form. However, due to the nature of the research questions, the implicit knowledge ownership of journal writing, the ability for individual expression, the flexibility of the form in regards to when,
where, and how much, and the privacy and control inherent within writing (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 136-137) this form was deemed most suitable for this research.

3.7.1 Formative Data

Formative data within this study can be identified as work done by the students either in-class or at home during the course of the school year. All data generated in this way was written by the students and took the form of a life narrative as the students were writing about themselves for the purpose of telling about self. Inspiration for these writings came from classroom discussion, teacher prompts, and personal interpretation on the part of the students.

Each week data were collected from the student in the form of journal entries created during class or outside of class (see Appendix B2 for a list of all writing prompts). While students were asked to create at least one journal per class session and to provide detail sufficient to not only answer the question of ‘what’ but also those of ‘how and why’, the amount of data produced by each student participant varied. In my role as teacher and mindful of the nondirective teaching model being utilized in the course (see Section 2.5.4), I responded to the writing, making comments and queries (see within student samples, Appendix C). In this way, I was able to support the learning that was taking place by each individual and create a dialogue between myself and each student. Based on my years as a classroom teacher, this sort of interaction with student-generated materials helps with: 1. personal reflection on the part of the student in regards to revisiting personal work in a critical way, and 2. building a one-on-one trust relationship with the students (see Section 3.5.1.a). Both of these actions were essential to the research being conducted as it calls for both a depth of thinking and an ability to personally reflect as well as sense of trust in the sharing of the details of one’s life. In my reading of each piece of formative writing, I generally looked at the data to see where the class was headed in regards to the summative data point, the enduring understandings, and the ultimate answering of the research questions. This reflection was then incorporated into the tasks for the next lesson.
I also generated formative data each week in the form of a reflective journal. Each journal utilized a lesson plan format, stating the enduring understanding of the module, the essential questions of study that come from this understanding, the specific questions to guide the days' lesson, the instructional sequence, the rational for instructional methods, and a personal reflection section. A review of the reflection generated by this process, the goals for the creation of the summative data piece, and the research questions was then utilized in the creation of the next lesson. This data will also be used in the ethnographic telling used to frame the data presented in Chapter Five.

Generally, then, the formative data were used as a means of assessing progress in terms of the research aims and goals and in making sure there was interaction in and around the curricular enduring understandings. It was also used to construct the summative data.

Over the course of the year, it should be noted that two different stages of data generation evolved within the formative data. Generally, it seems that the stages can seemingly be linked to two factors: time and curriculum ownership.

In regards to time, the collected data reveal that the comfort level and trust among the students and myself directly impacted the type of narration received. At the beginning of the year, the data function at the basic level of 'what' in regards to self-revelation. As the year progressed, and the student-teacher relationship was cultivated, the depth of self revealed was exponential in its ability to address the 'how' and 'why'.

In regards to curriculum ownership, the curriculum as written allowed for a transition from the prescribed curriculum to an 'emerging curriculum' (Eisner 2002) within the second term of the school year. The emerging curriculum was specifically generated topically and thematically by the students and the depth of data seemingly shifted in regards to self revelation in conjunction with this curricular switch (which began with Lesson 12).

This formative writing, then, is used for the purpose of providing the raw data for the summative data generation, analysis, and reflection. This formative data, as the building block of the summative data, will be used in Chapter 5 (Part Two – Data Analysis) in regards to formulating answers to the research questions.
3.7.2 Summative Data

The summative data within this study took the form of an end of the year project entitled ‘The Autobiographical Portfolio’ (see Appendix B3 for the actual assessment as provided to the student participants). This data were created around the formative writings – with the formative writings functioning as the base of knowledge – and asked the students to both reflect and analyze their work. The summative data created during this process of reflection and analysis, to be explained in greater detail below and in Section 3.8, will constitute the ‘Participant-Led’ portion of the Data Analysis used in this research study (see Section 4.2).

Specifically, in the creation of this autobiographical portfolio as means of summative assessment, the girls were asked to:

1. revisit their writing (the formative data), interacting with it in the manner of a teacher (making comments and responding to what they had previously written).
2. identify the topics of their writing (‘what’ they chose to write on no matter the direction or prompt given) and name them (‘friends, family, school’).
3. identify the themes of their writing by determining ‘how/why’ they were writing on the above topics (what is it that they have to say about the topic of ‘friends’...are they talking about self-esteem, a conflict in morals, and/or being too dependent in relation to this topic?).
4. check, verify, and support their topic and theme choices by revisiting their writing for a second time to highlight ‘quotes’ particularly important in supporting their choices.
5. create a chart to connect the identified supporting quotes, themes, and topics.

This exercise in thematic analysis comprises Stage One of the Participant-Led Analysis as specifically explicated below in section 3.8 and in Data Analysis Chapter 4, Section 4.2.

After completing this exercise in analysis, the students were asked to reflect on their findings. Generally, they were asked to reflect on how they ‘fit’ into the topical/thematic choice as well as how others contributed to it or impacted upon it. Additionally, within each identified topic and theme grouping, the students were asked to write a reflective
narrative paragraph that offered a summation as it created a chronology of experience; the
students were to identify items of the far past, near past, and relative present in both their
formative writing and life in general that related to and elaborated on their topical/thematic
choice and connection. The students were also asked to include a section on hopes for the
future (based on a critical look at the past) and identify lessons learned and wisdom gained,
affirmations of self past, present, and future. This exercise of the students applying a
viewing framework to their personal narratives comprises Stage Two of the Participant-
Led Analysis (as specifically explicated in Data Analysis Chapter 4, Section 4.2).

The students were also asked to frame this portfolio with an introduction and conclusion,
both meant to be acts of introspection and declaration. The students were also given the
directive to include any artefact from outside of class (art, pictures, song lyrics, work from
other classes, etc.) that they felt would contribute to the piece as a whole, to the telling of
themselves as self.

These summative pieces of data, in regards to the reflective and analytic nature of the
holistic products created by the students, constitutes the bulk of the data to be used in
Chapter 4 (Part One – Data Analysis), in regards to formulating answers to the research
questions.

3.7.3 Conclusion

The choice of having two different types of data sets, the formative data being directly tied
to narrative methodology (see Section 3.3.4) and the literature (see Chapter 2) and the
summative data being a marriage between the formative data and traditional classroom
assessment, has allowed for participant contribution within this study. The students’
creation, interaction, reflection, and manipulation of the data through analysis contributes
to finding authentically rooted answers to this study’s two research questions.
3.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The formative and summative data collected through the curricular tool is to be analysed in three stages by the participants (Stage 1 & 2) and the researcher (Stage 3) and the choices made for this analysis are done within the foundations laid down by Dewey and Rogers in Chapter 2.

The first two stages of analysis are *participant-led* and are comprised of a thematic analysis as well as a reflective three-dimensional framework for viewing and commenting on narrative writing. The two stages work together in response to the research questions by firstly identifying themes and then providing a frame for reflecting, analyzing and commenting on those themes. Both of these stages are done by the students and were done during their creation of the summative data as explicated above. This participant process of analysis repositions the voices of the students within this study into the role of co-contributor to gain perspective and insight into their lived experience (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 175). As both participant-led stages of analysis took place during the creation of the summative data and as a result of the methods, further discussion of these forms of analysis and the employment of student-as-researcher will take place below.

The third stage of analysis is *researcher-led* and provides a summative commentary on the first two stages. This commentary finds a frame in Jerome Bruner's (1997) indicators of self and is intended to make the connection between the student identified themes and the research questions interest in these themes as themes of self.

Prior to these discussions, a rationale for choosing participant analysis as a method and for using a three step analytical process will be explained as will the process, benefits and limitations of student-as-researcher.
3.8.1 Rationale for Distribution and Segmentation of Data Analysis

The rationale for having a distribution of analysis between the participants and the researcher and a segmentation of analysis (three stages) can be understood for the following reasons.

Firstly, as an over-arching rationale, this study is interested in the reality of student experience and the possible implications of this experience on the educative relationship. As the data gathered are qualitative in nature, to assure the highest level of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in relation to the research findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985), the choices of student-as-researcher and a three-step analytic research process helps to disperse partiality and subjectivity on the part of the researcher.

In regards to a *distribution of data analysis*, one main criticism of qualitative data and applicable analysis techniques is that they are subjective and allow for researcher bias to be a part of the interpretation and sense-making (Suter 2012; Gallagher 2009; Lichtman 2006; Richards 2005). With the recognition of this as a limitation of this study in regards to the type of data collected, the thinking was that a researcher biasing of the data could be diminished if the participants were a part of the process of analysis. In this fashion, if there was to be bias in the initial analysis, it would be reflective and limited of and by the biases within the students’ perceptions and beliefs, not my own (Symonds 2008). This is not to say that my biases did not influence those of the students in regards to classroom instruction and discussion, but there is certainly a greater limitation in the reach of my bias when the first step of analysis were done without my predispositions or research understandings. Also, in regards to conducting a thematic analysis to address the research questions, the themes identified as emerging would, if teased out, explained, explored and justified by the participants, be more valid to the life of the participant as, regardless of bias, the themes would be both a process and product of *their* self, knowledge, experience, and bias – not *mine* (Thomson & Gunter 2007: 329; Symonds 2007). In addition, this participant-led analysis allows for immediate ‘stakeholder checking’ in regards to the trustworthiness and credibility of the data as the stakeholders are the ones generating it (Suter 2012: 346).
In addition, if one of the enduring understandings of this research (and curriculum created to facilitate it) was on the validity, necessity, and encouragement of student voice in the educative relationship, then to favour my own analysis over the students seems hypocritical and invalidating; to do so would replicate a classroom dynamic I am keen to avoid, that of teacher voice overwhelming and redirecting student voice. For this reason, I wanted my voice to be as co-researcher, following that of the students, taking what they had created during analysis and reflection and guiding it towards a research aim and outcome (Nash & Roberts 2009; Flutter & Rudduck 2005).

In regards to the segmentation of data, a thematic analysis on the part of the student would not have been sufficient in regards to making meaning from the data. To create a reflective and analytic narrative around the thematic data, a three-dimensional viewing framework was also used to provide the data and the student the opportunity to extend the formative story of self and to expand on the identified patterns in a structured manner (Braun & Clarke 2006). These two tasks together, that of the thematic analysis and reflective and analytic narrative, work to make the process meaningful to both the students (in regards to self-discovery and reflection) and the research questions.

The addition of the third stage of analysis, that of my own analysis piggy-backing that of the students', is necessary for contextualizing the thematic and reflective analysis in regards to the literature of the self and the role of self within the educative relationship. This step also is intended to allow for a consolidation of the data in regards to making holistic conclusions and recommendations. In addition, this step allows for a balance of analysis; the students' thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and analysis are not more true than that of the researcher, but offer a perspective on their reality that is not often cultivated within the classroom (Flutter & Rudduck 2005).

Additionally, these three stages work together to provide for multiple opportunities to interact with and learn from the data, resulting in a data set that has been revisited in a manner that allows for sense making, patterns, and understanding to emerge (Richards 2005: 86). This process also makes for research that is collaborative, with the students acting as experts of self and the researcher acting as an expert in research practice (Thomson & Gunter 2006: 852).
3.8.2 Student-as-Researcher

A significant feature of this study is the student-led data analysis.

By giving the students the responsibility of the first two stages of data analysis, this study allows the students to assume the mantle of researcher and active co-constructors of meaning and understanding within the constructivist perspective of this research (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 1). While the section above explains the rationale for this, this section will address the articulation of this choice within the study as well as the benefits to the student, school, and research due to this methodological choice. Lastly, the limits of the student-as-researcher will be presented.

Considering the educative relationship and the student as an equal point within the triad, the recognition of ‘student’ as a source of experience and expertise within a classroom setting allows for a perspective into knowledge, learning, curriculum, and self that is otherwise inaccessible and limited to a third-person perspective (Symonds 2008; Thomson & Gunter 2006, 2007). This recognition, and the cultivation of student voice in research, has been supported and inspired by Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1990) which states that governments and nations:

shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

This research study, by allowing for student analysis of data, recognizes that young adults ‘have the articulate-ness and honesty to analyse what they experience’ and that ‘they show consistent judgment and evidence for what they are saying’ (Cullingford 1991: 2).

In regards to preparing the students to assume the mantle of researcher, firstly, the use of Carl Roger’s non-directive teaching model within the classroom (see Section 2.3.4) helped to establish the want for students to take a leading role and believe in the validity of their own voice. With self-disclosure – formative data – focusing on what the students believed to be important and coming at their own pace (Rogers 1961), the participants’ self-
confidence and ownership in the process of the research was cultivated. While the student-participants were informed at the beginning of our course module that they would be co-contributors in the analysis stage of the research, during the year I left them to write without the pressure of research implications, trying to remove their formative creations from the search for a ‘right answer’ to this study (Symonds 2008) by affirming and empathising with their individual paths (Rogers 1961).

As we neared the end of the course and the girls were given the autobiographical portfolio summative assessment, the idea of being research co-contributors was revisited. The steps for undertaking a thematic and reflective analysis were explained as was the concept that people’s conception of how they think things are – their perceived realities – hold much more weight than what may actually be (Flutter & Rudduck 2005: 6). With this encouragement of self, the space for student voice, experience, and meaningful contribution was created within this study and the role of student as participant and co-researcher was concretely established.

In regards to the choice of creating student researchers, the transformative potential of pupil voice has clear benefits to the students, the school context, and the research it supports (Flutter & Rudduck 2005: 132).

For the students, benefits can include the move to the critical realm of knowledge, learning the ability to self-teach, negation of reliance on procedural thinking, as well as an increase in metacognitive thinking (Kellet 2005: 1; Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998: 240). Also, the process of analysis can help students to not only understand an event but to recognize the implications of the experience in a temporal fashion (Kinchelow & Steinberg 1998: 231). In addition, asking students to be co-contributors in school-based research can ground and affirm connections between the students’ lives outside the school by affirming personal interests, experience and capabilities by creating and fostering relevance (Flutter & Rudduck 2005: 132) within the school context. A sense of personal responsibility is also cultivated within the student-researcher as they build non-familial adult relationships, share their ideas and beliefs, and are encouraged to become proactive members of the educative relationship (Symonds 2008: 63).
Consultation of students within the teaching and learning environment can benefit teacher practice, student learning, and the general and specific school environment (Flutter and Rudduck 2005). By considering the direct experience of teaching, learning, knowledge, and school that students' have, a deeper knowledge of the educative relationship is revealed, and school improvements can be informed and directed more specifically. In addition, where '...the student voice is attended to, learning comes to be seen as a more holistic process with broad aims rather than a progression through a sequence of narrowly focused performance targets' (Flutter & Rudduck 2005: 135).

Specifically in regards to this study, there are also benefits to having students as active participants in the research. By co-constructing and contributing to the research process, the generated data align more closely with students' social worlds and cognitive constructs, generally increasing the authenticity of the data (Fielding & Bragg 2003). In support of this authenticity, when using participant-generated documents, artefacts, and analysis, natural modes of communication are used and the students are in control of the language and perspective of the data (Freeman & Mathison 2009: 66). With the inclusion of student voice in research, there is also the benefit of the creation and contribution of new knowledge as children and young adults ask different questions, have different priorities and concerns, seeing the world through different eyes than adults (Kellett 2005: 2-3).

Weighed against the benefits, there are definite limitations within this methodological choice as Flutter and Rudduck specifically discuss in Consulting Pupils: What's in it for Schools? (2005: 74-76). Firstly, the fact that research typically has temporal and contextual limits and is attached to specific people, places, and moments in time limits the impact and benefits to the specific moments of research engagement. Second, there is the sense that student data will only give 'half the story' as research questioning can be misunderstood, student response can be created to please the researcher instead of reflecting true experience, and there is the danger of those with the loudest and most articulate voices being the ones heard. In addition to these limits, 'pupils age-specific abilities in constructing and interpreting information may produce data that are simplistic’ (Symonds 2008: 63). And finally, just as researcher bias is an issue, student bias also carries with it limitations based on age, experience, knowledge, etc.
The approach to the participant-led thematic analysis and reflective frame and the tasks associated with and around them, then, was mediated by both the limitations and the benefits of allowing for student contribution within research.

### 3.8.3 Thematic Analysis (Participant-Led)

As discussed in the previous sections, the thematic analysis portion of the data analysis was conducted by the student-participants as a part of this study’s curricular invention. In writing the summative autobiographical portfolio assessment in which the analysis was conducted, the following understandings of thematic analysis – in regards to rationale, definition, and process – were used to shape discussion and student direction.

First, in regards to the choice of a thematic analysis for the data, as the research questions in this study are specifically interested in the ‘themes of self’, a thematic analysis was the clear methodological choice. Also, thematic analysis can be considered a foundational method for the analysis of the type of narrative data produced by the students within this study (Braun & Clarke 2006). In addition, the accessibility of thematic analysis as well as its general flexibility as a form made it a valid choice for the student researchers to use in their first act as research co-contributors (Braun & Clarke 2006: 87). Also of particular relevance to this study in regards to data expectations is the ‘ability for thematic analysis to reveal a variety of issues and patterns both within individual narrative accounts and across the entire sample group’ (Cooper & Davey 2011: 88).

Specifically, then, and for the purposes of this research, thematic analysis is the general process of looking at qualitative, story-telling data where meaning emerges based on commonalities of experience categorized thematically (Suter 2012; Cooper & Davey 2011; Riessman 2008; Braun & Clarke 2006). It is a method of analysis used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns and occurs by sorting through the whole for an understanding of the smaller strands for the purpose of making a general statement on the overall nature of them (Braun & Clarke 2006; Ely et. al 1997: 206). In the case of this study, an inductive latent thematic analysis was sought after. A latent thematic analysis is one that travels beyond semantics and pre-existing frames into interpretations of the ‘how’s’ and ‘why’s’ within the data. For latent thematic analysis, then, the development of
the themes themselves involves interpretative work, and the analysis that is produced is not just description, but is already theorized (Braun & Clarke 2006).

To achieve an inductive latent thematic analysis of their formative data, students engaged in a process generally based on the frame Mary Kellet describes in *How to Develop Children as Researchers* (2005). While the researcher processes associated with thematic analysis include knowing data, establishing a focus for the data, organising data, categorizing data, identify patterns and connections, and sense making (Suter 2012; Tierney & Fox 2010; Flick 2002), Kellet articulates a corresponding child-centred process. Specifically, Kellet, generically pulling from grounded theory analysis, articulates three student-friendly steps to creating a thematic analysis:

1. **Coding** – a way of managing, organising, and reducing data into labelled categories so that themes and patterns can then be abstracted.
2. **Memos** – an intuitive form of analysis that captures the thought process that accompanies coding through reflective note taking
3. **Abstraction** – a process of identifying common themes between and across sets of data.

The specific tasks given to the students to guide their identification of emerging themes within their personal narratives were generally explained in Section 3.7.2 of this chapter and will be specifically presented in Section 4.2.1a. Generally, however, the coding step corresponds with the students revisiting their writing to search for primary topical categories, the memos step corresponds to the students reacting to the data as if they were a teacher to determine how and why they were writing on the identified topics, and the abstraction step corresponds to the students identifying the actual themes contained within their personal data. Throughout all three steps, students were encouraged to make selections that captured something important about the data and the stories contained explicitly and implicitly within their narrations of self (Braun & Clark 2006; Kellet 2005; Ely et. al. 1997: 206); general direction was around the research interest in the emerging themes of their lives.

In regards to the concept of ‘emergent’ themes, it should be noted that while the language describes themes springing from the data, there is a clear understanding that any identified
themes are a product of the researchers’ interest and impetus (Braun & Clarke 2006: 84; Ely et. al. 1997). While in some studies this may be viewed as a limiting bias, for this study, as the interest is in the themes that result from a process of telling, reflection, and analysis on the part of the student-participant, the interest and impetus of the student-as-researcher guiding theme selection is in some ways desirable.

This definition, general theory of, and process for thematic analysis is what informed the tasks given to the student participants in performing their personal analysis. This inductive approach allows for the data to speak for itself as categories and themes emerge (Suter 2012: 346), and offers a solid foundation for the second stage of analytic commentary.

3.8.4 Three-Dimensional Viewing Framework for Narrative (Participant-Led)

While the thematic analysis provides for a structured and uniform way of pulling meaning from the data, the use of Clandinin and Connelly’s three-dimensional viewing framework (2000) to create a reflective and analytic narrative allows for the students to articulate and expand on the external qualities of their formative narrative texts as well as their selected topics and themes. In addition, it directs thinking and writing, allowing for a metacognitive ‘tightening’ of the story of self being shared (Bruner 1997).

Firstly, however, four specific reasons for choosing this sort of narrative analysis within the ethnography, as given by Cortazzi (Cortazzi and Jin 2006: 27-29; Cortazzi 2001: 385-387) include:

1. **Concern with the meaning of experience**
   In recounting events in narratives, tellers directly or indirectly give their own interpretations and explanation of those events while evaluating the principal people, the meaning of events, and a wider relevant context.

2. **Voice**
   The sharing of experience of particular groups so that others may know life as they know it (a ‘felt need’ for certain groups to be heard).

3. **Human qualities on personal and professional dimensions**
To publically reveal crucial but probably generally unappreciated, personal and professional qualities involved in the certain occupation and/or profession being studied.

4. Research activity itself as a story

Ethnography is often constructed as a narrative account, on the part of the researcher, of a quest, discovery and interpretation – the journey from outsider to insider – using story conventions and for the purpose of presenting the data.

In regards to Cortazzi’s (Cortazzi and Jin 2006: 27-29; Cortazzi 2001 385-387) reasons for narrative analysis within ethnography, this study, as dictated by the research questions and with the students taking on the role of ethnographers of self:

1. Is concerned with the meaning of experience as it searches to explore how the students’ experience and process of narrative (within the design study) influences their meaning making in regards to self and self as a member of the educative relationship.

2. Is creating the opportunity for a certain group (students) to express their voices (in the form of thematic and narrative exercises) so that others may hear what they have said and come to some understanding on life as the students’ perceive it.

3. Is interested in revealing, through the reality of the narratives provided, the human qualities of students, as both self and learner, which are oftentimes overlooked by others.

4. Uses a student-constructed narrative (based around a thematic analysis of the preliminary data) to reflect on the research findings.

Solidly situated with these four reasons this study finds a methodological grounding in regards to the place of a reflective analytic narrative within the student-led analysis.

Framing the inquiry used in the second stage of student-led analysis and allowing for narrative commentary on the raw and thematic data, Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000: 50-51) metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space allows for a guided reflection and interaction with the formative narrative as it shapes the creation of the summative narrative. Clandinin and Connelly’s design is influenced by Dewey’s concept of
experience (Clandinin and Connelly 2002: 162) and supported by Roger’s process of client-centred therapy used to create the nondirective teaching model used within this study (Rogers 1951:135) In this space, the three narrative dimensions are:

1. Personal and Social (interaction)
2. Past, Present, and Future (temporality)
3. Place (situation)

![Figure 10 – 3-D Viewing Frame](image)

This space is then defined by what Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 50-51) identify as the directions of inquiry:

1. The Personal and Social dimension includes:
   - Inward - towards the internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions
   - Outward - towards existential conditions such as the environment
2. The Past, Present, and Future dimension includes:
   - Backward - in regards to temporality
   - Forward - in regards to temporality
3. The Place dimension includes:
   - Concrete Physical Boundaries
   - Topological Boundaries
It is with an understanding of this framework and these three dimensions that the directions and prompts for the analytic narrative portion of the summative autobiographical portfolio were created (see Section 3.7 and Section 5.2 as well as Appendix B3).

With the understanding that this inquiry space is 'a valuable metaphorical tool to use for understanding the facets of experiences as a means of recovering and reconstructing meaning from curricular situations' (Schlein 2007: 36), it is a natural frame for the research of this study, a study that created a curricular intervention for the purpose of using narrative to explore a student's understanding of self. However, with the idea of the narrative self at the forefront of this study, a slight modification of Clandinin and Connelly's inquiry space is needed.

Considering that this is a study interested in the articulated self of the participants, the three dimensions identified by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) will be used to illuminate features of self-construct and narrative telling. In relation to this modification, the new space of inquiry takes on these features:

![Figure 11 - Viewing Frame Leads to the NARRATED SELF](image)

With these modifications, the three dimensions of inquiry are still balanced, interactive, and relevant to defining the parameters of the researcher's commentary on the students' thematic analysis of the data set. However, each dimension is also used to focus the data into highlighting features of the narrated self that are made available through the data,
analysis, and inquiry space, focusing the data toward the next stage of analysis, Bruner's (1997) indicators of self.

Specifically, in regards to this new model, each dimension of inquiry will take on the following parameters:

1. the Personal & Social Dimension will consider the EVENTS described in the narration of self and, within these events and with the consideration of the inward (internal conditions) and the outward (external conditions), the place of:
   - the research participant
   - the identified peer group
   - family
   - school personnel
   - etc.

2. the Past, Present, Future Dimension will consider TIME and EVOLUTION in regards to self in:
   - the past (anything prior to the study)
   - the present
   - the future (anything beyond the study)

3. the Place dimension will consider the following SITUATIONS of self:
   - school
   - home
   - etc.

This constructivist viewing frame provides not only structure and a point of reference within each students' summative writing, but it also helps to create uniformity across the data set allowing for a holistic commentary in the first part of the data analysis chapter (see Chapter Four). This three-dimensional reflection on the thematic analysis, then, informs commentary on the formative narratives as it creates the summative narratives, guiding both the participant and researcher observations.
3.8.5 Indicators of Self

Using the students’ thematic analysis and three-dimensional reflections as a base, the third stage of data analysis was researcher-led and focuses on the ‘narrated self’ portion of the research questions. Specifically, in this last stage of data analysis, the student-identified themes and subsequent reflections are linked to Jerome Bruner’s indicators of self (1997) to provide a deeper understanding of the self being revealed through the students’ narrative writings, thematic choices, and overall analysis. Generally, this analysis provides observational commentary on the individual summative data of the participants for the purposes of making holistic observations in light of the research questions.

Bruner’s writings on the narrative link to self-formation were chosen as the frame for researcher commentary due to Bruner’s ideological position not only as a tempered constructivist, but as an educationalist whose work the curricular portion of this study is grounded in both practically and theoretically. While other models of self where considered, such as Paul Ricouer’s (Dauenhauer & Pellauer 2011) constitutive capabilities of the human being, this model was selected due to its concrete descriptors and ease of use as well as potential relevance to the self of interest. In addition, as it shares a similar grounding to the work of both Dewey and Rogers, Bruner’s model seemed to situate itself well within this study. Also, as no disadvantages could be found within the literature, it was thought that there was strength to this frame as a bridge between theory and practice.

In *A Narrative Model of Self-Construction* (1997), Bruner discusses self-construction as a metacognitive process; in the narrative telling of self, self – and the indicators of self – finds shape retrospectively in the narrative choices used to build the story of self (159). His interest in self is specifically centred in what humans consider to be the ‘*indicia* of self when they talk about their own or other selves’ (Bruner & Kalmar 1998: 310). In considering this story of self and the ‘elements’ that make up a functional narrative, Bruner identifies nine indicators of self, nine ‘classes of major cues signalling the presence of enculturated and individuated selfhood’ (1997: 151).
Due to the nature of the collected data and the implicit redundancies within certain categories, this study modifies Bruner’s frame by focusing in on six of the nine indicators. Specifically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF (taken from J. Bruner)*</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Commitment</em></td>
<td>Intended or actual line of action, an adherence that transcends momentariness and impulsiveness. Tells about steadfastness, delay of gratification, sacrifice, or of flightiness and inconstancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Resource</em></td>
<td>Includes not only such ‘external’ resources as power, social legitimacy, and sources of information, but ‘inner’ ones as well, like patience, perspective, forgiveness, persuasiveness and the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Social Reference</em></td>
<td>Tells where and to whom an agent looks in legitimizing or evaluating goals, commitments, and resource allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Evaluation</em></td>
<td>Provides signs of how we or others value the prospects, outcomes, or progress of intended, actual, or completed lines of endeavour. Tells about <em>situated</em> affect as it relates to the conduct of life in the small or large.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reflexive</em></td>
<td>Speaks to the more metacognitive side of Self, to the reflective activity invested in self-examination, self-construction, and self-evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Positional</em></td>
<td>Reveals how an individual locates himself or herself in time, space, or the social order – where one stands in the “real” world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bruner also includes agency, qualia, and coherence as indicators.*

In discussion on these indicators of self, Bruner speaks to a balance of the indicators and how narrative eminence of certain indicators can influence the self revealed. For example
narrative, ‘...focus on commitment signals a dedicated self; specialization on resources signals either a profligate or a miserly self; too much social referencing bespeaks the in-grouper and/or the snob...’ (152). In addition, Bruner suggests that within the frame of these indicators, self is individuated and narrative sharings reveal not only background knowledge and beliefs, but expectations, values, cares and fears. As a self tells a story, they indicate who and what they are.

By using these indicators to offer commentary on the self-identified student themes and reflection, the interest is in the reality of the revealed self and, per the research questions, the relevance of this self in understanding the student as an individual life as well as how an understanding of the individual and collective student life may be used to enhance the educative relationship.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter first has worked to frame the personal context and drive behind the research, establishing the starting point from which the research questions evolved. It then looked at the theory behind various methodological choices, specifically articulating how this study aligns itself with the theory to create a mixed-approach design. Before launching into the practical methods of the study, the governing research ethics were discussed. The chronology of the study in regards to the methods was then discussed with specific attention paid to the study’s unique data collection tool – the research-authored curriculum. The way in which the curriculum allowed for the generation and collection of data were also detailed as well as the methods and rationale for the rich process of participant/researcher data analysis.
The analysis of the data gathered for this research will be done in two parts. Part One (Chapter Four) will present and analyse data from all research participants while Part Two (Chapter Five) will present and analyse data from one participant.

The rationale for this segmentation of the data is to provide for a faceted experience of the thematic research question through a consideration of the emerging themes from both a collective and individualized perspective. In addition, the separation of the data into two chapters is done to highlight the value of considering learner voice from both a communal and singular standpoint in relation to both research questions, particularly the one aimed at understanding the educative relationship. Also, as the educative relationship is one of community and individuality, the educational purpose of knowing the student as a self can be explored through both these arenas; the selves that emerge from the data are perhaps more rich and deep than teachers are aware, allowing for a possible enhancement of mutual respect within the educative relationship. Additionally, the breadth and depth of the data set is also revealed through the creation of dual data analysis chapters.

Specifically, then, Part One (Chapter Four) will explore the thematic similarities that exist across the data set as a whole, highlighting the unique features of this study in regards to it being a participant-led research experience. Striving to maintain the students’ voice and authenticating their words, understandings, and experience, Part One’s data analysis will specifically use the students’ experience of reflecting on and analysing their narrative journey as both the data and the main generation of analysis (summative data). Further analysis will then be done using the previously established frameworks and the resultant commentary will be pertinent in regards to the collective emergent themes that are uncovered.

Part Two (Chapter Five) will explore the richness, depth and beauty of the data through the sharing of one student’s writing and story of self. This chapter will also act as reinforcement of the belief that each student is a life and that each life must be acknowledged in the sea of desks that make up any classroom. The student-participant
chosen for this chapter, classified as an outlier based on her chosen thematic and topical classifications, did not share any stated similarities with the Part One data set. Part Two’s data analysis, then, will specifically use extended excerpts of this student’s initial writings (formative writing) and reflections (summative writings) to showcase the formation and trajectory of her identified themes of self and her process of discovery, change, and transformation within her narrative telling. Commentary on the data will be researcher-led and make loose use of the established frames. This chapter will also include commentary from the identified student as means of reinforcing the validity and necessity of acknowledging the power of individual voice.

As the nature of the data shared in both Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 is, as a narrative of self, extremely personal and revealing, a restatement of the ethics surrounding the research should also preface the experience of the data. Specifically, all participants in the study and all parents/guardians were informed, in writing, of the personal nature of the research project, its goals and aims, and the type of personal data product being generated (see Appendix A). Written consent was obtained by all participants and parents/guardians and all parties were informed that they could withdraw from the study at anytime. Special emphasis was placed on the fact that all information obtained would be reported with confidentiality, at both the individual and school level. Participants and parents/guardians were informed that the data obtained from this study would be used for the definite purpose of a PhD dissertation. They were also given notice that the data could appear in academic articles as well as conference presentations (see Appendix A for all materials mentioned in this paragraph). At the end of the study, once analysis was concluded, participants selected for Chapter 4 were shown a sample excerpt of how their data would be used in the study and additional verbal consent was requested and given at that time. The participant that Chapter 5 was, when identified as the outlier, initially asked if she felt comfortable in this role. After written consent was given, the agreement was reached that when the chapter was written, she would be given the power of veto on any and all sections included within. After sending the chapter off to her for approval, she was also given voice within the analysis/reflection, adding her own final thoughts to the chapter. In addition, a five year stay has been put on this PhD within the Trinity library so that it will not be readily accessible to any participants.
In addition, with such personal revelations imminent, a preface should also be given to the educative purpose of such sharing. While the sharing done in this piece of work is for research and the level of personal intimacy reached is beyond what may be needed within the classroom, the thought that students have lives just as valid as the teacher or knowledge within the classroom must assert itself here. The narratives that are told in the search for answers to the research questions are real stories from real people, the voices that emerge (both collective and individualized) are valid and this sharing attempts to recognize them as such in the hopes that those who are integral within the educative relationship will take them on board.

Lastly, my want to present and analyse the data in two ways stems from my teaching background and this as a research study interested in informing both practice and theory. By offering dual data analysis chapters, I am attempting to offer something concrete in regards to the necessity and validity of all student life, voice, and experience to the teachers in the staff room - sceptics and believers alike! - as well as to the theorists. Too often in my teaching career did I hear statements in favour of an impersonal classroom built around inaccessible knowledge. By showcasing the breadth of student data from the classroom perspective in a comprehensive and structured fashion, my intention is not to be clinical, but to offer a thorough investigation of the classroom and data I was presented from a comfortable personal distance. In addition, by presenting the singular story of one student in a softer less structured data, my intention is not to advocate for such an evasive dip into the personal lives of our students, but to showcase the power of telling, reflecting, and analysing within the ordinary, real lives that sit in front of us, both for their own personal benefit and the overall benefit of the educative relationship.
CHAPTER FOUR
Data Analysis – Part One

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Most English teachers love books. I am no different. In the fourth grade I was a part of the winning ‘Battle of the Books’ team, a win that came from the simple virtue that I was the only student to read every single book on the reading list. In high school, I developed a reading compulsion, convinced that if I did not finish a book in one go, the plot and the characters would continue without me during my absence from their story. And when I studied English as an undergraduate, I discovered that it was not the books I had a passion for. It was the themes – the lessons learned – they held within their pages.

This intrigue with themes and their ‘take-away’ appeal became a cornerstone in my teaching and is now central to my research. This time, however, the themes that intrigue are not from books or characters engaged in fictitious conflict. The themes that have captivated me this time are from my students’ lives and are purposefully directed towards answering a research question. This time the ‘lessons learned’ are not being transferred from teacher to student in a transactional fashion that will lead to static assessment. This time, seventeen girls have spent a year telling their stories, reflecting on the selves held within their personal pages, and articulating their own individual themes, the themes that have emerged from their very own ‘lesson learned’ moments of being. This chapter shares these students’ stories, their thematic analysis of their own personal narrative data, and a teacher-researcher analysis of these narrated selves.

4.1.1 Review of Data

While the methodology chapter (Chapter Three) speaks more specifically to the characteristics of the data set, a review of the key features is helpful to situate the research participants as student-learners who are three-dimensional beings well able for narrative and thematic revelation.
Methodologically speaking, the research for this study was conducted from an ethnographic perspective that used a narrative methodology to interact with a select group of student-learners.

Specifically, the data for this study was collected from seventeen ‘ordinary, everyday’ female Irish 4th Year (Transition Year) students aged 15-16 years old (24 students were in the course, but only 17 submitted complete portfolios at the end of the study, thus the sample size is 17). These student-participants were volunteers and attended a weekly elective course I offered at their fee-paying urban school during the 2010-2011 school year. I designed this elective course around the study’s main research question and with the intent of using it as my tool to generate and gather narrative data. The data, then, was a product of classroom instruction and came in two forms:

1. process driven weekly writing assignments tied to course instruction
   (termed formative assessment/data/writing)

2. a final reflective and analytical autobiographical portfolio product tied to the weekly writings
   (termed summative assessment/data/writing)

As this data was collected via a curricular intervention that I, the researcher, authored (see Section 3.6), it is necessary to re-acknowledge it as a vehicle with specific bias, guided construction, and a very direct lens through which the data was generated (see Section 3.5.1 for a more detailed look into the research tensions).

In this two part curricular intervention, instruction and formative assessment were initially built (lessons 1-11) around my first research question:

- What themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student-learner) of a personal narrative?

and the following enduring understandings created using the Understanding By Design curricular template (see Section 3.6.2):

- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world.
Past experiences formulate present realities influencing future possibilities. Lessons (1-11) were generally designed prior to entering the school and were based on both the literature (see Chapters 2, 3) and my prior experience as an English teacher of thematically based curriculum. These enduring understandings took on greater thematic focus during lesson 12 when I asked the students to respond to the following prompt: ‘What is important to me? What are the ideas that swirl around my life, giving me pause and making me question?’ (see Appendix B2 & B4). Using emerging curriculum design, I then used the girls’ responses to this prompt to shape further instruction. In lessons 13-20, then, the writing prompts were influenced by the students’ previous work (the work submitted in response to lesson 12), thus casting a future influence on the nature, focus, and student analysis of the data.

As a product of classroom instruction, the data set also has some unique features that make it both faceted and rich.

Firstly, the nature of the data analysis is exceedingly unprocessed in its evolution as it is predominantly participant-led. Specifically, as part of the summative assessment for the course, students were asked to create a thematic analysis of their formative writing (see Appendix B3). This analysis and the resultant student-generated themes will constitute the thematic analysis for this study as will the girls’ application of the previously discussed three-dimensional framework as a means of viewing, reflecting, processing, and analysing their narrative. While supporting the validity of student voice, this facet of the data set allows for more authentic thematic qualifiers; the themes used are organically conceived instead of being superimposed by myself as the teacher-researcher. My role will be to present the students’ themes, their three-dimensional analysis of these themes, and to reflect and comment on this analysis while connecting it to the narrated self this data reveals.

Secondly, another notable and relevant feature of the data set brought about by it being a product of classroom instruction is the wealth of the data. With 17 students writing at minimum one page per class meeting, and with 20 total class meetings, that is, to start, 20 pages of formative data for each student. In addition to this, in their creation of the summative data set, I asked the students to include an introduction, construct of learning, and conclusion as well as a reflection on each topic pulled from their writing (with
direction given to identify up to five topics). With this each student, minimally, had the potential to generate anywhere from 25-30 pages of either handwritten or typed work (see Appendix C for scanned excerpted copies of select participant autobiographical portfolios). With 17 students submitting work in at the end of the school year (out of 24 total class members making the sample size 17), that is over 400 pages of data of purely participant-generated material.

Lastly, one of the more unique features of this study, the research, and the resultant data is that this is a study interested in the ordinary life of a general and generic population of students who live, for the most part, homogeneously. This data set was not gathered with an agenda or for the purpose of advocacy but with the want of gaining insight into the everyday selves of ordinary teenagers through their words.

With this review of the data set, the means for selecting the specific data strand to be presented and analysed becomes pertinent.

4.1.2 Data Selection

In regards to selecting the data subset to be used for this study, the themes chosen for analysis in Part One can be teased out in two fashions, either topically or holistically. These choices as options are based on the type of data, the wealth of data, and the understanding of the participants’ role in the generation and creation of various levels of data. This section presents both of these options and then concludes with an explanation on which option was used to select the data subset best suited to the wants and needs of this study.

4.1.2a Topical Data Selection

When the students were given the summative task (Appendix B3) of creating an autobiographical portfolio on the themes of their life (the summative data set), they were given the direction to first identify larger topical classifications within their narration and from there derive themes; the topics were to represent the ‘what’s’ of their lives (what they were writing on) and the themes to represent the ‘how’s’ and ‘why’s’ (how they were writing about this topic/why they were writing on this topic). For example, while the
student may have found herself consistently writing about a friend or friends (TOPIC), the reasoning or purpose for her writing on this topic would typically vary (THEME). Thus, while searching for emerging themes, the students’ created two layers of data – the topic and the theme – and it is the primary classification – the topical – that drives the sorting of data under this heading.

While 27 topical identifications were created by the 17 students (each participant was asked to identify up to five topics, for a possible 85 topics across the entire data set), in regards to pulling the data for analysis, three topical classifications emerged as most identified by the students in regards to what they were writing about. These topics are:

- Friends (15/17 participants identifying with this topic)
- Family (14/17 participants identifying with this topic)
- School (11/17 participants identifying with this topic)

In regards to the next most identified topic - ‘Myself’- only 5 out of 17 of the participants pulled this topic from their writing, creating a significant break in the data set. This break establishes the first boundary line for data to be analysed for the purpose of this study’s research questions. This is, however, not to discount the outlier topic groups identified by individual students (e.g. Confidence, Anxiety, Conflict, Longing, The Past, etc.) which are interesting, relevant, and worth exploring in their own right and can be found in Appendix D1. The outliers, or anomalies, will be somewhat addressed in Part Two of the analysis (see Chapter 5), but are given over in favour of highlighting the collective and individual dimensions of the research questions.

At this time, it should be noted that the directions I gave to the students in their instructions for creating their autobiographical portfolio (the summative assessment that presented each students’ topics and themes) may have influenced their topic choices. In directing the girls in how to identify topics within their writing, the three examples I gave when modelling possible topical classification were Friends, Family, and School. However, as the theme is what will be of interest in the analysis, and the topic works to contextualize the theme, I do not feel that this instruction influenced the integrity of the data. Also, in regards to the everyday interactions and contexts of life for an ordinary fifteen-year old, the topical
classification of friends, family, and school are to be expected as would many of the other classifications (the above mentioned ‘Myself) that were chosen.

In regards to the thematic analysis approach of this research study, then, one way to cull the themes to focus in on when answering this study’s research questions is to pull the most commonly identified theme within each of these top three topics. With this as the method for selecting themes under each topical heading, the following themes emerge as the most prevalent (see Appendix D1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>THEMES*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*please note the word chosen for the thematic identifier is researcher-generated and is created for convenience rather than preference over the language used by the participants. As this is a participant-led research study, the specific language (voice) of the student will be shared during the analysis. Categorization was also done to recognize both synonyms and antonyms.

This method of pulling data works to contextualize the themes and reflects and supports the notion put forth in the previous chapters that the narrated self is a socio-historical construct, meaning that an individual’s narration is embedded within the contexts of its existence.

4.1.2b Holistic Data Selection

In considering the data set holistically, the topical categorizations become secondary as the themes identified by the participants come to the forefront. In this holistic way of focusing the data set, the themes each student identified are combined across the board regardless of the topic and theme the student originally connected them to; it is the overall use and frequency of the theme across the data set which makes it significant and worth focusing further analysis on.
This means that topics such as ‘The Future’ (3/17 participants) and ‘Anxiety’ (1/17 participants) and the thematic qualifiers the students assigned to them would be combined with the larger thematic data groupings discussed above for a more widespread look into how a theme is articulated in the various contexts of students’ lives. This method of categorizing and selecting data acknowledges each participant’s voice in regards to thematic selection and analysis as opposed to a consideration focused solely on the majority population.

With 149 themes identified by the students (see Appendix D2), the top ten most commonly identified themes across the entire data set are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>(14)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*this number reflects the frequency with which students’ identified this theme in varied topical contexts

At this time, it should be noted that in regards to linking the students’ thematic identification to the classroom and the curricular tool used to solicit the data, the only themes from the above list that classroom instruction specifically touched on were ‘learning’ and ‘trust’. In regards to ‘learning’, this was a theme that was generally touched upon throughout the year in regards to looking at life as a place for learning. In regards to ‘trust’, there was one specific lesson on this theme. This lesson (see Appendix B4 - Lesson 15) was created as a part of the ‘emerging curriculum’ portion of the course and was something I designed in response to ‘trust’ as an issue or theme that the girls had brought up in their writing during lesson 12.
This holistic method of pulling data works to focus in on the themes as articulated by the students and seems a sensible approach for a study that will be using thematic analysis. However, as the themes are pooled together to create a data subset, the number of times the theme is identified is not sizable enough to reflect a substantial finding, and as the thematic analysis has actually already taken place, this method can lose the contextualization and focus of the themes within the certain topic that provoked the identification in the first place.

4.1.2c Data Selection Conclusion

In recognition of much of the literature I have presented on teaching, learning, and the educative relationship as well as the narrative self, and to consolidate and direct many of the threads I have worked to lay down throughout this piece of research, the topical approach (Section 4.1.2a) is what I will be using to select the data subset to be used in this chapter, Part One, as it tells the most convincing and dominant story in light of the research questions.

Using the topical approach to contain and sort the data, there will be three data sets presented in this chapter. These data sets are derived from the three most identified topics and partnered themes (see Section 4.1.2a) and will be presented under the following headings:

1. DATA SET ONE  Topic: Friends; Theme: Trust
2. DATA SET TWO  Topic: Family; Theme: Love
3. DATA SET THREE  Topic: School; Theme: Pressure

These data sets, then, contain the data that will be used for analysis within Part One.

4.1.3 Chapter Contents

This data analysis chapter (Part One) will first discuss the different stages of data analysis, distinguishing the participant-led analysis from the researcher-led analysis. The data will then be presented in three data sets, sets chosen based on their topical and thematic
headings. In each data set, the data and data analysis will be presented as a participant unit. After each data set, summative observations will be given by myself using both Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework and Bruner’s modified indicators of self (1997). Key observations of the data will then be highlighted in the chapter’s conclusion.

4.2 STAGES OF ANALYSIS

In regards to understanding the data being presented, it is imperative to understand that based on the approach of student as co-researcher (Nash & Roberts 2009; Flutter & Rudduck 2005) there exist two forms of analysis: 1. Participant-Led Analysis, and 2. Researcher-Led Analysis. Across these two forms, there exist three stages of analysis, all of which will be explained in this section.

Figure 12 – Stages of Analysis
4.2.1. Participant-Led Analysis – Stage One & Stage Two

For **Stage One** analysis, the girls used their weekly writings as the data (the formative data) for creating their topical and thematic categories. This writing was then used as support and justification for their analytic choices and will be shared as such.

For **Stage Two** analysis, the girls’ summative writings (the summative data) were created using Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework in response to the formative data and Stage One of analysis. This writing will constitute the bulk of the data shared in this chapter.

In regards to creating the analysis for Stage One and Stage Two, the girls were given two months to complete the above tasks outside of school (a time period which extended into the summer holiday). When handing out this analytic ‘assignment’, I gave clarifying directions in class but then left the girls to their own devices with basic follow-up questioning to ensure understanding of and confidence in what they were being asked to do. In addition, I also continuously told them that at the end of the day, in regards to their work on this, it did not really matter what they did or said, because whatever they shared or did not share would be ‘right’ by the virtue of them being the ones identifying, creating, and sharing it.

**4.2.1a Stage One Topical/Thematic Analysis from Formative Data**

The girls, as co-researchers, conducted the thematic analysis portion of this study as a part of their class work to create an autobiographical portfolio based on their writings from the course. To identify their emerging topics and themes the girls were asked to:

1. **revisit** their writing (the formative data), interacting with it in the manner of a teacher (making comments and responding to what they had previously written).
2. **identify** the topics of their writing (‘what’ they chose to write on no matter the direction or prompt given) and name them (‘friends, family, school’).
3. **identify** the themes of their writing by determining ‘how/why’ they were writing on the above topics (what is it that they have to say about the topic of
'friends'...are they talking about self-esteem, a conflict in morals, and/or being too dependent in relation to this topic?).

9. check, verify, and support their topic and theme choices by revisiting their writing for a second time to highlight ‘quotes’ particularly important in supporting their choices.

10. create a chart to connect the identified supporting quotes, themes, and topics.

In regards to the narrative data that will be specifically shared under the Stage One Data/Analysis heading, the students’ shared writing has been pulled from the specific direction within the autobiographical portfolio/summative data reflection asking the girls to:

‘Quote yourself! Choose five things you said (that you really like, you found insightful, interesting, intriguing) and match them up to not just the TOPIC but the THEMES within each topic.’

Specifically, this direction asked the girls to look back through all their writing from the year – their formative data – and to choose, from the material they had previously highlighted when identifying material for topic and theme relationships, supporting quotes. As I explained to the girls in the class when elaborating on this direction, instead of quoting from the text to support an argument about theme for an English paper, they were to quote from themselves – from their life! – their writing, to support their own personal themes, the how’s and why’s of their own life. The actual assignment the girls received can be accessed in Appendix B3.

In the presentation of the data that follows (sections 4.3 – 4.5), the student identified supporting quotes are taken from the girls’ responses to the above direction.

4.2.1b Stage Two Summative Data Provokes 3-D Framework for Reflection

After identifying and connecting their supporting quotes, themes, and topics, the girls were asked to, in the directions for creating their autobiographical portfolio/summative data reflection:
'Write a reflection on each identified topic. In each reflection, please include your thoughts on this topic (and the themes you identified within each topic) in regards to:

Following this direction, the specific questions for the reflection were taken from Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework for viewing narratives. This framework uses interaction, temporality, and situation (see Section 3.8.4) as its three dimensions and, specifically, the girls were asked to respond to these dimensions with the following directions:

In regards to interaction (the personal and the social):

- How 'you' fit into [the topic and themes] ('you' you and 'self' you and any other 'you' you come up with!). Consider internal conditions such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions.

- How 'others' fit into [the topic and themes] (think about all of those relationships you so aptly identified the day Marta was in with us!). Consider external conditions and things outside yourself.

In regards to temporality (past, present, and future):

- Where you have been in the far past, near past, and relative present in regards to this topic/theme (as identified in your writing or not). What lessons have you learned and what wisdom do you hold on this topic/theme?

- Hopes you have for the future based on where you have been in your past.

I did not ask the girls to specifically address the third dimension, situation or place, in their responses. It was my feeling that situation would be articulated within the answering of the above questions and that it would be more interesting to see where they situationally placed their reflections without guidance.
Specifically, these directions were given in keeping with the first research question and asked the girls to go beyond the simple act of identifying that 'friends' were important to them or that based on their writing 'trust' was central to their life. This task asked the girls to truly think about these topics and themes after identifying them, to extend their understanding and interaction with these concepts and to consider them in the scope of the narratives they have written and will write. As well, this task asked them to reflect on who they had created in their narration, the self that was revealed throughout their formative data. As I explained in class, this was their 'take away' from it all – the articulation of and reflection on lessons learned or not learned, concepts near and dear. In this way, the students utilized the three-dimensional framework to guide their reflection and articulation of analysis.

In the presentation of the data that follows (sections 4.3 – 4.5), the reflection/analysis on theme in context quotes are taken from these three-dimensional framework guided reflections and are excerpted by the research in regards to the specific theme being analysed.

4.2.2 Researcher-Led Analysis – Stage Three

Using the thematic analysis conducted by the students and working from their reflective perceptions derived from holding up the three-dimensional frame to their stories of being, I will be looking at the ‘self’ articulated within their analysis using the following steps:

1. Generic observations and comments about the excerpts of data provided. The purpose of this step will be to highlight and validate the authentic voice of the girls as they narrate and discuss self.


The indicators of self that will be held up to the narrative excerpts for sense-making purpose in Stage Three of analysis are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF (taken from J. Bruner)*</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Intended or actual line of action, an adherence that transcends momentariness and impulsiveness. Tells about steadfastness, delay of gratification, sacrifice, or of flightiness and inconstancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Includes not only such 'external' resources as power, social legitimacy, and sources of information, but 'inner' ones as well, like patience, perspective, forgiveness, persuasiveness and the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Tells where and to whom an agent looks in legitimizing or evaluating goals, commitments, and resource allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Provides signs of how we or others value the prospects, outcomes, or progress of intended, actual, or completed lines of endeavour. Tells about <em>situated</em> affect as it relates to the conduct of life in the small or large.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>Speaks to the more metacognitive side of Self, to the reflective activity invested in self-examination, self-construction, and self-evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Reveals how an individual locates himself or herself in time, space, or the social order – where one stands in the “real” world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bruner also includes agency, qualia, and coherence as indicators. These have been omitted in the following analysis due to the excerpted nature of the data.*

In the presentation of the data that follows (sections 4.3 – 4.5), the researcher comments/observations and the revelations of the narrated self follow from these two steps respectively.
4.2.3 Conclusion

One of the unique features of the data analysis is that it is participant-led, with researcher analysis being grounded in and acting as an extension to this primary analysis.

In presenting the data, both the participant-led analysis, Stage One and Stage Two, and the researcher-led analysis, Stage Three, will be presented together under each student heading within the three data sets.

4.3 DATA SET ONE  Topic: Friends; Theme: Trust

Using the topical method of sorting data as described in Section 4.2.1, this first data set presents the topic of 'Friends' and the theme of 'Trust'. 'Friends' is the most identified topical classification used by the students to categorize their writing for the purpose of analysis. Within this context of 'Friends', the theme most girls identified as emerging from their writing is 'Trust'.

4.3.1 Definition  Topic: Friends; Theme: Trust

To clarify, the terms 'friends' and 'trust' are labels I created based on the actual language used by the students. This is not meant to show preference in any way over the language used by the girls for their articulations and identifications but was done for convenience and uniformity in data presentation. I decided upon these terms by looking over the language used by the girls and recognizing both the synonyms and antonyms grouped under the same topical or thematic headings. However, when presenting each individual students' writings under this heading, I will allow for the students' voice and labelling to lead their data set.
Specifically in the creation of the topical label ‘friends’ no language generalization was necessary as it was the term used by the students. In regards to the thematic label of ‘trust’, I selected this word in consideration of the following student-generated identifiers:

Trust, Trust, Trust, Trust, Trust, Trust, Trust, Trust

*Synonym*: Being the One Who People Tell Things to

*Antonym*: Betrayal, Betrayal

With eight students using the word ‘trust’ as their own self-selected thematic label, and with synonyms and antonyms closely linked to both the denotation and connotation of the word ‘trust’, ‘trust’ is what I selected as the preferred researcher-generated label for this thematic grouping.

### 4.3.2 Presentation of Data

**Topic: Friends; Theme: Trust**

All participants’ names, and names of people or places identified by the girls, have been changed to preserve anonymity. In regards to presenting the data, I have chosen to present it alphabetically based on the pseudonym assigned to each student. Also, to maintain the integrity of the girls’ voice, their writing is being shared in the fashion it was created, with typographical errors, spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, and text speak. In addition, I have chosen not to annotate with *sic* to aid readability and fluidity.

In this data set, the writings of nine participants will be shared – Amanda, Audra, Becky, Greta, Jenny, Julie, Karen, Rachel, and Sand with both Becky and Sandy having identified two themes falling under this heading.

*****
Amanda identifies supporting quotes from her writing on the theme of trust as:

- I worry about things all the time because I'm the type of person that people tell their problems to and that adds to the worry.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Amanda writes (excerpt):

To have people that you can be completely yourself with, in a world that's so keen to judge everyone, is really special. I have that with a very few select people. I mentioned in my writings once about being many different versions of yourself with all the different people in your life and how each of the different relationships in your life require a different version of yourself. I wondered whether anyone ever sees all the different versions of one person. I still don't know if it's possible, but I have a few friends who have come close.

While Amanda does not refer to her theme as one of trust, my feeling is that in what she does identify - that of being the one that people tell things to - contains within it elements of trust, something her writing seems to allude to as well. Of particular interest in her response is the element of her understanding and articulation of having 'different versions of yourself' and the way in which different relationships 'require' these different versions.

In considering Amanda’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Amanda – Friends; Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>To identify a theme of life as ‘being the one that people will tell things to’ seems to reveal within Amanda the value of commitment both in herself and others. She also speaks to a steadfastness of character and of morality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>In considering Amanda’s commitment to both her idea of trust as well as to the beautifully articulated concept of the different versions of self, it seems as though she is willing to make certain sacrifices of self to maintain her beliefs in this as a virtue. In particular, mentioning that she worries implies that she is taking on the problems of others and values her role as confidante. Her understanding of the need to be different with different people at different times and for different purposes implies a flexibility and thoughtfulness as well as an insight into the dynamic nature of relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Amanda’s label for this theme reflects an understanding of a cognitively constructed group of trustworthy individuals. She also is putting value in others and allowing them to validate her ability, commitment and resource allocation to this theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>In referring to having ‘a few friends who have come close’ to knowing her different versions of self, Amanda reflects on this concept as well as on the relationship between this and being the one that her friends will tell things to. It seems as though she is drawing a connection between the two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>In Amanda’s self-selected supporting quote, she shows herself as a reflexive friend, one who considers who she should be in that role and what it entails. Her reflection shows a meta-cognitive awareness of who she is and how her self/selves influence and is influenced by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>In regards to placing herself, as Amanda is writing on this theme under the context of friendship it is evident that she places great value on her friend relationships and her role as confidante within such relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AUDRA
on the theme of ‘TRUST’

Audra identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of trust as:

- "...a build up in a relationship over time that must be maintained..."
- "...no way of really proving that someone is completely trustworthy."

During reflection/analysis on this theme in context, Audra writes (excerpt):

_The issues and events in my relationships have made me experience feelings that at times got too out of hand for me to handle, and I also learnt a lot from this. Many of my experiences had negative effects on me. Trust has been a big issue, and my ability to trust others has decreased enormously. Because of this, I have fallen out with tone of the people that matters the most to me, my best friend, and there have been many conflicts with this person, as identified in my writings. We have both been in the wrong about each other and I fear that things have gone far beyond repair. This has had affects on my self-esteem. Losing a best friend is bound to have effect on my self-esteem because I’ve lost the person I could entirely trust. On the fortunate side, I did start to make other friends, and the results were phenomenal. I feel comfortable with these people and trust certainly isn’t an issue._

Audra’s understanding that trust is something that needs to be maintained in her initial formative writing is both insightful and telling and supported in her reflection on her relationship with her best friend. Her ability to understand the connection between this and her self perception in regards to esteem and worth is intriguing. Also, it is interesting to note that while she mentions her ability to trust others ‘has decreased enormously’ she goes on to mention that with her new friends ‘trust certainly isn’t an issue.’

In considering Audra’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
| INDICATORS OF SELF | RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA  
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audra – Friends; Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>While Audra articulates a personal definition of trust in regards to it being something that ‘builds’ and ‘must be maintained’ her reflection on the topic indicates her struggles in and around trust. Her changing friend group and the articulated difference of trust levels with the new friends and the old best friend suggest that this struggle continues and that there is inconsistency in and around her in regards to this theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Audra seems to have struggled with bringing resources into her old friendship to support her definition of trust. It seems, however, that with having a new set of friends she is willing to recommit herself to finding trust relationships (though she states that her ability to trust others has ‘decreased enormously’). Audra’s damaged self-esteem could potentially be a resource in regards to these newer friendships if she is able to be re-validated by this new peer group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Audra’s specific mention of a best friend and a new group of friends, and her connection between esteem and trust, relays her high value of her classmates and friends as well as who she is in relation to them. Her friends and her relationships with them seem to legitimize her sense of self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>While it is clear that Audra values trust and has a definition of it in her original writing, when she reflects on her story, it seems as though she has begins to define trust more on what breaks it and corrupts it then on what it actually looks and feels like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>In regards to looking at herself within the theme trust, Audra’s writing seems to focus more on her friends actions than on her own. However, her connection of self-esteem to trust is very reflective and shows how she values herself in regards to both trust and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Audra seems to have feelings of uncertainty about her position within her old friendship but seems confident in her new friends and the prospects they might bring to her and her life story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Becky identifies supporting quotes from writing on the themes of trust and betrayal as:

- If someone broke a pinkie promise, I could never trust them and I would lose a little bit of respect for them.
- I love being known as a trustworthy person.

During reflection/analysis on these themes within the context of her writing, Becky writes (excerpt):

I used to fit in perfectly with a group of friends who I could trust and share secrets with at times but there was always the down side, ups and downs as they call it in relationships. I think I fit in because I made everyone laugh with my crazy laugh and hyper-ness, but as time went on, it later started to annoy them. I was there for them when they needed me, I listened to them and gave them advice. I still do but to different friends, if that makes sense....Trust is one of the hardest things I have had to deal with, with my friends....It takes a certain amount of time for me to trust people as I have had difficulty trusting people in the past. Trust and honesty are very important to me when it comes to friends. It's what builds a friendship between one another. Betrayal is one of the worst possible things a friend could do. This theme has come up a lot in my teenage life. Even though I'm very young, trust and betrayal appears numerously throughout my life. I have learned to deal with each of these themes but I must still live life bumping into them occasionally.

Becky’s identification of her direct quote on ‘pinkie promises’ is refreshing in regards to capturing the spirit of a fifteen-year old girl’s ideas on trust. Her value of being a trustworthy person may perhaps have come from being put into situations where others were not trustworthy and betrayed her. It is also interesting to note how Becky identifies certain personality traits – her laugh and hyperness – in regards to this topic of trust, betrayal and the change within her friendship group. It makes me wonder if friendships were lost due to an act of betrayal or from fifteen year old girls being fifteen year old girls.

In considering Becky’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Becky – Friends; Trust &amp; Betrayal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Becky’s closing statement on having learned how to deal with both trust and betrayal perhaps best reveals her want to maintain her self as a ‘trustworthy person’. She knows that these issues will extend beyond her current situation, and expresses optimism at being able to deal with them and in maintaining her own values of honesty and trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>In regards to Becky’s commitment to trust and the resources she is willing to bring to the table in regards to it, her writing gives the impression of hope. Even though she articulates betrayal as a theme separate to trust, her reflection is positive and upbeat in regards to her future with these themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>In regards to legitimizing her life themes of both trust and betrayal, Becky seems to pull on not only her own personal experiences, but also cultural norms of what it means to be trustworthy. Whether it is breaking a ‘pinkie promise’ or listening and giving advice, Becky draws on more than just her story to validate her understanding of trust and betrayal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Becky’s understanding of her young life and the role the themes of trust and betrayal have had in it evaluates her friendship life and the ends and beginnings she has experienced within this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>Perhaps the most reflexive statement Becky makes is on her understanding that she must ‘still live life bumping into [trust and betrayal] occasionally’. She places these topics in her past and her present but understands them and her relationship with them in her future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Becky is very aware of her place within her peer group and her identification of the theme of betrayal alongside that of trust helps to flag her awareness of what is on the other side of trust in regards to who it is acceptable to be.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greta identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of trust as:

- I have heard them telling me things other people have said.
- It just feels like I can't tell them everything.
- There is only one person I trust to tell everything to.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Greta writes (excerpt):

Through the years I have also realised that friends can be cause of a lot of trouble and heartache. I can feel at times like I am not worth it and feel insignificant compared to them. They have caused me to re-think things I have done and sometimes analyse them painstakingly. Because they are the people I trust I sometimes take what they say to heart even if they aren't meant that way. I feel a loyalty to my friends which can sometimes get in the way of other things. I know that sometimes trusting a friend can be a mistake but it is a risk worth taking as allowing other people into my life has helped make it better. I hope that I remain a trusting person despite and especially because of incidents in the past.

It is interesting that Greta begins her reflection on friends by commenting on the 'trouble' and 'heartache' they bring and then follows it up with an immediate statement of self-worth and significance. Greta's admittance of 'painstaking' self-analysis in the light of personal actions and agency are also interesting and noteworthy in her connecting them to her personal theme of trust.

In considering Greta's writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA: Greta – Friends; Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>There are two instances of commitment in Greta’s writing that seem to speak to her self. First, her commitment or compulsion to monitoring and reflecting on her own past behaviour speaks to a sense of sacrificing her own opinion in regards to that of her peers. Also, her sense of loyalty and how loyalty can ‘get in the way’ show a sense of commitment to an ideal. Both of these concepts show a true commitment to the idea of trust, though it seems Greta’s concept of trust may be a bit romanticized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Greta seems willing to draw on her own personal reserves to maintain loyalty and a relationship of trust. While she seems to know who she can and can not trust based on her selection of direct quotes, she also displays a resolve in regards to loyalty that seems all-encompassing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>While Greta obviously looks to her peers to legitimize her beliefs on trust, it also seems as if she has set her own personal bar that is high and noble against which she measures the theme of trust in her life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Greta’s admittance to risk-taking when it comes to trust and friends shows her commitment to seeing this belief out to the end. While she does not speak specifically on her friends or her peer group, there is a sense that she maintains deep beliefs on this topic, an observation that is reinforced with her connection between trust and others’ judgements of her own actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>In describing the way in which others make her think about her actions, and in associating this habit with that of trust, Greta thinks about how trust affects her and her own personal story of self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>In regards to the real world, Greta’s story speaks to someone willing to give quite a lot to others in terms of trust, loyalty, and self-perception. She has a clear standard of trust that she seems to strive for but is willing to question her beliefs based on the statements of others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JENNY

on the theme of ‘TRUST’

Jenny identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of trust as:

- Expect something in return like the other person’s trust in you.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Jenny writes (excerpt):

I’m considered the mother of my group. I tell my friends to clean up after themselves, only do something for them if they ask with ‘Please,’ and then thank me....I hope I stay the ‘mother’ because I love being able to comfort my friends, build up trust between them all and keep things honest....My family does influence who I’m friends with, if they don’t trust someone they would recommend I stay away from them but don’t enforce it. Boys also come in to the equation, I don’t want to be friends with the girls that will do anything for a boy’s attention, will degrade themselves and shatter their self esteem by embarrassing themselves, I am friends with girls who are comfortable with themselves and are honest, who don’t care if they’re friends with boys or not....I’ve learnt not to immediately trust someone, let them earn your trust; don’t just give it to them. Being honest from the beginning is also a great quality, it has helped me in the near past and relative present with friendships because in the far past my friendships were based on lies and nastiness, just completely tearing people apart to make them feel like nothing.

Jenny’s articulation of what it means to be the ‘mother’ of the group is interesting in regards to how she forms relationships and expectations of others. It is interesting how Jenny makes a connection between her familial influence in choosing friends and that of boys and how a girl’s conduct with a boy seems to implicitly affect Jenny’s ability to trust them.

In considering Jenny’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
<th>Jenny – Friends; Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Jenny articulates a clear commitment to her code of behaviour, what it is that constitutes appropriate behaviour and what does not. Speaking on manners or a friends’ sense of self-worth in relation to boys, Jenny speaks to an ingrained rule system that she attaches to friends, honesty, and trust.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>The biggest resource Jenny seems to bring to the table in regards to backing her commitment to her code is her code itself. She clearly articulates her rules for being, living and acting, and it is this that she will use to prove her and other’s commitment to the theme of trust.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Reference</td>
<td>Jenny seems to be operating with a higher order legitimizing her code of behaviour. While it is not clear if she is working from the rules of her parents or simply rules of being that she has come to learn and understand, Jenny places these, and other ‘rule followers’, as her points of social reference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Jenny clearly speaks to the idea of how she evaluates commitment to the theme of trust when she speaks on not being friends with girls who degrade or embarrass themselves for boys. For her trust is evaluated by a girl who is comfortable with herself, who is honest, and who earns it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive</td>
<td>Jenny’s summary comments on where she has been in regards to friendship and trust lend a more reflexive feel to her excerpt and her explanation of her rules of being. She has a sense of who she needs to be but - more clearly - a sense of whom others need to be to be allowed into her world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>In regards to social order, Jenny seems to show no deference to her peer group and appears to be quite confident in who she is and in what she deems appropriate and acceptable for her life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Julie identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of trust as:

- Like many people my age I need to learn more about trust in life as I don’t the life experience yet to understand and appreciate it, I only hope that I can in the future and that those around me will too.
- I think we all travel very different roads and our choices make s who we are and who our friends are.
- Trust in a friend is a sign of real friendship. The knowing that you can express yourself or say something and be heard without the whole world knowing. It is a sacred trust and you can/will only ever have it with your closest friends.
- Sometimes you will doubt yourself and your friends will help you but if you doubt trust, loyalty this could be the factor that makes or breaks a friendship.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Julie writes (excerpt):

> We all doubt ourselves and our friends at times but it’s the trust, understanding and happiness a friend gives that makes us believe in ourselves and them. I learnt to believe in myself and others this year, and I hope to bring this forward into my future and current friendships.

Julie use her direct quotes from her formative assessment as the bulk of her reflection on the theme of trust and perhaps one of the most intriguing statements she makes is calling the trust of ‘knowing that you can express yourself or say something and be heard without the whole world knowing’ a *sacred* trust. With this label, Julie articulates the complexity of trust as well as its status - when achieved - something that is almost other worldly.

In considering Julie’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Julie’s connection between life experience and trust as well as the concept of a sacred trust existing between the closest of friends show a commitment to the idea of trust as fluid and evolutionary. She also shows a great understanding of trust as an isolated ideal, removing it from herself and her friends in regards to not ‘doubt[ing] trust’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Julie’s perspective on trust is her greatest resource and support for her ideals. Her understanding of trust as an isolated ideal, removing it from herself and her friends in regards to not ‘doubt[ing] trust’, shows a mature perspective as does her understanding that trust is not the same for everyone depending on the roads one travels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Reference</td>
<td>In referencing others in regards to the theme of trust, Julie seems to understand that while it is something different for everyone it is also something solid and worth putting time and thought into. For Julie, it seems as though the value of trust is larger than both herself and her peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>In her reflection, Julie speaks to learning to believe in herself and others this year and this speaks towards her progress as a person and a validation of her statement on needing to gain more life experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive</td>
<td>Julie’s comments on trust and the way her articulation of her beliefs on this concept relay her self is very reflexive, speaking of a self who understands and appreciates both the past and present’s role in building her future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>Julie’s sense of self and her understanding of where she is in regards to her peers seems quite open and unassumptive as she seems to include all of them in her own understanding of self and trust.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Karen identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of trust as:

- want to talk but can’t

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Karen writes (excerpt):

This topic makes me feel happy and sad. It makes me feel happy as I know I have those people that if I was struggling I could turn to, when I was really sick my mind was playing games with me and made me feel like everyone was against me but now I truly understand that I have a good few friends that I can rely on....Everyone has their struggles and everyone feels lost at some point so you have to play your part in the friendship...I have learned to trust my friends more and not worry too much about the consequences of this....I also hope that I will conquer my fear of rejection and maybe find a boyfriend in whom I can trust with everything and be entirely comfortable around....I love when I feel needed as a friend so this is where I would like other to rely on me more. They may be afraid because I had so much going on in my life for a while but now that I’m back on more stable ground I hope that my friends turn back to thinking of me as the one they can always confide in or the one that is always there and listens to them.

While Karen’s direct quote is short but sweet, it speaks volumes especially when compared to her reflective paragraph and her discussion of her illness, her fears, and the shaky place she was in during the course of the year. From this, and her expansion on it, it is clear that Karen has much to say but no one she feel she can trust with what is going on in her life, especially with her belief that everyone has a part to play in a friendship. This seems to have made her question herself and her worth, but the realization that she does have friends she can rely on gives her the hope that is evident in the rest of her writing.

In considering Karen’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
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<tr>
<th><strong>INDICATORS OF SELF</strong></th>
<th><strong>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Karen – Friends; Trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commitment**
Karen seems to have struggled with the role of trust in her life when confronted with some serious personal issues such as her illness. However, it now seems that she has pushed through this and is committed to taking more of a chance to gain friends, a boyfriend, and a sense of worth as reflected in her statement to ‘not worry too much about the consequences of this’.

**Resource**
Based on Karen’s want for her friends to put their confidence back in her, it seems as though Karen’s own trustworthiness might have come into question. The value she places in gaining back the trust of others, in being needed, and in being seen as a listener shows the effort she is willing to put in to re-establish her reputation in the eyes of her friends.

**Social Reference**
Karen very much identifies with her peers as her point of social reference and her writing reflects her want for approval and acceptance. Her specific mention of a boyfriend also seems to show the value she places in a romantic relationship validating her self and her sense of worth.

**Evaluation**
Karen seems to indicate that her beliefs in trust, herself as a trustworthy individual, and her ability to put trust in others will come once she is reaccepted by her friends and has a boyfriend.

**Reflexive**
Both Karen’s direct quote and opening statement summarize her ability to reflect on trust as a theme in her life and just life in general; in other words, Karen seems to understand the duality and contradiction of her own life around specific plot points.

**Positional**
Karen’s admission that she felt like everyone was against her when she was sick, as well as her loss of worth and fear of rejection, speak to her viewing herself on the outside of the group. However, her reflection ends hopeful and with the want and will to be viewed as an equal once again.
RACHEL
on the theme of ‘TRUST’

Rachel identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of trust as:

- I think I’m lucky to have trustworthy friends so young.
- It’s a huge personal compliment when a friend feels they can trust you and you trust them back.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Rachel writes (excerpt):

I think out of all my topics friendship is a really important one because they have such a huge influence on me. I feel that within my group of friends there is a really good dynamic...Although of course there can be conflict and a clash of personalities and morals. I sometimes find myself kinda jealous of my friends. They have so many incredible talents, are very pretty and some have boyfriends and it can make me feel inferior an insecure. I guess I just have to not let it get me down and tell myself that I have just as many wonderful qualities as they do.

Rachel’s direct quote on trust as a relational value is very insightful and quite spot on in regards to how trust can be given. In her reflection, while she does not speak specifically to trust, her mention of conflict, jealousy, a clash of morals and a sense of inadequacy are quite revealing in regards to her self belief. It is also interesting to note that the two specific things she mentions in relation to feeling inadequate are looks and being in a relationship.

In considering Rachel’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>In considering Rachel’s reflection, she seems to be committed to a version of her self in comparison to her friends. She articulates that trust goes two ways and also speaks to feeling lacking when looking at herself against her friends’ talents and abilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rachel – Friends; Trust
**Resource**

Rachel seems to have no specific resource in regards to her commitment to her feeling of inadequacy beyond her hopeful ending remark on not getting down on herself and using self-talk to support her own esteem.

**Social Reference**

Rachel very clearly looks to her friends in regards to self-worth and self-esteem as well as in regards to creating knowledge on what things will make her feel secure (beauty, boyfriend). Her last comment has more of a societal norm feel to it in regards to a reference for this as a resource.

**Evaluation**

Specifically in regards to trust, Rachel has a clear sense that the trust relationship does need to be equal as she looks to a friend trusting her as she can trust them back. Evaluating her jealousy of her friends, Rachel has very specific articulated targets in regards to feeling on level with them.

**Reflexive**

Rachel begins her reflection with a true self insight in regards to how influential her friends are to her. She then follows up with specific examples to illustrate how she is influenced negatively by her friends, but ends with a positive statement.

**Positional**

Positionally, Rachel appears to feel left behind in the social order, viewing her self as something less than that of her friends and peers.

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**SANDY**

on the themes of ‘TRUST’ and ‘BETRAYAL’

Sandy identifies supporting quotes from writing on the themes of trust and betrayal as:

- *...few close friends.*
- *I don't mind if they tell a good friend because they wouldn't go tell people.*
- *...always putting me down because I like him.*

During reflection/analysis on these themes within the context of her writing, Sandy writes (excerpt):

148
During the past year I had hoped to be more independent and make more friends. Although I have made few more friends I’ve also grown away from others. I got annoyed with friends during the year because I wasn’t being listened to deal with that kind of situation. Even though I tried to be more independent of some of my friends it didn’t do that this year because I was in a class where some of my friends went to hang out with other people and just left me and my other friend. Next year I hope to make more friends.

Even though Sandy does not mention either trust or betrayal in her reflective paragraph on both of these themes, it is interesting to note that she focuses in on the idea of independence in regards to friends. Also her direct quote on not minding if ‘they tell a good friend because they wouldn’t go tell people’ is interesting in regards to supporting the themes of trust and betrayal as this idea seems to exist between the two. This middle ground also exists with Sandy’s wish to be more independent but also make more friends.

In considering Sandy’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Sandy seems to be committed to the idea of making new friends, though based on her reflection this proved to be difficult for her this year as the friends she did have seem to have drifted away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>In regards to resources, Sandy seems to be a bit inconsistent in what it is she actually wants and her reflection shows a girl who is still finding her way and her place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>It is very clear that Sandy looks towards her friends as a social reference for legitimizing her self and her understanding of trust and betrayal. This seems to be most apparent when she speaks on wanting independence but being unable to grasp it when her friend group distances themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Sandy sticking with her one friend, despite her group of friends hanging out with other people and her want to branch out, shows how she values of friendship and trusts in steadfastness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflexive

Sandy’s thinking about her situation with her friends – her annoyance at them not listening – and her decision to try to break away from this peer group show that she is thinking about who she wants to be with whom.

Positional

Based on Sandy’s reflection, she appears to feel out of her one circle of friends, yet solid with the one friend she keeps to. Her search for independence seems to show a want to get beyond social ordering.

*****

For each of the nine stories presented above, both the participant-led and the researcher-led strands of analysis were presented in an integrated and reflective participant package.

In the following sections, Section 4.3.3. and 4.3.4, only the researcher voice will be shared as a means of summarising, creating cohesion and pulling together a holistic look at the data set.

4.3.3 3-D Viewing Framework – Summation Topic: Friends; Theme: Trust

To situate this data as analysis within the research, the girls were asked to use Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000: 50-51, 162) metaphorical three-dimensional framework for reflecting on narrative inquiry. This viewing framework was established as a guide for narrative reflection in Chapter Three (see Section 3.8.4). The excerpted paragraphs contain these reflections and their specific responses to questions aligned to the framework concepts of Interaction (Personal and Social) and Temporality (Past, Present, Future) as explained in Section 4.2.1b. Situation (Place) was left out of the specific and directed questions as it was my thought that girls would naturally address this point of the framework on their own; despite this, researcher comments on situation will still be offered.

To consolidate and further the above participant-led strand of analysis, in this section I will use this frame to collectively comment on the data set as both raw data and a piece of analysis. Using the three dimensions to reflect on the girls’ writings, the following observations rise out of the data:
Situation (Place)

As stated previously, the girls were given no specific direction regarding place and the concrete physical and topological boundaries that define this dimension. As a result their writing did not clearly define the spaces of their narrated selves, though that of school and that of home are implicit throughout. Only one of the girls, Sandy, specifically mentions the classroom as a context and controlling feature of her friendships: ‘...I was in a class where some of my friends went to hang out with other people and just left me and my other friend.’

This lack of mention can imply two things. First, that there are no situational boundaries influencing the theme of ‘trust’ within the topic of ‘friends’ and that issues, concerns, interests, beliefs, and stories are integrated between the various places of the girls’ lives (home, school, friends’ homes, sport facilities, coffee shops, etc.). However, this lack of mention can also mean the exact opposite. Specifically, that the boundaries are so rigidly defined and are so apparent and obvious that they need no mention.

Interaction (Personal and Social)

The girls were given questions that were specifically directed to help them address both the internal (feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions) and outward (existential conditions such as the environment) aspects of this dimension.

In regards to the personal – internal – slice of this dimension, the girls’ writing showcased certain commonplace threads within their reflecting on the theme of ‘trust’ within the context of ‘friends’.

Whether looking at Amanda’s worry, Audra’s loss of self-esteem, Becky’s recognition that certain personality traits may be annoying, Greta’s feelings of insignificance, Karen’s fear of rejection, or Rachel’s jealousy there seems to be within these writings a definitive relationship between ‘friends’, ‘trust’, and the way in which the girls find and define self value. In contrast, there also is great confidence, hope, and faith in these internal conditions as evidenced by Julie’s belief in a ‘sacred trust’, Jenny’s articulation of specific
actions to allow for trust, Sandy looking to make new friends next year, and Rachel’s self-talk on her own valuable qualities of self.

In looking at the social – external – slice of this dimension, the most over-arching and obvious commonality is that of friends as it is within this context that the girls write. However, two other social groupings, that of family and that of boys, make an appearance as influencing the theme of ‘trust’ within the context of ‘friends’. Jenny speaks to her family offering their opinion on friends’ trustworthiness, and both Karen and Rachel speak to boyfriends in regards to not having one being a social determinant.

**Temporality (Past, Present, Future)**

The girls were directed to reflect on the theme of ‘trust’ within the topic of ‘friends’ in a temporal fashion; specifically, they were asked to comment on the far past, near past, and relative present as well as their hopes for the future in relation to this topic.

When looking at the past, there seems to be nothing from the students’ writing and reflection that is specifically based in their childhood. The ‘past’, both far and near, as written on by the girls does not have a specific temporal label in regards to a time period, year, or place of life. Generic relationships from the past are mentioned in regards to creating a present insight or mindset towards ‘trust’ and ‘friends’. There is also the sense in the girls writing that trust is something that requires time and a temporality all of its own as trust requires ‘...a build up in a relationship overtime that must be maintained’ (Audra). Past friendship relationships and actions within them have led to uncertainty, insecurity, and doubt on the part of a majority of the students (Audra, Becky, Greta, Jenny, Karen, Rachel, and Sandy) and are mentioned to support current actions, thoughts, or self beliefs. In regards to the future, there is a hopeful thread that runs throughout all the narratives for the possibilities and potential for both ‘trust’ and ‘friends’. Overall, the impression is given that the girls’ writing and reflection, and therefore self, exists within a very short time unit.

*****
Within this first data set, then, the features of the three-dimensional framework – situation, interaction, and temporality – are all useful in helping to establish depth to the identified themes (trust, being the one whom people tell things to, betrayal) and the context of these themes within the self.

4.3.4 The Narrated Self - Summation Topic: Friends; Theme: Trust

To further the individual classifications of Bruner’s indicators of self done above in the researcher-led portion of analysis on each girls’ data, in this section I will consolidate the data within each indicator for the purposes of giving a holistic commentary on the girls’ writings and the narrated self.

Commitment

Considering that the commitment indicators of self speak to adherence and steadfastness – or its antithesis – to a line of action (1997: 149), a holistic look at the girls’ stories brings certain revelations when considering ‘commitment’ alongside the theme of ‘truth’ within the context of ‘friends’. Overall, the girls’ are collectively committed to the concept of trust and look at it with both a moral and value compass. The girls’ writings expose their belief that trust is something that is tentative, fragile, but also fluid and evolutionary. Their writing shows their understanding of trust as relational, as something that is both given and earned. They all seem to articulate certain rules around trust that manifest into specific actions or inactions and they all articulate or imply a commitment to these rules.

Resource

Bruner’s definition of the resource indicator of self speaks to the’ powers, privileges, and goods that an agent seems willing to bring or actually brings to bear on his commitments (1997: 149). In light of their overall commitment to trust, the resources the girls narrate range from a willingness to self-sacrifice to both earn and maintain it, the ability to be both positive and hopeful when faced with betrayal, and a romanticized view of what trust can and will do for a friendship. On the flip side, there is also the sense that for some girls, they either possess no resource to maintain their articulated commitment to trust or any resource they do have is overwhelmed by a feeling of inadequacy and unworthiness.
Social Reference

In regards to social points of orientation on self, Bruner’s definition of the social reference indicators names both real and cognitively constructed points of reference (1997: 149).

Considering the ‘real’ groups the girls are looking to in order to validate their understanding and moral legitimacy of trust, it is apparent that friends are the most influential in resource and commitment management. As this writing takes place under the topical heading of ‘friends’, this is not a great surprise, however, there is a certain redundancy and passion to the writing on the influence of friends that is noteworthy. Two other groups that are given credit for legitimizing ‘trust’ values, beliefs, and actions are parents and boyfriends.

In looking at ‘cognitively constructed’ groups, many of the girls’ writings speak to cultural norms and actions, socially validated trust behaviours, and unattached understandings of what a trustworthy individual looks like.

Evaluation

Bruner’s definition of the evaluation indicators of self ‘provide signs of how we or others value the prospects, outcomes, or progress of intended, actual, or completed lines of endeavor’. These signs of self ‘may be specific (as with signs of being satisfied or dissatisfied with a particular act) or highly general’ (1997: 149).

In looking at the girls’ evaluation indicators of self, then, within the theme of ‘trust’ it seems as though the most universal evaluator is the ability to be a steadfast friend, to have a friendship that has longevity and a sense of equality in the give and take of trust. On the other side, the inability to maintain trust and show a commitment with resources to trust, leads to complete devastation of the friendship relationship, creating a lack or break in trust that permeates, maintains and influences evaluation.
**Reflexive**

The second portion of shared data was very much entrenched in Bruner’s reflexive indicator of self, tapping into the girls’ metacognitive self. However, when considering the shared data, it is interesting to note that true metacognitive thinking is only displayed in some of the data. For those girls that truly considered their writing and selves in a metacognitive fashion, their writing was focused on their personal behaviour and actions, the fragility and dependent nature of their self-esteem, and the connection between their personal past, present, and a hopeful future. For those girls who did not engage in true metacognitive reflection, their writing and reflection was externally placed, mostly geared towards the behaviours, morals, and values of their friends.

**Positional**

Bruner’s definition of the positional indicators of self is connected to how ‘an individual locates himself or herself in time, space, or the social order-where one stands in the “real” world’. This type of self indicator becomes ‘salient when we sense a discrepancy between our own sense of position and some publicly prescribed one’ (1997: 150).

It is no surprise that within this indicator of self there is either great certainty or uncertainty in the girls’ sharing of self. They either are comfortable where they stand, feeling equal and up to the challenges of ‘trust’ in friend relationships or they feel awkward, uncomfortable and in an unequal role of value with their peer or friend group.

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Through a consolidation of these indicators of self – commitment, resource, social reference, evaluation, reflexive, and positional – lies a sense of the layers of self at stake within this theme and topical context.
4.3.5 Conclusion

When considering each girls’ individual data and analysis as well as both the summative commentaries included in this section, various conclusive statements on the theme of ‘Trust’ within the context of ‘Friends’ can be made.

First, as ‘trust’ was the theme most identified not only under the context of ‘family’ but throughout the study as whole, the weight it carries as a significant theme emerging from this process in relation to both research questions is noteworthy. Indeed, it was such a strong thematic thread within the girls’ narratives that it made itself known prior to the summative activities, emerging during Lesson 12’s free write and becoming a part of the emergent portion of the curricular design. Trust, then, is a concept at the heart of the stories of these ‘ordinary’ participants at this specific time in their lives and it is a concept that is multilayered in the way that it shapes, controls and modifies the narrative self of each girl. While a communal theme, it also has individual features, specifically how each participant defines trust, believes in trust, identifies factors that influence trust within self and others, and the ripple effect personal life events can have on trust within this context. Trust is the answer to the first research question in regards to emergent themes and perhaps also the answer to the second research question in regards to the relationship between the emergent themes and the educative relationship. Simply put, trust is the emergent theme in regards to the participants’ narratives and this study (to be discussed further in Chapter 6 – Findings and Recommendations).

One of the most interesting conclusions coming from the above narrative sharing is the girls deep understanding and interaction with trust, specifically ‘trust’ within the context of ‘friends’, as a definer of self. There is an evident, almost tangible, understanding of trust as the girls identify its complexities, subtleties and brittle nature. They are aware of trust as an essential ingredient in either making or breaking a friendship and there seems to be an acute awareness of trust as something that must endure but will always be fragile. They articulate the power of trust as a theme of life and self as they speak on it as something sacred, something that needs balance, and something that is intertwined with fear. They articulate beliefs on how actions as well as personality traits can influence whether trust is given or received and as they narrate their stories, the girls establish working definitions of what a trustworthy individual looks like. Due to the prominence of writing on trust, it is
clear that trust is a theme that has the potential to be all-reaching at this age for the ordinary.

In addition, the fact that trust is something that is relational is revealing in how the girls sense of self is linked to others and constructed in a social setting. They speak to instances where trust was broken in the past and the way in which this has coloured and will colour future actions with others. It also seems to play a large role in creating a sense of self-worth in its link to friendship and creating a sense of security and belonging among others. In some ways, the theme of trust and the way the girls speak on it is as something all-influencing - dictating peer groups, social standing, and ease of self within the situation of school. Awareness of and articulation in and around the complexities of the role trust plays within friendship makes it a loaded topic that seems to greatly affect self in its construction, articulations, modifications, and general confidence one has with it and in it.

There was a recognition of the theme of trust early on in this study by both the girls and myself. It was the clear commonality of human experience shared within the first half of the course, helping to guide and shape portions of the emerging curriculum in the second half due to its significance. This was the theme the girls wanted to talk about – needed to talk about – and within their writing, their trusting of self to me and this study, trust is the theme that emerged on top.

4.4 DATA SET TWO Topic: Family; Theme: Love

Using the topical method of sorting data as described in Section 4.2.1, this second data set presents the topic of ‘Family’ and the theme of ‘Love’. ‘Family’ is the second most identified topical classification used by the students to categorize their writing for the purpose of analysis. Within this context of ‘Family’, the theme most girls identified as emerging from their writing is ‘Love’.
4.4.1 Definition: *Topic: Family, Theme: Love*

To clarify, the terms ‘family’ and ‘love’ are labels I created based on the actual language used by the students. This is not meant to show preference in any way over the language used by the girls for their articulations and identifications but was done for convenience and uniformity in data presentation. I decided upon these terms by looking over the language used by the girls and recognizing both the synonyms and antonyms grouped under the same topical or thematic headings. However, when presenting each individual students’ writings under this heading, I will allow for the students’ voice and labelling to lead their data set.

Specifically, in the creation of the topical label ‘family’ no language generalization was necessary as it was the term used by all students. In regards to the thematic label of ‘love’, there was also no need to generalize language as all nine students used the word ‘love’ when articulating this as a theme emerging within this context of their writing.

4.4.2 Presentation of Data: *Topic: Family, Theme: Love*

All participants’ names, and names of people or places identified by the girls, have been changed to preserve anonymity. In regards to presenting the data, I have chosen to present it alphabetically based on the pseudonym assigned to each student. Also, to maintain the integrity of the girls’ voice, their writing is being shared in the fashion it was created, with typographical errors, spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, and text speak. In addition, I have chosen not to annotate with *sic* to aid readability and fluidity.

In this data set, the writings of nine participants will be shared—Abby, Becky, Greta, Jenny, Marianne, Megan, Meredith, Rachel, and Rosanna. In regards to voice variety, four of these girls (Becky, Greta, Jenny, and Rachel) were also a part of data set one.

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Abby identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- *My grandparents are key role models in my life.*

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Abby writes (excerpt):

> Like friends our family have a huge impact on my life, it not an even greater one. Again, it is with no surprise that this topic appeared as often as it did. To me family is quite an obvious topic for me to write about as they are such leading figures in my life so I seemed to write about them quite often.

Abby clearly articulates the importance of her family in her life with no surprise, hierarchically classifying them above the context of the first data set, friends. Speaking generically of her family as ‘leading figures’ and specifically of her grandparents as ‘key role models’ supports and validates the place Abby gives her family in her writing.

In considering Abby’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Abby – Family; Love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>If Abby shows any commitment indicator of self in this passage it is to the understanding of her family as leading figures of her life and to her grandparents as role models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>For the theme of ‘love’ within the context of ‘family’, Abby’s resources appear to be both her grandparents and the ‘family’ she classifies above her friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Both Abby’s grandparents and her ‘family’ are her legitimizing social referees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is nothing in Abby’s writing that truly speaks to this although the implication is there that the value of her endeavours is formed by her grandparents and family.

Abby’s acknowledgement of her family’s ‘huge impact’ on her life shows some reflexivity.

Positionally, Abby acknowledges that her family is a great influence and this would indicate both a sense of belonging to this group as well as a sense of dependence.

BECKY
on the theme of ‘LOVE’

Becky identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- *My brother inspires me.*

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Becky writes (excerpt):

> Reflecting back on my writing, I realised that I had poured out my feeling on how I see my family and how I fit into it all. I noticed that I don’t really fit into my family as much as my brother does because he is a very high achiever and I am underachieved compared to him. It always seems as if he is favoured over me which upsets me and also irritates me to see how I could be if I tried that extra bit harder but when I do, I always seem to fall a little behind as I can never match up to my parents expectations. I look up to my brother. He inspires me. He is so out-going and I just know that he will make the best out of his future career. Ever since I was little I have looked up to him. Besides, he is the only sibling I have and without him, I would be very unhappy.

In writing on her family and the theme of love, Becky’s perception of her family as well as her place in it seems to be a source of conflict and angst among the relationship she has with her brother, the way her brother affects her self-image, and her relationship with her parents. Becky speaks to her brother as an inspirational figure and a source of happiness but also as a standard to which she does not measure up. This standard is one that seems to be dictated by her parents as Becky speaks to not really fitting into her family as she can ‘never match up to her parents expectations.’
In considering Becky’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Becky’s writing shows a sense of commitment to the belief that her brother is the model for who and what she should be. A sense of inconsistency arises within this, however, as her brother is the role model she is committed to but also a source of feeling isolated and inadequate (in comparison). For Becky, her commitments of self are conflicted in this thematic context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>It seems as though Becky’s main resource for self-worth is her parents and her brother and the relationship she describes between the two, a relationship that leaves her with little self value and worth. Because of this, her resources of self seem to be paralysed as her view of self has shifted to what her brother is (as opposed to what she is).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Becky’s looks to her brother and her parents’ relationship with her brother as her point of social reference when evaluating her self in terms of goals and commitments. While this is a ‘real’ social grouping there is also the sense that it has a mythic status for Becky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>When evaluating her self path, Becky favours that of her brother’s over her own, a feeling that seems to be validated by her parents. Becky’s self-evaluation is that she is ‘underachieved’, a disappointment to her parents’ expectations, and an outsider in her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>The metacognitive thinking in Becky’s reflection shows a sense of examination, construction, and evaluation that is based in comparison and dependent on her parents view on what makes a valuable self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Becky perceives her position in the social order as, despite her sibling relationship, an outsider within her family.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greta identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- I am a family girl at heart.
- I have fun and enjoy spending time with my parents and brothers.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Greta writes (excerpt):

I am a different person with my family than I am with my friends. With my family I am alot more casual. They are the people who have seen the worst side of me and still love me. They are the people I feel safe with and know that no matter what I do they will always always be there. My family gets a different 'me' to everybody else....My home and family environment it one of love and support. Sometimes I feel like screaming but I know that I am lucky to have them. We are a very close family...Despite this we have our ups and downs but I know I am always loved. My family have taught me many important lessons. My little brother...has taught me responsibility, my two-not-so little younger brothers...have taught me friendship and my parents have taught me respect and love among many other things.

Greta’s admission of being ‘alot more casual’ with her family than her friends connects well to her admission to being a ‘family girl at heart’ and being someone who enjoys and has fun with her family. Her understanding of unconditional love is clear as is her acceptance of the family unit as something that is dynamic in certain ways, but constant in the elements of love, respect, and care. Her ability to identity and articulate the concrete values she has learned from her family offers further support to the strength of her relationship with her family.

In considering Greta’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Greta – Family; Love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Greta’s writing shows a commitment to the concept of her family knowing a different version of her self than the rest of the world. She also articulates the idea of the family unit working together and coming together to support, love, and assist each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>In her articulation of what she has learned from every member of her family, Greta implies that she also is a valued contributor (though she does not mention specifically what she brings).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Greta’s point of social reference is that of her family, with her parents and three brothers specifically mentioned as a part of this validating group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>In regards to evaluative indicators, Greta’s belief in the love and support, as well as her acknowledgement of the steadfastness of her family despite ‘ups and downs’, speaks to how she views the theme of love within family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>Greta’s metacognitive thinking comes through in her reflection on what she has learned from her brothers and her parents as well as in her understanding and articulation of her family being privy to a different ‘me’ than ‘everybody else’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>There appears to be no discrepancy in Greta’s sense of self within a positional context; there is an implied sense of equality within the family unit she describes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JENNY**

on the theme of ‘LOVE’

Jenny identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- *They shower me with love and protect me.*
During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Jenny writes (excerpt):

...I really do depend on my family though, they help guide me through life and make me feel safe, they're the reason why I'm happy, even if they make me mad. They're the reason I feel at home, they make me feel loved, safe, secure, just because I can be myself around them, they let me be who I want to be. I only feel truly happy knowing my family are happy, their happiness brings me happiness and just makes me feel like I'm glowing. My family love me, I love them back, that's the great thing about families, nearly every family loves and excepts their relatives for who they are and I love that I'm in one of those families, I hope I can grow up to be in a family that loves their relatives as much as my family loves me... In the near past I've seen the effects of inequality at home, but I've still always felt loved, secure and happy. I have gained more dependence as well... What I have learned is that no matter who the person is, love them, make them feel equal, make them happy, life is too short to make mistakes with family.

While Jenny is writing on the theme of 'love', it is interesting to note how many times she uses the word love in her reflection. This seems to reflect a genuineness of this theme as well as the reality of her feelings towards her family and the love they share. Jenny's reflection brings to light how she connects love to her family - through safety, security, equality, unconditionality, etc. – and is a wonderful life lesson on the nature of love in general.

In considering Jenny's writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Jenny – Family; Love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Jenny articulates a commitment to the happiness of her family as well as how this relates to her overall foundation of self-happiness as an indicator of self. She also speaks to the ideal of life being 'too short to make mistakes with family'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>In regards to what resources Jenny allocates to the above commitments, she contributes her own happiness and an ability to love her family despite 'inequality' or 'feeling mad'.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jenny’s family acts as her social guide, specifically in their ability to make her feel loved and secure despite conflict.

Jenny’s reflection shows a sense of being satisfied within her family unit in both good times and bad. Her continuous articulation of the value of ‘happiness’ gives specific weight to her contentment and underscores her conduct in this thematic and topical condition.

In her reflecting on the theme of love within the topic of family, Jenny speaks to being able to be herself around her family. She also describes a sense of growth within her family when speaking of past inequalities through the frame of still feeling their love.

Any positional indicators described are from the ‘near past’, and Jenny’s writing locates her solidly within her family unit.

MARIANNE
on the theme of ‘LOVE’

Marianne identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- If [my sibling] wasn’t born my life would be completely different!

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Marianne writes (excerpt):

My family is always going to be a part of my life no matter what. I don’t get to choose who my family are, but if I were given the choice I would never change them. My family have been there my entire life so far and they’ll be there until the end. No matter what happens, they’ll always be around to return to....I’ve got Mum and Dad. The things they do for me and my brothers is often taken for granted. They drive us everywhere, pay for us to do exciting things often sacrificing things for themselves, try to cook us healthy dinners every night. I sometimes say as a joke, be nice to your children because they’re the who will pick your nursing home. They always want the very best for us and I love them so much for that!
Marianne’s realization of the impact her family has on her life is very tangible in both her direct quote and her reflection. She is aware of herself as both dependent on her family and a contributing member (getting to pick their nursing home!). Her mature understanding of the sacrifice that has been made by her parents is sincere as is her enthusiasm for the family she would ‘choose’ no matter what.

In considering Marianne’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Marianne – Family; Love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Marianne’s articulation that her family will be with her for life as well as her joke about being ‘nice to your children’ show both her love and her commitment to her family as well as a sense of immortality. She also speaks to the sacrifice of her parents and her understanding that she can, at times, take them for granted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Marianne’s appreciation of her parents’ sacrifice as well as her acknowledgement of how different her life would be without her siblings show a sense of self-resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Marianne’s mum and dad legitimize her self and her place within this family unit. As mentioned in her direct quote, Marianne’s siblings also create this place for her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Marianne’s list of what her parents do for her and her siblings – from driving them everywhere to cooking them healthy dinners – as well as her nursing home joke illustrate her points of evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>A strong sense of the value of her family comes through in Marianne’s reflexive paragraph as does her deep appreciation for all that her parents do for her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Marianne seems to write on natural positional roles within the family unit, with the parents in the clear role of provider and the children as dependent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEGAN

on the theme of ‘LOVE’

Megan identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- **...knows me better than anyone [Mam].**
- **He’s not just my brother, he’s my friend.**

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Megan writes (excerpt):

...I have discussed so much in my writing about my family and how they effect and influence my world....I know that without my family none of this stuff means anything, because it is the people I love that makes my life matter. Another theme that ties in with comfort is love, I know that the love I have for my parents and my parents have for me is completely unconditional. Though we love each other so much it leads me into another theme which is irritation, we really do get on each others nerves sometimes, we have fights but I think this is a perfectly normal part of being in a house with somebody, and to do it now and again is good as it helps you get stuff that’s bothering you off your chest....My family is my life and at the end of the day there all I am guaranteed to always have right behind me!

Based on this excerpted reflection, it is clear that Megan has linked not only the theme of love to her family but also that of comfort and irritation. It is interesting to see that she sandwiches love between these themes and it seems as though she understands that with love comes both comfort and irritation. Megan’s outlook on love and her family is positive despite the honesty of conflict. At the end of her reflection, it is the unconditionality of her family’s love that impresses.

In considering Megan’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Megan’s belief in the people she loves making her life matter and her follow-up expression on her family being all she is ‘guaranteed to always have right behind me’ reflect her commitment to family and love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>In speaking on the fights that exist within her family, Megan acknowledges that love is work and it is good to clear the air every once and a while. She also speaks on not just the love her parents have for her, but the love she has for them as an unconditional resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Megan’s family are her point of social reference in regards to familial love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Megan mentions comfort, love, and irritation as her key ingredients to maintaining a loving family unit. Unconditional support is also implicit in her writing in regards to connecting ‘love’ to ‘family’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>Megan’s direct quotes show a close consideration of her familial relationships, a consideration that is extended in her reflective paragraph by a clear articulation of what love looks like to her in her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Positionally, Megan paints the picture of a family unit that is equal and aware of the importance of balance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEREDITH on the theme of ‘LOVE’**

Meredith identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- We used to hate eachother but now we’re best friends.
- Home is so many different things.
- ...Christmas Day...
During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Meredith writes (excerpt):

*I've said it before and I'll say it again that family are hands down the most important thing to me in my life ever ever ever. They have no idea how much I love them but I make sure to tell all of them every single day. I think family must be central to everyone's lives, even if its not always in a good way they're there. You can't just forget your family, its not that easy. They love you. Raise you. Care for you and are the most influential people in making you who you are today. They are the ones you look up to when young and think 'I wanna be like them when I'm big'. Hell. I still do that today and I'm nearly seventeen!*

While Meredith’s reflection is both honest and humorous, it is interesting to consider Meredith’s selected supporting quotes in connection with her reflection on the theme of ‘love’ within the context of ‘family’. While Meredith’s first choice of quotes describes the varied nature of familial relations, her second and third quote are more context driven by locating ‘love’ and ‘family’ within the concepts of ‘home’ and ‘Christmas Day’.

In considering Meredith’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

| INDICATORS OF SELF | RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA  
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Meredith is passionate in her writing on what her family means to her and she shows this commitment by sharing her love with them on a daily basis. She also articulates her belief that family is ‘central to everyone’s’ life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Meredith shares her vision of what a family should do when she speaks on them loving, raising, caring, and shaping ‘you’. She also describes the influence family can have and the role they fill as models for being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>While Meredith looks to her family to legitimize these beliefs, the way in which she states them gives a greater sense of their application, almost as if she is stating universal truths to a universal audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Evaluation**
The value Meredith places on family and what family can and should do is clear in her speaking to them making you what you are and being there as role models to look up to (at any age!).

**Reflexive**
Meredith is very mindful of her place in her family, what she wants her family to be, and how they have and will shape her. The direct quotes she chooses to support her choices also reflect this in regards to what she connects to the topic of ‘family’ and the theme of ‘love’.

**Positional**
In Meredith’s writing, there is a very clear sense of position in regards to role modelling.

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**RACHEL**

_on the theme of ‘LOVE’_

Rachel identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- _I feel safe and secure and I can be completely myself._

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Rachel writes (excerpt):

> Family has a massive impact on who I am. I’ve learned so much from them, my morals, my religious beliefs, and my attitude. A lot of me relates back to my family. Without their love and support I know I would be a very different person.

Rachel’s reflection is very straightforward in regards to her placement of ‘love’ within the familial context. Her acknowledgement of her self being derived from her family is clear as is her belief in this self her family has helped shape.

In considering Rachel’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
INDICATORS OF SELF | RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rachel – Family; Love</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commitment**
Rachel conveys a sense of commitment to her self as shaped and supported by her family.

**Resource**
In regards to resources, Rachel connects her morals, her religious beliefs, and her attitude to the self that her family has worked to shape.

**Social Reference**
For social reference purposes, Rachel looks to her family.

**Evaluation**
There is not a clear sense of evaluation in Rachel’s writing, but there is a general sense that commitment to the mentioned resources work towards this.

**Reflexive**
Rachel, while not writing a substantial reflection, still clearly articulates the influence her family has had on her in regards to allowing her to be herself while also shaping the self she is.

**Positional**
There is not a clear sense of positional indicators of self in Rachel’s writing.

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**ROSANNA on the theme of ‘LOVE’**

Rosanna identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of love as:

- I have a good relationship with my parents for the majority of the time.
- They have to love me because they are my family.
- Needless to say I was devastated, I went home and cried to my Mum all evening.
During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Rosanna writes (excerpt):

*Family has always been important to me, they have always been there and I love them for that. I love the way your family just accepts you for you and don’t try to turn you into something you’re not. I love the sense of security and belonging that I find in my family, we all bring different talents and qualities it and there is a space for everyone. I love the support I get from my family. Within reason they never hold me back and allow me to express myself, even if it means I get in trouble, but I find this a critical aspect of my family. I think I love it so much because I feel safe and secure and loved. Everything I have experienced I have experienced with my family, well the majority of my experiences, I don’t tell them everything! Since I have gone through so much with them I think it’s easier to be myself with them and that’s something I’ve learned from my writing. I hope that I can stay close with my family. I hope that we don’t ever have a massive family argument that can’t be sorted.*

When thinking about the connection between love and family it is interesting to note Rosanna’s expression of a ‘critical aspect’ of family in regards to the fostering of self-expression and the parameters surrounding it; while perhaps being frustrated by getting in trouble, she is appreciative of the system of checks and balances. Her comfort and security in this, and the love that she feels, seem to support the sense of self that she exhibits in her reflection. Rosanna’s connection between the amount of experiences she has shared with her family and her ability to be herself is also insightful.

In considering Rosanna’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Rosanna’s commitment indicators speak to her family <em>having</em> to love her because they are family as well as family just accepting you for who you are and the ease of just being yourself around family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Rosanna’s reflection is full of the resources needed to maintain a loving family unit and whether it is fostering a sense of belonging and security or sharing life experiences, her sense of a loving space is strong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Social Reference

In regards to a point of reference, Rosanna seems to have an implied sense of the universal role of a family. She implies that her parents guide her, allowing her to get herself in trouble if that is what is best, clearly legitimizing her sense of commitment and resource.

### Evaluation

Based on her reflection, it seems as though Rosanna’s greatest evaluation of love within the family is the ability to be yourself and to still be loved.

### Reflexive

Rosanna is extremely reflective both about what ‘love’ looks like in the context of ‘family’ and on her sense of self within her family and because of her family.

### Positional

Rosanna explains that each family member brings ‘different talents and qualities’ to the unit allowing for equality among members and their positioning.

*****

For each of the nine stories presented above, both the participant-led and the researcher-led strands of analysis were presented in an integrated and reflective participant package.

In the following sections, Section 4.4.3. and 4.4.4, *only the researcher voice* will be shared as a means of summarising, creating cohesion, and pulling together a holistic look at the data set.

#### 4.4.3 3-D Viewing Framework – Summation

**Topic: Family; Theme: Love**

As previously stated, to situate this data as analysis within the research, the girls were asked to use Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000: 50-51, 162) metaphorical three-dimensional framework for reflecting on narrative inquiry. This viewing framework was established as a guide for narrative reflection in Chapter Three (see Section 3.8.4). The excerpted paragraphs contain these reflections and their specific responses to the framework concepts of Interaction (Personal and Social) and Temporality (Past, Present, Future) as explained in Section 4.2.1b. Situation (Place) was left out of the specific and directed questions as it was my thought that girls would naturally address this point of the framework on their own; despite this, researcher comments on situation will still be offered.
To consolidate and further the above participant-led strand of analysis, in this section I will use this frame to collectively comment on the data set as both raw data and a piece of analysis. Using the three dimensions to reflect on the girls’ writings, the following observations rise out of the data:

**Situation (Place)**

The girls were given no specific direction regarding situation and the concrete physical and topological boundaries that define this dimension. As a result their writing did not clearly define the spaces of their narrated selves, but there are both direct and indirect acknowledgements of the connection between family, love, and home.

Meredith identifies the concrete location of ‘home’ as direct support for ‘family’ and ‘love’. In addition, she also offers ‘Christmas Day’ as support, an abstract combination of both place and time. Megan speaks to what happens when living in a house with others and Marianne throws in the joking future location of the nursing home.

For the most part, however, the girls to do not specifically tie ‘family’ and ‘love’ to any one place. This is perhaps because this context and this theme transcend a location as they both integrate into, as Rosanna mentions, experience. Experience can perhaps be looked at as an abstract location for ‘family’ and ‘love’ as many other girls allude to this link. In addition, there is perhaps an implied sense of location – home – within the context of family.

**Interaction (Personal and Social)**

The girls were given questions that were specifically directed to help them address both the internal (feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions) and outward (existential conditions such as the environment) aspects of this dimension.

In regards to the personal, internal, slice of this dimension, the girls’ writings on ‘love’ within the context of ‘family’ showcased certain commonplace threads, however there is one thread to which all others seem linked.
The most prevalent commonality revolved around the relief and security and comfort of your family being a place for complete acceptance of self. Whether it is Greta’s casual sense of self when around her family, Jenny’s connection between happiness and being accepted for who she is, Megan’s guarantee of familial support no matter what, Rachel’s declared ability to be herself, or Rosanna’s acknowledgement that her family will not turn her into something she is not, the girls all share an internal belief in the solidity, unconditionality, and permanence of familial love.

While not every girl specifically talked on this acceptance, there lies the implicit connection between family, love, and other internal feelings that are articulated by the majority. Beyond feeling loved, feeling safe, secure, and supported were also mentioned in regards to this personal dimension and the above commonplace thread.

One anomaly outside of this thread is Becky, whom narrates a very different internal condition. For her, her sense of self appears to be at risk within her family unit as she feels unworthy, unimportant and very much the outsider.

In considering the social, external, slice of this dimension, then, Becky’s writing makes an excellent transition as her internal condition is very much a product of the external condition of having a brother and parents with rigid ideals. While Becky very much loves her brother and cites him as a source of happiness, he is also - through parental comparison - the source of her inner discontent.

The nature, then, of the relationships the girls have within their family unit makes up the external condition of this dimension. Beyond Becky, the rest of the girls, while admitting to fights and tensions, speak of loving their siblings and being blessed with parents who are giving and loving.
Temporality (Past, Present, Future)

The girls were directed to reflect on the theme of ‘love’ within the topic of ‘family’ in a temporal fashion; specifically they were asked to comment on the far past, near past, relative present as well as their hopes for the future in relation to this topic.

With the context of ‘family’ being a rather stable and generically ‘given’ temporal unit in life, the girls shared minimally in this area, perhaps seeing familial time as more fluid and less segmented. A few girls even articulate this permanence, speaking on family and familial love and support as being a given condition over the course of a life as well as something they would not change. Within these articulations it is interesting to note that within their writing, the girls show little to no acknowledgement of future factors – such as death – or the reality of other’s situations – divorce, detachment – as a possible impingements to their stable current condition; they are absolutely absorbed and convinced in their current familial situation.

Specifically, a few girls do make mention of temporal qualifications. Meredith speaks on how the young look up to their family, holding them up as a template for what they want to be. Jenny also speaks specifically on the past, mentioning past ‘inequalities’. There are hopes for the future as well with Rosanna wanting to remain close to her family and without argument and with Marianne joking about picking her parents’ nursing home.

Within this second data set, then, the features of the three-dimensional framework – situation, interaction, and temporality – are all useful in helping to establish depth to the identified themes (trust, being the one whom people tell things to, betrayal) and the context of these themes within the self.
To further the individual classifications of Bruner’s indicators of self done above in the researcher-led portion of analysis on each girls’ data, in this section I will consolidate the data within each indicator for the purposes of giving a holistic commentary on the girls’ writings and the narrated self.

**Commitment**

In considering how the girls story of self unfolds in regards to the commitment indicator, these indicators were not overly strong, but, when present, relatively consistent across the board. Generally, there is a clear sense of self being influenced by either the implicit or explicit valuing of family and the love given (or withheld) among a familial unit. In relation to this, the girls do show a clear commitment to the idea of familial love, a belief in what familial love should look like and feel like, and the idea that the family is a safe haven for self.

**Resource**

When looking at the girls’ resources in regards to fulfilling their perceived commitments, their views on what they bring to the above mentioned unconditionally loving family unit express a duality. While they seem to acknowledge that they are contributing members within and to the familial unit, the girls do not articulate what they do to help create and promote such a family dynamic. However, they do articulate what others bring to this commitment. Specifically, the girls’ writings identify others bringing the resources of safety, security, a sense of belonging, and acceptance to the commitment of the unconditional family unit.

**Social Reference**

With Bruner’s definition of the social reference indicators of self focusing in on ‘...where and to whom an agent looks in legitimizing or evaluating goals, commitments, and resource allocation’ (1997: 149) it is clear that on the theme of ‘love’ within the context of ‘family’ the most important legitimizing factor is the members of the family. Parents,
siblings, and grandparents are all mentioned as supporting and maintaining the family unit and the love that exists within it. There is very little consideration of peers or the general population within this indicator based on these reflective writing.

**Evaluation**

Bruner’s definition of the evaluation indicators of self ‘provide signs of how we or others value the prospects, outcomes, or progress of intended, actual, or completed lines of endeavor’. These signs of self ‘may be specific (as with signs of being satisfied or dissatisfied with a particular act) or highly general’ (1997: 149).

The value placed on the endeavours of the family unit to love and be loved are common across the board as the girls’ writing did not truly address this indicator. Generally, the above mentioned resources double as a standard of evaluation, creating an almost cyclical feel around the place of love within families.

**Reflexive**

Considering the girls’ metacognitive observations, perhaps the most shared reflection is the validation of love and family in the process of self-examination, self-construction, and self-evaluation. The girls’ convey a clear, if not specific, understanding of how they have, are, and will be shaped by their family. They articulate clear boundaries as well as supports and acknowledge their ability to grow within the established parameters of the familial unit.

**Positional**

For the most part, the traditional familial roles are what the girls’ writings describe in regards to the positional indicator of self. The girls articulate their parents as the guiding figures and within this positioning, often times convey a sense of equality and balance within the family roles. The girls’ respect their parents’ roles as ‘head of the family’ but also consider themselves as part of the familial dynamics and not beneath them. There is only one specific case where there is clear separation and discrepancy to this balance; Becky perceives herself outside her family unit as well as not worthy of her family.
Through a consolidation of these indicators of self – commitment, resource, social reference, evaluation, reflexive, and positional – lies a sense of the layers of self at stake within this theme and topical context.

4.4.5 Conclusion

Based on the data, the second most identified theme emerging from the students in response to the first research question was ‘love’ within the context of ‘family’.

The topic of ‘family’ being one of the top contexts of the girls writing was in many ways expected. One of the reasons I used it as model topic in my initial directions to the girls is because I felt that it would be a topic of choice whether or not I gave it as an example. The selection of ‘love’ as a theme emerging from this topic was, however, slightly surprising due to the fact that much of the girls’ formative writing within this topic seemed to centre on familial conflict. However, with nine girls identifying love as emerging from their writing on this topic, within this choice there is an affirmation of the power and influence of the family unit on self. During a time when for many teenagers the familial relationship can be all-consuming in its conflict, it would seem that love permeates in its value and is considered by the girls to be more important in regards to life and self than any conflict of will and self. In addition, as a study of the ordinary lives or ordinary girls, there also exists a refreshing and beautiful innocence that permeates their writing and beliefs in relation to their familial unit and their love and support as an unchanging and enduring force.

Just as the first theme/topic pairing was relational in nature, the theme of ‘love’ within the building of the narrative self is dependent on, in this data set, its connection and dependency on the familial unit. Throughout the telling of their narratives, there is a clear understanding in their lives of the unconditional love of a family and how this absolute love influences self. Specifically, the girls articulate a freedom of self when they are with their family, showing a clear relationship between the family unit, love, and self understanding, acceptance and liberty. There is an ease of self when that self is set against a loving familial context. In many ways, family – parents – are described as a given in life,
a solid base from which to operate from and come back to in regards to a testing of one’s true self in the world. However, as in the case of Becky, the opposite can also be true. While it can be supposed that Becky’s parents interact with her and set the expectations they do out of love, it has led her to be extremely self-conscious and self-critical when existing within her family unit. Her true self is not at ease within her loving family unit as they way in which her self needs love does not seem to match with the way in which her parents provide it.

This theme, ‘love’ within the context of ‘family’, is the only one of the three within the data sets to be examined that exists wholly outside the classroom. This is reflective of the fact that the girls’ lives also exist outside the classroom and are multi-faceted in regards to what is influencing their perceptions and creations of self. It is also a reminder that the selves that are presented within the classroom bring experience and life both beyond and unseen in their class work.

4.5 DATA SET THREE  Topic: School; Theme: Pressure

Using the topical method of sorting data as described in Section 4.2.1, this third data set presents the topic of ‘School’ and the theme of ‘Pressure’. ‘School’ is the third most identified topical classification used by the students to categorize their writing for the purpose of analysis. Within this context of ‘School’, the theme most girls identified as emerging from their writing is ‘Pressure’.

5.5.1 Definition Topic: School; Theme: Pressure

To clarify, the terms ‘school’ and ‘pressure’ are labels I created based on the actual language used by the students. This is not meant to show preference in any way over the language used by the girls for their articulations and identifications but was done for convenience and uniformity in data presentation. I decided upon these terms by looking over the language used by the girls and recognizing both the synonyms and antonyms grouped under the same topical or thematic headings. However, when presenting each
individual students’ writings under this heading, I will allow for the students’ voice and labelling to lead their data set.

Specifically in the creation of the topical label ‘school’ no language generalization was necessary as it was the term used by all students. In regards to the thematic label of ‘pressure’, I selected this word in consideration of the following student-generated identifiers:

pressure, pressure, pressure/motivation

*Synonym:* stress, stress, stressful

With three uses of the word ‘pressure’ as their own self-selected thematic label and with three uses of the word ‘stress’ or a derivation of it, I had two clear choices when selecting a label for this grouping. I chose ‘pressure’ as the label for this grouping as I felt as though ‘stress’ naturally falls within the umbrella of ‘pressure’ as a qualifier of it and a condition from it (though I am aware the opposite argument can be made). The girls’ writing on this topic also seemed to support this relationship, the ‘pressure’ of school causing ‘stress’ within it. It is for these reasons that ‘pressure’ is what I selected as the preferred researcher-generated label for this thematic grouping.

4.5.2 Presentation of the Data *Topic: School; Theme: Pressure*

Once again, all participants’ names, and names of people or places identified by the girls, have been changed to preserve anonymity. In regards to presenting the data, I have chosen to present it alphabetically based on the pseudonym assigned to each student. Also, to maintain the integrity of the girls’ voice, their writing is being shared in the fashion it was created, with typographical errors, spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, and text speak. In addition, I have chosen not to annotate with *sic* to aid in readability and fluidity.

In this data set, the writings of five participants will be shared – Karen, Megan, Rachel, Rosanna, and Sandy with Megan identifying both ‘pressure’ and ‘stress’ as themes within her writing. In regards to voice variety, Karen, Rachel, and Sandy were a part of data set one whereas Megan, Rachel, and Rosanna were heard from in data set two.
KAREN

on the theme of ‘STRESS’

Karen identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of pressure as:

- Exams.
- Friendship.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Karen writes (excerpt):

School is a long period in everyones life, everyone has different experiences of it. Some like it, some hate it. I have had a mostly good experience with school. This topic makes me feel good and bad, quite like the topic of family. I feel school can make you feel like you have achieved so much at sometimes and then at others make you feel like such a failure. School is such an important environment in life, it should be way easier to deal with. This topic affects the understanding of myself as it shows me where I can go in life if I work hard and it also shows me what will happen if I fail to work to my best ability. I feel that school is far too academically focused and that teachers should show a bit more interest to their students as human beings and not just as a part of their job they have to deal with. I have discovered that most schools are not interested in their students as much as they should be, if I had teachers...who showed us so much, I would succeed far past my capabilities. This project has helped me to understand not to take too much criticism from your teachers or peers as they do not know you as well as you know yourself.

Karen’s choice of both ‘exams’ and ‘friends’ as her supporting quotes for the theme of ‘pressure’ within the context of ‘school’ shows an understanding of both the academic and social relevance of school. Her reflection continues to support this understanding, as does her articulation of the extremes of school fostering a feeling of either success or failure. There is also a clear sense that Karen is looking for more out of both her teachers and school in general; it is interesting that she makes this observation under the theme of ‘pressure’, establishing a relationship between the three and hinting at the educative relationship.

In considering Karen’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
| **INDICATORS OF SELF** | **RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA**  
Karen – School; Stress |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>Karen’s identification of the school environment as one of the most important in life, and one that should be ‘way easier to deal with’ shows her commitment to the idea to what school is and can be. She ends with a valuable declaration on criticism from others and her commitment to the view that no one knows you better than yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>The resource that Karen specifically mentions is her work ethic and how this ties into her success or failure at school. She also mentions that if others brought their resources to her commitment (the teachers) than she would find more success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>Karen seems to be referencing a group outside her self when speaking about her discovery that most schools are not interested in their students. She also is referencing a larger philosophical order in regards to the purpose and function of school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Karen evaluates all of this through her understanding of how her teachers react and relate to herself as a person. The value of this relation within her teachers increases her overall ability to value her commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflexive</strong></td>
<td>In regards to reflexivity, the interesting part of Karen’s reflection is that she considers what others do and have done before she considers how she feels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positional</strong></td>
<td>Karen’s biggest positional indicator occurs when she speaks on teachers and their lack of acknowledging her as a human being. This clearly shows a lack of positional balance in Karen’s mind with the teachers coming out on top of their students. However, based on her last statement, Karen is eager to dismiss this inequality and put herself above both her teachers and peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEGAN

on the themes of ‘PRESSURE’ and ‘STRESS’

Megan identifies supporting quotes from writing on the themes of pressure and stress as:

- All about working towards passing exams not for the love of a subject.

During reflection/analysis on these themes within the context of her writing, Megan writes (excerpt):

*I finally was able to see that I am not the only student who understand that the education system is definitely far from perfect, I've known that for the last few years now that the majority of teachers want to shove enough information down your throat just so you can pass the end of year exam, very few teach to help the student find a love of the subject. I have always had a “love/hate” relationship with school, I love that I can see my friends everyday and learn about the subjects I love but I hate the “pressure” that is forced upon us day in day out. They make it seem like every piece of homework is going to determine the outcome of your life ad when something is not done, they take it personally! However that is not to put down every single teacher out there, some are great they want you to learn for you not for the test next week, they want you to love the subject like they do.*

Megan identifies both ‘pressure’ and ‘stress’ as themes within the context of school and in her reflection it is clear that both the pressure and the stress come from the way in which learning, knowledge, understanding, and information are passed from teacher to student. It is also interesting that Megan mentions the impersonal nature of school (in regards to passing the exam) on the students’ part versus a seemingly ‘personal’ investment by the teacher (in regards to homework not being done).

In considering Megan’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Megan – School; Pressure &amp; Stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commitment**

Megan’s commitments seem to lie clearly within her thematic choices as she identifies both ‘pressure’ and ‘stress’ in connection to the topic of school. She believes that the school system currently cultivates both of these and she would seem to enjoy something less forced.

**Resource**

In regards to the resources of self, Megan’s reflection focuses on what teachers and the school system can and should be doing in regards to her themes of ‘pressure’ and ‘stress’.

**Social Reference**

Megan makes reference to other students at the beginning of her reflection and it is within this group she places her sentiments on teachers and school.

**Evaluation**

Megan seems to place her value of education, and the antithesis of ‘pressure’ and ‘stress’, in being given a passion for the subject being studied.

**Reflexive**

The most self-reflexive portion of Megan’s writing comes in her description of her love/hate relationship with school and the way in which she feels when she is at school.

**Positional**

Megan shows a clear sense of positioning when she speaks to the teachers taking something personally (work not being done by the students); with this example she illustrates the hierarchy she perceives within school and both the misunderstanding and sense of authority that create it.

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**RACHEL**

on the theme of ‘PRESSURE’

Rachel identifies supporting quotes from writing on the themes of pressure as:

- The cool girls can be intimidating.
- Teachers assume their students don’t know alot.
During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Rachel writes (excerpt):

*School is certainly important but out of all of my topics I think wrote about it the least. I like school; I get on well with most people in my year. Some of them don’t know me well. I’ve met my close friends through school and I can see how school would be a lot harder without them. I was bullied in school when I was younger. I think I’ve learned from it, it’s still a sensitive subject but it has made me stronger. I know if someone tried to bully me now I’d be able to stand up to them. I think others in my year and teachers see me as a nice girl who can be abit quiet but as a friendly a positive attitude. I hope that I continue to do well at school and learn to do well at school and learn not only academically but socially.*

Rachel’s supportive quotes are very telling in her perception of both her peer group and the teachers. Her relation of her past experience with bullying is very honest as is her perspective on how she has been changed by it. Speaking on this topic as well as her relationship with her close friends, the way teachers perceive her, and her overall hope for learning are interesting connections under this heading of ‘pressure’ and ‘school’.

In considering Rachel’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Rachel – School; Pressure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
<td>In regards to commitment indicators, Rachel speaks to a want to learn both academically and socially in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource</strong></td>
<td>Rachel brings a positive attitude to her commitment as well as an understanding of herself as both nice and quiet. She also mentions being able to now stand up for herself as a resource in dealing with the pressure of school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Reference</strong></td>
<td>In regards to a reflection on ‘pressure’ within ‘school’, Rachel’s writing initially situates the theme within her peer group (the ‘cool girls’, those that don’t know her, and her close friends). She also talks about the teachers and their perspectives on her self.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is not a clear sense of evaluation in Rachel’s writing, but there is a sense of her connecting a positive attitude to success in school (both academically and socially).

Rachel’s self inspection in this reflection focuses on the way others see her. Her association between this perception and the theme of ‘pressure’ within school is also telling of her self view.

Positionally, Rachel, in identifying various peer groupings – cool girls, those who do not know her, close friends – insinuates the existence of both an ‘in’ and ‘out’ group. This perception of inequality is interesting to note within this specific context.

Rosanna identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of pressure/motivation as:

- Teacher did give us motivation but it didn’t work for me because the result I got didn’t go towards anything, it was just a piece of paper.
- I can’t wait for 5th year because the pressure will be back on.

During reflection/analysis on these themes within the context of her writing, Rosanna writes (excerpt):

*I feel happy in school because I enjoy learning and I’m open to new experiences. I also like it because it gives me a chance to socialise and interact with my friends and teachers. I think you learn some very valuable life lessons in school like how to deal with people you may not like, the fact that what you expect doesn’t always happen, that you need to work at something to get better at it and to foster your creativity. I think school is a good place to let your talents shine as there is usually an area in which everyone is good at from sports to academics to music. I enjoy letting my talents shine as does everybody I’m sure. Teachers can make school either very pleasant or a horrible place to be. They can make you hate a subject or love it. I feel teachers should encourage and motivate students and should be passionate about their subject because I think this enthusiasm really rubs off on the students.*
Rosanna’s labelling of this theme as ‘pressure/motivation’ and her supporting quotes show her understanding of the positive nature of pressure. Within her reflective paragraph, the life lessons that can be taken from school are insightful and an interesting to hold up next to her thoughts on a teacher’s role. A nice sense of confidence is revealed in her statement on letting her ‘talents shine’ and backed up by her statement on teacher enthusiasm.

In considering Rosanna’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>In identifying her lessons learned, Rosanna speaks to her commitments and the courses of action to which she adheres. Whether it is ‘what you expect doesn’t always happen’ or to ‘foster your creativity’, Rosanna has a clear mind set on her commitments of self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>In regards to personal resources, Rosanna believes in being open to new experience and letting her talents shine. She also believes in enthusiasm as a commodity for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Reference</td>
<td>Rosanna’s points of social reference seem to be a cognitively constructed ‘societal’ group that is paired up with her learned life lessons and her beliefs on what school should be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Rosanna looks towards actions in regards to evaluation, specifically that of letting your ‘talents shine’ and enjoying yourself and what you have to offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive</td>
<td>In thinking about this topic, Rosanna’s take on pressure and motivation within school seems to be laid within these two themes as a positive force. She connects them both to the ability to be yourself and to a reason for succeeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>Positionally, while Rosanna mentions teachers and the role they can play in encouraging students, her tone conveys a sense of respectful equality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SANDY

on the theme of ‘STRESSFUL’

Sandy identifies supporting quotes from writing on the theme of pressure/motivation as:

- I have a lot of homework. I might be up very late to finish it.

During reflection/analysis on this theme within the context of her writing, Sandy writes (excerpt):

When I’m in school I always feel sad or bored because I don’t like it. I hope to do well in life so I have to be in school. Although school is for my own benefit, I felt that its forced on us. Teachers don’t give us an opinion and sometimes it feels that they’re forcing it down our throats. I think other students feel the same and I think teacher feel like they’re better than us and there are a different set of rules for them. I think I have come a long way during the year as I can talk to teacher easier. I think that if we talk to a teacher about a problem they are actually willing to help.

Sandy’s identification of school as a ‘stressful’ place seems to come from both the work requirement and her general interaction, expectation and attitude towards teachers and the difference she perceives between them and herself. Despite being a student who views school as a means to an end, Sandy is able to articulate certain lessons learned from her time at school.

In considering Sandy’s writing, the following revelations of her narrated self become apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS OF SELF</th>
<th>RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENTED DATA Sandy – School; Stressful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Sandy articulates a commitment to doing well in life, which in her eyes is why she has to be in school. She also mentions talking to teachers about a problem as a commitment that has developed within her self this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>In regards to personal resource, Sandy mentions finding the ability within herself to speak to her teachers. She also speaks specifically to the negative resources (in her perception) that teachers use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For each of the five stories presented above, both the participant-led and the researcher-led strands of analysis were presented in an integrated and reflective participant package.

In the following sections, Section 4.5.3. and 4.5.4, *only the researcher voice* will be shared as a means of creating cohesion and pulling together a holistic look at the data set.

### 4.5.3 3-D Viewing Framework – Summation *Topic: School; Theme: Pressure*

As previously stated, to situate this data as analysis within the research, the girls were asked to use Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000: 50-51, 162) metaphorical three-dimensional framework for reflecting on narrative inquiry. This viewing framework was established as a guide for narrative reflection in Chapter Three (see Section 3.8.4). The excerpted paragraphs contain these reflections and their specific responses to the framework concepts of Interaction (Personal and Social) and Temporality (Past, Present, Future) as explained in Section 4.2.1b. Situation (Place) was left out of the specific and directed questions as it was my thought that girls would naturally address this point of the framework on their own; despite this, researcher comments on situation will still be offered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Reference</th>
<th>Sandy gives a lot of power and ownership of her educational experience over to her teachers. With this also comes a point of social reference as there is the sense that they somewhat legitimize her academic experience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Sandy puts value on doing well in life and reluctantly associates school as the process towards this end product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive</td>
<td>Sandy’s main piece of metacognition comes with her identification of how she feels at school, either ‘sad or bored’. While she goes on to explain why she does not like school, the rest of her writing is more reflective on the teachers’ actions than her own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>Sandy makes a clear positional statement when she identifies her belief that teachers feel superior to the students. This indicates that she feels that students are cast in the role of inferiors and that the school environment exists in positional inequality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To consolidate and further the above participant-led strand of analysis, in this section I will use this frame to collectively comment on the data set as both raw data and a piece of analysis. Using the three dimensions to reflect on the girls’ writings, the following observations rise out of the data:

**Situation (Place)**

The girls were given no specific direction regarding place and the concrete physical and topological boundaries that define this dimension. As a result, their reflective writing did not define the spaces of their narrated selves. However, as this thematic categorization is derived from a topic with situational and geographical roots – the school – every reflection acknowledged this dimension as they were all situated within it.

In regards, then, to the actual physical boundaries of the school, Karen is the only student who speaks to this aspect when mentioning that school is ‘an important environment in life.’ Beyond this explicit mention, the girls view the place of school as more of a situational factor in their narration. Without the situational features of school – class work, exams, teachers – there would be no ‘pressure’.

**Interaction (Personal and Social)**

The girls were given questions that were specifically directed to help them address both the internal (feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions) and outward (existential conditions such as the environment) aspects of this dimension.

In regards to the personal – internal – slice of this dimension, there seems to be a shared hope for school to be a place that is not solely about academics; the collective envisions an academic setting that allows for and cultivates the personal realm of feelings, hopes, etc. In addition, Karen speaks on school showing her ‘where [she] can go in life’ and helping her to feel both achievement and failure. In identifying a love/hate dynamic between herself and school, Megan aligns the love part with the social aspects of school and the hate part with the ‘pressure’ of academic rigidity. Rachel places her internal growth after being bullied within this context of school and identifies this past situation as a learning experience. Rosanna takes a positive spin on ‘pressure’ by connecting it to motivation,
learning, and a sense of self satisfaction. And Sandy speaks to school as a place that she feels forced to bear.

Socially, the external slice of this dimension is almost fiercely directed at the teachers and the impact they, as a condition of the environment, have on the girls’ experience of ‘pressure’ within ‘school’. Sandy speaks most vehemently on teachers forcing knowledge ‘down [our] throats’ without allowing for student opinion. Megan also speaks on the sensation of information being ‘shoved’ down her throat by teachers more mindful of an exam than her self as a life. Karen mirrors these sentiments in her comment ‘that teachers should show a bit more interest to their students as human beings and not just as a part of their job they have to deal with.’ On a more positive end of the spectrum, Rosanna calls for teachers to ‘encourage and motivate students and...be passionate about their subject because...this enthusiasm really rubs off on the students.’

**Temporality (Past, Present, Future)**

The girls were directed to reflect on the theme of ‘pressure’ within the topic of ‘school’ in a temporal fashion; specifically they were asked to comment on the far past, near past, relative present as well as their hopes for the future in relation to this topic.

In looking at the past, the girls’ writings are generally reflective over past experience and give loose temporal referencing in regards to speaking to a specific moment or condition. The use of the past tense locates much of the girls’ writing as does the fact that they were writing at the end of the school year. In regards to specific temporal mentions, Rosanna speaks to her lessons learned, Sandy is reflective on how she has come a long way in speaking to teachers this year, and Rachel cites a past experience of being bullied as part of their self stories under this heading.

As for the girls’ sense of the future, their comments are limited, perhaps because it easier to imagine where you have been when you have years of experience behind you than where you are going. For those who did speak on the future, they were generally focused on where they were going in life or on their hopes to do well. The only comment that specifically addresses the future is Rosanna’s declaration that ‘I can’t wait for 5th year because the pressure will be back on.’
Within this third data set, then, the features of the three-dimensional framework – situation, interaction, and temporality – are all useful in helping to establish depth to the identified theme and the context of these themes within the self.

4.5.4 The Narrated Self - Summation Topic: School; Theme: Pressure

To further the individual classifications of Bruner’s indicators of self done above in the researcher-led portion of analysis on each girls’ data, in this section I will consolidate the data within each indicator for the purposes of giving a holistic commentary on the girls’ writings and the narrated self.

Commitment

Bruner’s definition of the commitment indicator of self speaks to how one adheres to a line of action or belief (1997: 149). The girls do not speak too specifically on commitment indicators but operate more in the general realm in their articulation of the belief that school is a place for both academic and social development. Expanding on this, there also seems to exist the agreed upon sentiment that school is not doing enough to promote this development in a positive and nurturing fashion. This, however, is not a surprise in writing that is focused on connecting the theme of ‘pressure’ to ‘school’.

Resource

Bruner’s definition of the resource indicator of self speaks to the ‘powers, privileges, and goods that an agent seems willing to bring or actually brings to bear on his commitments’ (1997: 149). For resource indicators, there is a sense from the girls’ writing that attitude is everything. Whether the belief is that a positive attitude or hard work will allow for the maintenance and adherence to the aforementioned commitments or that the teacher’s attitude will determine the ‘pressure’ felt within ‘school’, attitude is the determinant, the resource supporting or undermining the commitment.
Social Reference

In writing on ‘pressure’ within the context of ‘school’, the girls naturally look to their peers as a point of social reference in regards to legitimizing perceptions, resources, and commitment indicators. For the most part, their peers confirm and reinforce the existence of a school-generated pressure and the role both exams and teachers have in creating it. There seems, in this, to be a sense of shared and communal identity among the girls’ selves as students and what the student experience is.

In addition to peers, another point of reference in creating legitimacy within the identified resources and commitments are the teachers. The girls recognize that an enthusiastic teacher who loves their subject and is aware of their students’ individuality can contribute to their developing self and alleviate pressure within this theme/topical grouping. From the girls’ writing, the opposite also seems to hold true; teachers without enthusiasm and interest legitimize the need for the articulated positive expectations, reinforcing the need through deficit.

Evaluation

Bruner’s evaluation indicators of self look to how value is established and ‘how satisfied or dissatisfied one is with lines of endeavour’ (1997: 149). There is the implicit sense of the girls’ being evaluative on what school could and should look like as they share their thoughts on ‘pressure’ within this context. They all have a sense of what education is and what they would like it to be, a sense they connect and link more to their teachers and the educational system than their selves. There is a clear sense of dissatisfaction with the role of the teacher in facilitating a nurturing environment as the girls write on a perceived sterility within their classroom experiences. For those that do write on specific evaluative indicators, the girls look towards attitude as a sign of how the endeavour of school may be completed with less pressure.
Reflexive

In regards to Bruner’s reflexive indicators of self, while there is some metacognition evidenced in the girls’ reflections, particularly around their attitude and perception towards school, invariably the girls tended more towards reflexive thinking on the part of others than on themselves. Specifically, they reflected on the actions, attitudes, and directions of their teachers as affective towards their experience of ‘pressure’ within the context of ‘school’.

Positional

Bruner’s definition of the positional indicators of self connects to an individuals’ sense of his or her place in the social order. This type of self indicator becomes ‘salient when we sense a discrepancy between our own sense of position and some publicly prescribed one’ (1997: 150).

There is a clear sense of discrepancy articulated in the girls’ reflection when considering their understanding of where they are located in the ‘time, space, or...social order (Bruner 1997: 150) of this thematic context. For the most part, teachers are seen as being in a position of both authority and power, and the girls speak to the mismanagement of both of these in regards to the classroom hierarchy. While feeling clearly substandard in the school setting, there are instances where the girls feel positionally respected, valued, and equal; these instances are tied to teachers taking an interest in not only the subject they are teaching but in their students as something more than seat fillers.

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Through a consolidation of these indicators of self – commitment, resource, social reference, evaluation, reflexive, and positional – lies a sense of the layers of self at stake within this theme and topical context.
4.5.5. Conclusion

In regards to this as a study of the themes of self within an ordinary teenage population, it is no surprise that ‘school’ was identified as the third context of self, nor is it a surprise that within this topic ‘pressure’ was identified as the predominate emerging theme. It should be noted, however, that this study was conducted during the non-academic 4th year Transition Year, a year considered to be less stressful as it is non-exam preparatory; had the study been conducted during the 5th or 6th year, the number of girls writing on this topic/theme combination may have been skewed differently.

In looking at the girls’ writing, the theme of pressure and its resulting stress seem to be attached more to the academic relationships within school than the academic work itself. Specifically, the writings seemed to centre in on the role of the teacher in the classroom and how the attitude and relationship the teacher chooses to have with their students influences the perception and reality of academic pressure on the part of the student. There is a clear sense of this relationship as both a positive and negative force in the minds of the girls; there is also the sense that the girls feel as they are not in control of the relationship, playing the more receptive role within the power dynamic.

In addition, within their discussion of the role of the teacher, there is an understanding of the educative relationship and the feeling that when the classroom becomes impersonal, ownership and interest in the knowledge at stake is at a minimum. The girls describe their classroom experience as transactional, with the teacher ‘shoving’ knowledge down their throats. As a result, the girls describe a classroom experience that revolves around the pressure of regurgitation without self specifically when the teacher fails to acknowledge the existence of self.

Within the theme of ‘pressure’ within the context of school there exists a polarity, a clear sense in the minds of the girls of the good and the bad. In some instances, the pressure is a positive force, providing momentum and direction with the support of a nurturing and interested teacher. In many cases, however, there is a sense of school as a pressure that can not be overcome as it is not a place for self.
4.6 CONCLUSION

Seventeen stories shared, seventeen ‘books’ to captivate and continue my love of the emerging themes and lessons learned from life. Shared individually but viewed – in this chapter – collectively, these narrative and the three data sets that were presented (Friends/Trust; Family/Love; School/Pressure) offer key conclusions of self as they provide preliminary answers to the research questions of the emerging themes of self and the educative relationship (more specific and directed answers to the research questions will be given in Chapter 6 – Findings and Recommendations).

In specific regards to the data sets, firstly, the biggest conclusion to be drawn from the first data set, the set that looked at the theme of ‘trust’ within the topic of ‘friends’, is that the concept and conflict of trust is so resounding within the lives of this set of ordinary teenage girls. Without prompting, trust was the topic that emerged from their writing, and with their guidance it was a theme I picked up on in regards to instruction. It was a theme that was identifiable and relatable to most of the girls within this study and the role it has played in shaping self is notable. The way in which the trust relationship between and among the peer group impacts the classroom self and the ability for students to engage in the knowledge process and classroom community is also apparent in the shared reflections. The identification of trust as a theme of self also has implications for student needs within the educative relationship and could perhaps points towards an area for cultivation within the student-teacher and student-knowledge relationships; the students need to trust not only the teacher but the knowledge that they are being asked to own.

Second, in regards to the second data sets exploration of the theme of ‘love’ within the topic of ‘family’ the most striking conclusion is not that the family offers a safe haven for self through their love and support, but that the girls are aware and consciously making decisions of self around this home base. By acknowledging that for them familial love is unconditional, these girls create clear boundaries for their actions of self both in and out of the home. The freedom of self described within the family unit is seldom showcased without, but perhaps there is something to be said for the socialized middle-of-the road self that is described within a communal environment, particularly the school. This freedom of self has interesting implications when considering it within the educative relationship and while this may be a hard rode to forge, their certainly is a place for love within the
classroom, whether it is love for the knowledge at play or a sense that there is genuine interest within the personal realities which exist.

Within the third data set to be shared, 'pressure' within the context of 'school', there is much to be said on the influence of the teacher on the perception of the demands of the classroom, and due to the context of this theme, its relevance to the educative relationship is explicit. While the girls are at the age to know that school should be challenging, they are also at the age to realize that their selves should be included and acknowledged within content selections and instructional choices. And the language the girls use to narrate this realization is not merely observational, it is fierce and impassioned – strong language for a strong belief. Without directly articulating the importance of a positive, balanced, and mutually cultivated educative relationship, what the girls narrate is this exact sentiment. They understand the importance of the role of the teacher in regards to attitude and they highlight and emphasis its link to the emerging theme of pressure, correlating a positive teacher attitude with the student perception of less pressure.

In considering the presented data as a whole, one of the greatest conclusions is on the value of the opportunity for self-revelation and disclosure. Within the environment of trust established for this study, and with the stated purpose of this revelation for the purpose of self-reflection and growth, there is clear evidence of discovery learning within the knowledge relationship with self. The process of this study for the students, in regards to the initial creation of formative data and the reflective design of the summative data, reveals the benefit of gauging self-knowledge and learning. This process of interacting with self in terms of acknowledgement, acceptance, and transformation as evidenced in the summative paragraphs showcases a resiliency about what has been and a tangible feeling of hope about what will be. There is an articulated sense of self construction in the temporal. And within this construction, there is the sense of validation of voice, self, and being.

In answer to the first research question on what themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student-learner) of a personal narrative, the simple answer this chapter provides is that Friends/Trust; Family/Love; and School/Pressure are the themes of this ordinary teenage population, themes that have story and life, relevance and weight.
In regards to the second research question and the relevance of these themes to the student-teacher-knowledge relationship, the simple answer that this chapter provides is that by articulating a life concerned with and revolving around trust, love, and pressure, the students have articulated three key concepts in helping to determine the type of educative relationship formed and cultivated within the classroom. In addition, the identification of these themes provide a window into the knowledge world of the student, a window that can be used to strengthen and root each of the three individual components of the student-teacher-knowledge relationship and all the relationships existing within.

The more complex answer is found in the merging of these two simple answers.

Specifically, through the articulation of these themes of self, the role of the student within the educative relationship is strengthened in the aspect of it being a role populated by individuals with an acknowledged depth of life typically never accounted for in the classroom. By acknowledging this depth and becoming sensitized to the complexity that exists on the other side of the desk, perhaps a greater sense of equalization can occur within the classroom, where neither the teacher nor the knowledge is leading the way, but where there is a sense that all three points of the triad are rooting within the reality of each other. With love, trust, and pressure at the core of the student-teacher and student-knowledge relationships, a stronger, perhaps more real, educative relationship could be formed.

These are the conclusions drawn from the collective voice; within the collective it is necessary to fully acknowledge the process and product of life and self that each individual participant engaged in throughout the course of this study. For this, Part Two of the Data Analysis (Chapter Five) will look at one participant’s narrative of self. The implications of these simple conclusions will then be discussed in relation to the merged data set – Part One & Part Two – in the Findings and Recommendations chapter, Chapter 6.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the more dramatic and game-changing climaxes in Ken Kesey’s novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest is when the swaggering yet tragic hero McMurphy leads the institutionalised patients out to sea on a fishing expedition; McMurphy, however, does not lead them back in. He, himself, is led back by the patients, patients who are no longer insipid characters, but rejuvenated men. Due to events in the sun and on the sea, the patients, ever a characterless collective prior to this moment, regain their manhood, their individuality, and the momentum of their personal lives.

This moment of transformation — from collective to individual — is also a significant moment within any classroom. The moment when the faces become names and the names become lives. As a teacher, I waited for this moment, always doubting it was on its way but relieved, refreshed and revitalized when it came year after year. As a research-practitioner, this moment contained even more weight as I was gambling my entire thesis on it. For while I knew I would be able to gather data on the collective community, I was uncertain if individuals would emerge from the data in a way that would be relevant to a study interested in themes. However, at the end, I was led back by seventeen individuals and this chapter is the story of one of them.

5.1.1 Review of Data

As this chapter is written in partnership with Chapter Four and in response to the first research question – what themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student) of a personal narrative? – the review of data presented in Section 4.1.1 is also relevant to framing this chapter. However, as this chapter is interested in the specific insights to be mined from the individual life and not the generalities and similarities of the previous chapter, certain features that are contextually pertinent need restatement.
In regards to the data collected, I have spoken previously about the two types of data received from the students, the formative and the summative. While Chapter Four presented almost exclusively the summative data from this cohort of girls, this chapter will present the formative and summative data of one participant in an uninterrupted and organic fashion.

The formative data refers to the writing produced during the course of the year as an extension to classroom lessons and instruction. Each lesson had an extending writing prompt that allowed the students to, through their writing, independently continue their interaction with the topic of the day. However, I was always very clear to let the students know that it was their choice whether or not they wanted to write and I continually reminded them of their freedom to interpret and go wherever they wanted. Hence, my prompts were, for some of the girls, simply an invitation to write. Their formative writing reflects these choices, thoughts, and personal expectations of self. In regards to the research questions of this study, the formative data speaks to the ‘telling’ of self.

The summative writing, then, was done at the close of our classroom session with the girls turning their work into me over the summer. With the instructions to interact with their writing as a teacher would, searching out points for comment and direction and identifying topics and themes of self, this reflective task was only as purposeful as the girls chose to make it. This summative piece is where the participant-led stages of analysis took place (see Section 4.2) and, in regards to the research questions, speaks to the ‘reflection and analysis’ of self.

While Chapter Four focused in on the summative data, each girl involved in this study also wrote formatively for a year, putting her heart, soul, and life to paper for the purpose of this project, creating a set of data that overwhelms and inspires for all it reveals. As a data set, there is a little bit of magic in what I have been given by my students – my participants – and while it cannot all be shared here, it is important to me to acknowledge such a gesture of faith and trust.
5.1.2 Data Selection

Sitting amongst the girls’ portfolios, there is a deep sense of privilege within me, the privilege one feels at being unashamedly welcomed into the dusty corners and junk drawers of a true self without even being asked to bring flowers or step with care. This sort of trust is special. It is something I have experienced at intervals throughout my teaching career and it is unique in the way it warms and wrenches the heart, always leaving a weighty reminder. These students – these research participants – are not just papers to mark or a case to study; they are lives being lived in all their glory and shame. And to select one – just one life – to showcase for the purpose of showing the true beauty of the data to contrast the more clinical presentation of the previous chapter, well how to go about choosing one life over another? Luckily, there is the data, and with it as my guide, Christy’s story is the one that emerges for the telling.

Out of the seventeen girls submitting complete autobiographical portfolios, only three did not identify one of the topic/theme pairings (Friends, Trust; Family: Love; School: Pressure) presented in Chapter Five – Heather, Lauren, and Christy. However, both Heather and Lauren did identify the topics of Friends and Family as emerging from their writing. Christy’s topic choices (Confidence, Discovering Who I Am, Control, The Past, Anxiety) along with her thematic qualifiers were true outliers among the data set, with only ‘confidence’ being shared with one other student. This made her the most natural choice for a chapter interested in delving beyond the chorus of similarities to validate the individually personal narrative arising from one student’s holistic data set. And it will be her unprocessed formative and summative writing that will be shared in this chapter, her story that will unfold.

However, with Christy materializing as the self to uncover, so did a concern about her as the outlier representative of ‘ordinary’ teenage girl life. Not because of her life circumstances or wealth of writing – which were common among the class – but because of her voice. Christy writes in a fashion that makes English teachers sigh. Not only does she speak to the ‘what’ of her life, but the way she surrounds, presents, and unpeels these instances of self are exquisite – not only a thinker and a writer, but an artist as well. So I
present her self with the caveat that the ordinary does exist within her extra-ordinary frame, the extra-ordinariness providing a certain sustenance to the self about to be exposed.

With over fifty pages of hand and type written data, then, the culling of Christy’s self has been done with her help. Formatively, for the prompts she wrote on and chose to include within her portfolio, I have excerpted the portions she highlighted when creating her personal analysis and presented them with context when needed. Summatively, I have included Christy’s work in its entirety – introduction, topical/thematic reflections, conclusion.

5.1.3 Chapter Contents

This chapter showcases the depth of the data received by presenting the formative and summative writing of one student – Christy. It is also where the ethnographic element of this study materializes as I will mirror the journey – and risk-taking – of all my students by lending my own voice, experience, and reflexivity throughout the data presentation and discussion. The reminder is given here that while such an intimate look into the lives of our students is not necessary, what is necessary, and what this research is interested in, is creating the awareness that complexity and experience do exist with each student, a reality that needs recognition and validation within the educative relationship.

This chapter first chronologically presents a substantial portion of Christy’s formative writing in partnership with my own ethnographic tellings. Her summative writing is then showcased in full, offering both her analysis and reflection. The chapter then provides my own commentary and observations on Christy’s writing using the frames for analysis established in Chapter Four – Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional frame and Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self. Christy, herself, will then provide a response to the chapter’s contents and her experience of it a year after it was created. The chapter ends, then, with specific conclusions drawn from the sharing of one student’s story.
5.2 THE DATA

In regards to sharing Christy’s writing, I have chosen to present it as it was created and received over the course of the school year with the formative data leading to the summative.

Christy’s formative writing tells the story of her self as process, given over in loose response to my weekly writing prompts and with a burgeoning sense of trust. This evolutionary writing reflects not only Christy’s self but also the potential influence on self articulation and revelation a classroom and curriculum built around humanistic and nondirective learning and teaching models can have. Different threads and thoughts run throughout every piece, weaving the tale of an ordinary girl reacting, responding, and reflecting on both the life she has been given and the life she has created. As Christy speaks, the story that unfolds is one of the expected and the unexpected, the sweetness and bitterness of what it is ‘to be’ – ‘to be’ sixteen year old Christy at these moments in her specific world.

Christy’s summative writing comes from a place of intimate distance with her formative writing and narrated self and reveals both a critic and champion of self. Crafted in retrospect at the close of our class and in response to the reflective directions given for the autobiographical portfolio, Christy’s summative work shows a painstaking analysis of her formative writing. The topics and themes she carefully plucks from the strings of her self are both starting and ending points in her articulation of self past, present, and future. Her reflections and frames create a moral to her story just as they evoke a commentary on the collective self.

And with this formative and summative exposure of self comes the certain truth of what a life is. Christy’s story, as it evolves, becomes deeply personal as she shares her realities and the impact of these facts of her life. In her writing there is pain, uncertainty, sadness and hope as she strips away the walls she has built around her self and family, a family in crisis due to parental addiction. What follows below is intimate, vulnerable and comes from the most private level of self of an extremely private self. Christy’s story is one that will leave an impression, not just for the facts it contains, but for the way in which she thinks about and around all that encompasses who she is.

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To maintain the integrity of Christy’s voice and to replicate my experience of interacting with her writing, all of her work is being presented in the fashion it was created - with typos, spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, and text speak preserved. I have chosen not to annotate with *sic* to aid in readability and fluidity. In addition, all identifying names of people or places used by Christy in her writing have been changed to help preserve anonymity. In regards to this as an ethnographic telling, my thoughts precede Christy’s writings and are distinguished through the use of bolded italics.

5.2.1 Formative Writing

As mentioned above, the writing shared below come from those responses that Christy chose to include in her autobiographical portfolio (a scanned copy of the parts of the original may be accessed in Appendix C). Specifically, the excerpted nature of the writing reflects Christy’s own choices in highlighting ‘significant’ thoughts that connect to and/or supports her topical and thematic decisions.

Our second class together and I am struggling with the girls’ names. Oh, some have made themselves known, but it is those that hide along the back wall that worry me. Instruction today is meant to start developing the trust relationship. The class is asked to respond to the prompt ‘what do people see when they see you’? My first piece of writing comes in from Christy, handwritten and with a picture of a Barbie doll drawn in the margin with the notation ‘you are too human to reach these standards’ alongside it.

I have never been so conscious of how I look till adolescence strolls by and suddenly you realise you don’t look like these worshipped models and what to do?...I am of course not alone, who doesn’t have insecurities. I’m so very short, stubby maybe a better word. My teeth are crooked and do not match the beaming smiles splashed in photos...But it depends how you look at these things, maybe I’m just petite. I can lust over high heels and not worry about towering over people. My teeth give me character, they’re not tipped with white but perhaps I’d rather be un-Christy with a mouthful of perfectly aligned veneers....But self worth and confidence I’ve finally accepted is gained on your own. I get more confident when I experience life and surprise myself. I feel good about myself when I
achieve. At the end of the day physical beauty fades, appreciate it while you have it yet cultivating inner beauty is so much important.

Today I shared a story from my own high school experience of judging and being judged. I connected the story to the popular television show the X-Factor. Christy’s handwritten response to this prompt is four pages and includes two provoking pictures: a girl with crosshairs over her face, and a ladder with two hands hanging on and the words ‘not good enough’ repeated on each rung.

People do not have time to search one another as we have skilfully trained our eyes to search within ourselves. However it is to be expected, as I begin to know others, ironically the less and less I notice them....Brushing past a stranger it’s a little naive of me to think they travel through my face, clothes, body, that stubborn pimple and JUDGE....When I am so restricted in self consciousness, I lose any essence of who I am. I don’t want to be edited to conform to other’s opinions. I remember being younger, and my eyes didn’t shift like shaken marbles around a room of people. I wasn’t threatened, shyness as all children can shift into wasn’t attached to how I looked.... As I’ve grown older, the attributes of childhood ignorance have shed and now I am quick paced thinker of my next decision based on how people will react. It seems like the less life experience brought less questioning of who I was....I am limiting who I am by who I think I am. But girls are fragile, we prep and cultivate an outfit, a hairstyle, make-up, overly think about possible opinions....A put down will linger and stir within us, it will be shelved in the back of our minds ready to be delved on to us at low points...Compliments will seem suspicious, untrustworthy....It’s sad we can’t be more honest and confront times when we feel insecure rather than try and deflate others to feel better. I think I should give up comparing myself to others and in doing that maybe relaxing into who I am/or feel most at ease being will fall into place.

It has been a month since I have seen the girls. Today I introduced the idea of learning into these discussions of self. Christy finishes her response during class time. I am beginning to know what to expect from her and have started to save each of her pieces to read as the last in my stack.
Why I learn is a mixture of for my own benefit and for my school reports! I take pride in learning but to say I sit at my desk and learn because I truly want to can’t be said. I see learning as necessity, if the topic of learning is something I find inspiring and captivating, I can never quench my interest in it. This part of learning does not feel rigorous but refreshing and ignites a curiosity. If we could learn what held our interest, not negativity towards school curriculum would exist. Learning can feel exhausting, a chore and if no interest is attached, incredibly boring. But why do I learn these subjects with pessimistic feelings attached....The hard work of learning subjects you dread can supply good grades. However learning something that infuses dedication to understanding and instills growing interest can be rewarding and can only enhance who I am as a person and how I learn.

*We started class today with a clip from the movie Good Will Hunting. In it, Robin Williams tells Matt Damon, ‘You’re just a kid, you don’t have the faintest idea what you’re talking about.’ We have an amazing discussion refuting this statement and I ask the girls what they know more about than me. When they finally open up to the idea, the list they come up with is extensive! I ask them to continue our discussion in their writing, sharing personal experiences, experiences they have learned from, that are ‘unique’ to them. In this typed response, Christy begins to open up, testing the waters of trust, laying the ground work for what is to come.*

The hardest thing in life I find is to stay in the present....I remember saying I never wanted to grow up, I think sentiments of that I have stayed. I’ve always been weary of not wanting to step ahead of my age. I remember pretending I wasn’t allowed wear heels to a party much my friend’s sympathy when in truth I was rather conscious and anxious I was growing up too fast....I think the quickest harsh reality I learned when growing up was simply my parents weren’t these shining examples of perfection, it’s obviously not a feasible expectation! But I think the environment I was apart of was not all that healthy. I don’t blame my parents for not being capable of knowing the ins and outs of how their own open struggles were inevitably weighed on me....Because it has effected me, I acknowledge now, despite loving my parents it made me as a child and as a teenager unconfident in trying new things or socialising because a foundation of security was not there for me to return to if things went pear shaped.
It’s mid-November and the class and Christy are starting to become comfortable with each other, the writing, the thinking, and the sharing. Christy has started to just write, generally guided by the prompts, but more for herself it seems. I am glad for her trust.

Can anybody really live life to the fullest? Sometimes the romantic in me is convinced, tomorrow I’ll live like its my last day...Living life to the full isn’t so much a persona, it’s not as much of a walking passport of knowledge and experience (whilst the bungee jumping thrill seeking kind are completely enviable!). Perhaps it has dawned on me that is a state of mind, a mentality....I don’t think we can live without regrets. We can live without unhearing them from the depths of our minds memory sand bank....some moments in life are sweetened by accepting things happen for a reason. I never try and ponder of reasons, establishing some unknown cause of fate feels somewhat comforting. Yet at times I would not insult other’s situation with this explanation, somethings are simply incomparable to being inevitable, they’re simply unfair.

It’s the Tuesday before the American Thanksgiving holiday and I structure my lesson around the idea of thanks. The girls enjoy it, though are a bit frightened by being asked to think of things in themselves and their own way of being that they are thankful for.

So who am I? Who is this person I am referencing to. I did a self portrait of myself during one of my consuelling sessions and it was funny because I drew my face, with another face wedged between my forehead. It dawned on me that perhaps not drawing a body as apart of my self just demonstrates how separate I view my body and mind. I seperate the two, I am much too engrossed in my head, thoughts, my ideals. I am immensley private. I’ve mentioned before how unconceivable a facebook seems!...I love reading something that I appreciate of both my parents is the value they’ve always placed on books...I love people and every since I perfect my grandmother’s accent as a child – I love accents!...Music that I love is so diverse and eclectic. I laugh about the obsession with Michael Jackson I developed when I was seven...Quirky films like *Amelie* or *Little Miss Sunshine* are my favourites. CGI effects and explosions don’t interest me, I like characters and feeling engrossed in their lives....I love pop culture-esqu things, and iconic products.
Now that we have a strong community, I am beginning to revisit topics - the curriculum is spiralling! – and the class session today on significant life events resonates with Christy.

In these past sixteen years, everythings that I’ve experienced they have crafted me into who I am. I wouldn’t change certain parts of me, because I do believe what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger. Pain can turn us into hard bitter souls with little hope....The mind is the most powerful force that must be cherished and nourished. Our way thinking has such an effect, it defeats our dreams and our hopes and it can be our worst enemy....Of the saddest moments of my life; my parent lying on the floor drunk and the haunting periods of time when it seemed the only option was for them to continue and the rest of the family to disintegrate and move out. As Robert Frost once said ‘LIFE GOES ON.’ And keeping going is the only predictable running current life will always do. Now my parent is sober and despite days when I feel anger or love and guilt I am at peace right now with feeling at times conflicted. It has made me stronger, sometimes I don’t acknowledge my journey enough. I think I have realised the forgiving of others and myself, the ones I value most, accepting their mistakes is probably in the future a great investment. I’m scared of being hurt again yet the mass of love I have for my parents seems to prevail over all. I just want to push forward, yet not deny myself of this journey to make things ‘easier’. I just want to appreciate what I have, as I have encountered this rush of wanting to stay in the moment and know no time was wasted.

It is the start of the New Year, our fifth month together. Christy’s trust in me now is implicit and her writing begins to reflect this as I receive five handwritten pages in response to the idea of ‘resolve’.

In ways I have found the person I was hiding from this past few months. I have finally dug deep to the root of who the person is that was smothered by layers. This person is flawed, she wants to be liked, and in being liked has formulated this person who wasn’t hard to like, but hard to know....It’s unappealing, unwinding the streams of disguise so tightly wound anticipating the truth. It’s like sitting with a map trying to follow the starting point to the present, and re-live the bumps along the way. Figuring out, I’d been almost leading a double life for unnervingly many years and for most of my school was self-explanatory thing. Only after living with my parent’s addiction, can I understand its manifestation into
my life, my being and it’s imprint on my way of thinking. It is strenuous though reserving this part of my life from friends, but trying to hold back it’s part played in who I am was impossibly done without feeling worse...I don’t know why exactly, hiding it was definately a coping mechanism, a defence. But I was terrified of displaying true emotions, I programmed showing what I felt as weak and the vulnerability I’d have to experience would be so open and bare. I wasn’t able to be myself in school. I tried to fade in...Attention on me became a pressure....This anxiety about home-life, school-life was being filtered and released through dreaded reading aloud. I could control not putting up my hand, or not looking for attention. However, reading aloud was this unpredictable light switch of day dreaming in class to instant focus on the sound of my voice. The yearning to be seen as ‘fine’ was pressurizing but in reading aloud I felt as though every inch of me was being examined....I imagined people seeing right through me....Were people really going to begrudge me for stumbling over a word, decide I was strange and unravel that all wasn’t what it seemed? No. I was a good reader before this fear, comfortable in this situation...It was hard that my anxiety had to be unleashed in front of a room full of people....I want to change or perhaps let down walls. I can’t transform into an explosive personality, thats not me....Everyone wants to be liked, but I also want to find a relatability in who I am...It is much to exhausting over analysing about how my next move will seem to others. Vulnerability can be a strength rather than a weak point. It is hard being so secretive and difficult to ‘work out’. I didn’t feel too fond of who I am when someone commented they couldn’t imagine me having parents!....I’d find a friend like myself unbearable. A realism to a person, an imperfection, an inner-truth doesn’t have to feel like some gruesome exposure but an opening to them as a person....Yet what am I so desperately afraid they’ll find out? What the world already knows? I have flaws, that my life isn’t perfect, and that I sometimes struggle to handle the ups and downs like everyone else. In this new way of thinking my high standards seem appropriate for a robot to master, being devoid of mistakes and vulnerabilities makes for a boring person, and it’s a little naive of me to try and hide such a universally experienced aspect that I should embrace and empower to feel freer and what really is ‘normal’.

I hate how closed up I am. How controlling I’m being, trying to be tight, weightless. Refusing to leave an imprint of who I am because it’s easier. I wonder if everyone analyses me as much as I do them? Or do I anaylze the way people analysse them. I like things solid, no gaps. Sometimes I’d rather be with friends that know me intricately than
with a group of people who know so little. Why do I see it as so bad to be a little flawed when I appreciate it in so many people.

*Today's lesson is on the abstract concept of home. To frame it, I speak on my own search for a home away from home. The girls are responsive to the idea of the safe places we create for our self and the difference between a 'house' and a 'home'. Christy writes four handwritten pages.*

I think of my parent's addiction as intangible, untouchable, elusive, enclosed in a glass case. It's blaring volume on mute, it is being powerless and useless. Addiction is the most powerful force I've ever known...It's hard to accept that I was inconsolable, you feel that living with someone give's you this insight. I must be to blame for this turmoil, what can I say to stop them from buying that bottle of vodka. It was that blatant rejection, that unmistakable preferance of a glass or a tablet. I suppose it hurt me, that I was trying as much as I could and they wanted to escape into oblivion....I was probably the most naively persistant to get them better, maybe because I was the youngest but it was pointless, in many respects but it gave them some reminder I was there admist a bleary eyed gaze.....I still feel all the emotion to this day. Anger at some pretty low episodes, shame, loss, sadness, pity, hatred, love, everything. I feel most sad at the desperation that addiction drove them to....I squirm at how close to the no turning back point we came to. Vividly I remember studying for exams and knowing doctors had felt indifferent and unwilling.....My parent has been sober for nearly seven and a half months. I still wonder who they really are. Is it a matter of time? My feelings contradict each other on a daily basis. Our relationship is open and growing closer at a slow but steady pace. I still hold onto the pain, but they've been thriving and despite the childhood chunks of life they've not been there for, I want to accept this person.....I'm too afraid to let friends know, maybe when I'm more settled into the idea of who I am. For so long my life circulated, at the core of me like spokes of a bicycle, around addiction. When addiction's life was stopped, the effects linger but my role dispersed. So who am I now?

*It is the end of January and we have reached the 'emerging' part of the curriculum. I feel that the girls understand the lack of boundaries I want on their writing and the reality of self that I am hoping for. I ask for their direction with my prompt of, 'Where we should go next...what ideas, issues, themes, concepts are 'spiralling' around you?*
Write your life.' Christy emails me her response, four pages single-spaced and typed. It is in response to this piece of writing that I ask Christy (in my written response to her work) to think about why she has decided to trust in me, in this project....why is she letting her barrier down...now? (see Appendix C1).

Where I am at present is hard to decipher because so much of me seems stationed in the past. I worry a lot, about whether grades and goals will be met? If certain things will ever change, always conscious of the future. I think I am starting to learn more about who I am right now, but forgetting who I was....I am still learning or trying to trust myself, it’s like something will slip out mid sentence...Sometimes it feels like I am among a few character profiles. I stand testament to the fact that pretence of acting on the outside a million miles away from how you are truly feeling on the inside is a tricky and exhausting game to play. You start to lose touch on emotions, and thoughts re appear like molten and burn at an overpowering rate that seem to only overwhelm me....In the past two or three years, I sort of masked myself and retreated, with a lot of my parent’s addiction going on I was extremely conscious of how I appeared to people. CONTROL. Close friend’s would very rarely attach this trait to me. I don’t seem very controlling; I mean there is an aspect to me where when I’m happy I like to go with the flow. But in regards to people I am very controlled and limited....With the inner shame of carrying my parent’s addiction, I made an unknowing pact to be visually anonymous, elusive, and mysterious. Appearing to be unoffending, inoffensive, a carbon copy of a student with no quirks just a weak compilation of light comic relief and this sort of happy go lucky girl to most, with closer friends knowing me on a slightly “deeper” level. Soon after the demise of the social butterfly buzzing first year, second year led to quietness and no longer participating in hockey. I sort of led myself into a disguise of fading away. Of course if I had realized how unhappy and stressful this kind of control would lead to, and the unimportance of whether is made sense. I rarely would speak of my family, unless in a funny manner, avoiding the topic of my parent completely. That absent infliction of my opinion was a common practice, traded stories of a nagging parents and my turn to despair and compare was silent. The less people could muster from me the better, the less they knew the more I could manage....Little tidbits of information about me...floating around, drifting from other people’s mouths, re-arranged, edited, changed and then complied to create my persona. Scary. Of course it’s completely embarrassing and saddening and I’m sort of glad it’s now I want to change. It’s so uncomfortable knowing that I have “best friends” who know
intimately and ineptly such a thin layer of me....I don’t think I trust in people enough, or
acquire the strength to talk about things that go on. I suppose I am undermining people’s
understanding and potential to be a lot kinder than I think....I’ve sort of realized that in
fifteen years, I will be thirty one and reading aloud will not plague me and stalk my
thoughts. Part of me sees it as silly, just as I down played my parent’s addiction, compared
it to things much worse. Just as there will always be the better student, there will always be
the worse off person, but all pain is universal and whatever the core subject that is drawing
out such strong emotion should be irrelevant. There is no border that is crossed into the
realm of justifiable pain, it is all to do with circumstance and individuals...It’s about
balance, without trying to control the tipping scales, giving up the shackles and trusting in
my instincts allowing myself to be me. Even if the parachute of family life wasn’t always
securely there to catch me, in time the security will come whether it’s to be sought from
my family? I’m glad that I’ve grown, that the last few years I couldn’t face my anxiety, or
wouldn’t allow the pain of realizing it was all down to family problems, and wasn’t some
little quirk. I like the tranquility that comes with accepting, the freedom. Plus knowing
we’re all trying to find out who it is we are and can only learn from the moments where it
is most apparent that we are unsure of this very thing.

It is the beginning of March and Christy is still shy in the classroom, our only true
interaction being done through this almost ‘pen-pal’ dialogue. I revisit the idea of how
others see us and how we see ourselves with an observation activity. This leads me to tell
the girls that from this point on they can either respond to the prompts or write for
themselves. Christy emails me three single-spaced typed pages on dreams.

I believe that we aim for what we feel we deserve to achieve, we strive for not what we
think we should accomplish and what we can justify. What we feel we are capable of and
what warrants self righteousness. We don’t always want the things that are best for us, but
what we deem as things we are worthy of. This I think is shaped from past experiences,
and how we think other perceive us....Nothing is as uplifting as having inspiration about an
idea and to replay and toss it, knead this dough of brainwaves and stretch it into plans.
Achievable? This doesn’t always have to come into context, because then the schemes of
the future would not broaden into dreams if realism was attributed to everything, they’d
simply be mundane goals; as ordinary as a supermarket checklist. What is a dream if we
constantly think of it being realistic, real-world expectations can stunt revelations of what
would be. But dreams can age backwards into pressure, which happens a lot for me. I think many could see those who dream a lot as lost and devoid of a grasp of the present. I can see this. Sometimes I see this in myself, if I dream about things I will do, and most dangerously WHO I WILL BE, I'm starting to realize I can lose track. I can't constantly decide upon my dreams that I will be someone else, because life doesn't just and come to a pause so easily. I am not in progress to be someone else, I am constant I cannot lose chapters of life and begin again, become the new and improved Christy. It's impossible to cultivate a new girl to be and ignore who you are, just because there's always an improved version in the pipeline. It's wasteful of the current moment, it's so very very hard not to think like this. I have for a really long time, used the future to escape the present. I've realized, dreaming of "ONE DAY" I'll walk into school, the epitome of the perfect blend of all I want to be was never for myself, always the perception of others. So coming to conclusion that even if I was such a person, it wouldn't make me happy as it's not true to me has perhaps led me towards learning to be okay with whoever I am. Deadlines aren't the be all and end all, they help give some organization but trying to rush something false and set unreasonably high standards is exhausting rather than invigorating. I sometimes have a very "all or nothing" mantra which is why I pressurize myself too much without thinking about it clearly and whether it is healthy....Dreams shouldn't dent our lives and make us devalue what we have; I don't want them to be drowned in comparative thinking of how much better our life could be. There to inspire, they keep us awake and living, moving. They urge us to appreciate what we have and increase this to new heights; it gives us a value and identity of not who we want to be, but where we want to be. Dreams are free to have and hold on to, but paying the price of allowing us to lead a life from them can't be purchased. We create the dream, but to follow out the dream means it will build us. Perhaps it is not the coming true of a dream that is most important, but the journey of believing in something long enough and strongly enough to attempt to prove it that is the most character building attribute of a person? I have small dreams, and bigger ones, some that are ordinary and others that are strange and quite minuscule. These dreams change, and the passion withers and regains zeal, increases, and decreases. I think it's sad, (a little contradicting of me) that young people are so downtrodden of what they could be. "Hard times for dreamers" maybe so, but with due time I want to be more fearless in digging for hopes, avoiding a pile up of doubt and stop thinking and just do.
My lessons are now directed by the girls’ writings. The topic of trust and friendship seem to be what they want to talk about and this class is on how friendships can form. I use personal examples to frame the lesson and ask the girls to think about their own friendships. Christy turns in a double-sided handwritten page that connects many of her previous topical writings.

Perhaps I am not fully authentic. My friends see extremely diluted dimensions of who I am. I almost have caution tape around me, I have walls and barriers. The secluded parts of me are the factors in my life which are most significant in how I act...My friendships are based on my diversion of my personal struggles. I am not willing to share the harder and riskier topics of my life. I feel so very rigid around my views of this. I am frustrated at myself in that I can’t elevate my self and allow vulnerability to become apart of my relationships. I should be more realistic of human – relationships and feeling and the reality that everyone has problems and harder parts of their lives to deal with. But if feel unapproachable because as much as I value these friends I fear reactions and the consequences. Girls gossip, friends change and with these people my inner most personal moments are travelling, and discussed. Out in the open, I don’t invite my friends to my house, I don’t show much negative emotion of how I feel truly. Of course I have the urge to almost justify this abnormal behaviour and skirting around my family....If I were honest about my parent’s addiction, going to see a therapist and this revelation I’ve been doing this on going act – that is not unbearable because my friends are kind enough not to press the mysteries I’m tagged with but it seems unachievable. I can imagine sharing this with two friends, despite the fact their families are very different to mine. I’m not going to decide their situations are perfect and that vague word ‘normal!’ However other friends I can predict gossip and theories and seeing me completely differently. I know I don’t revolve around them but I have a mix of shame and protectiveness over my family. They’ll depict a roaring drunk and see them, as not having a disease but being a topic for bitching about. I do want control, this obviously is a hindrance to how these relationships will progress. Yet I feel an authority, and sleeping at night knowing a game of Chinese whispers about something which bring me alot of pain is a safe place to be....I do know that in the future as we all grow older, personal struggles and grief will be universally accepted as a part of life not a source of conversation to throw around for meaningless gossip.
We are coming to the end of our time together and I encourage the girls to just keep writing on whatever it is that is speaking to them at the moment. Christy emails three single-spaced typed pages.

Creativity is key to profound discoveries, inventions, medicines and the forward movement of the world. I think the beauty of creativity, is that no one in the world could write the same piece of poetry, produce the same artwork, fashion design, music, writing as you. A written piece could not be delivered from the same tunnel of vision with the same experiences and outlook? To create something that is a product of your imagination is to me one of the best opportunities to remember how unique we all are. It is almost ignites a passion to stay this way, how secluded and individual we are in a way – the only thing we have true ownership of. We don’t own people, material items were never ours in the first place and we share the world.

This is our last teaching class (we will have two more sessions together, but they are more administrative in nature). The girls are sad. I pull all our lessons together in a presentation on celebrating life, giving examples of how I celebrate mine. Christy responds to the prompt, ‘the future...what do you want for your future...how will you celebrate your life’.

What if my life didn’t have these painful memories? I’ve discovered I wouldn’t have the simple appreciation of watching a movie as a family! Would I be as open minded and empathetic to other’s weakness? I’d probably be alot more understanding of my own pain as pretence wouldn’t be so involved in who I’ve been, as important to being accepted. But whatever happens – everyone feels like everyone else, just never at the same time. In being happy with myself I’ve learned living for yourself is vital, release emotion when you need to, experiencing new things and overcoming feeling unsure gives me confidence, when things I am unhappy about are in my control then it is my responsibility to change it. I cannot please everyone, why shouldn’t I just use my life to try and keep positively. From being self destructive when overwhelmed, I’ve changed and try running instead. This understanding of taking risks and trusting myself has these days made me an opportunist. Why worry so much, life goes so so fast, I’ve learned to say ‘yes’ even if i’m scared but I never want to live in the unknown because of the fear I have let drown me. I have not discovered who I am, nor will I ever have a solid image of myself in life, but I have learnt.
The beauty of life and the experiences which have been the source of writing true to me. This folder encloses the uniqueness I've hidden for so so long, the emotion and thoughts I was afraid to spill. The honesty of who I am that I found myself writing about has left me with the freedom of accepting as much as I can. This was the journey I never planned on taking, the commitment to myself I never made and the words I know were apart of the person I am. I have seen the beauty of just celebrating and recognizing my place in the world.

_I say goodbye to the class, to Christy. Our last session together is full of tears as we all realize that we have been a part of something important. We know we will see each other again (for the turning in of the autobiographical portfolio) and as I say goodbye, I hope they have come away from this experience stronger and with a personal benefit that they might use as they continue their journeys._

5.2.2 Summative Writing

Christy’s summative musings, contained within her autobiographical portfolio and shared below in whole include an introduction to her formative work, reflective paragraphs on each of her topical choices and thematic identifications, and a conclusion on her writing and holistic experience of this curricularly-initiated process of self.

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_It is the start of June. I didn’t see Christy on the ‘turn-in’ day for the autobiographical portfolios and send a follow up email. She apologizes for not being able to make it in and agrees to post her work to me. I am afraid that she might not turn the work in. I worry that she has had second thoughts about such a sharing of self. And I understand._

_At the end of June, I get a package sent care of the University and when I open it, I am overwhelmed. It is exquisite. The cover, the artwork, the inserts between the writing are an experience in their own right. And then there is the writing. As I turn each page, I am in awe. Here are all the writings I experienced throughout the year, but alongside them, framing them, are Christy’s reflections, her art, her self spread across each and every page (see Appendix C1 for a sample)._
When I send an email to Christy to let her know I received her project, she thanks me for all she has learned and responds that she just couldn’t stop working on it, this project of her life.

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INTRODUCTION

My words, thoughts, dreams, doubts, past, present, future, experiences and memories are reflected before me. Who I am uncovered, beneath exteriors and pretence my writing reaches to the depth of how I think I feel. The people around me, my environment and the mind I possess and all of the great, bad and the vivid snapshot memories I use to write displayed before me. From the significant moments that will stay with my forever to little observations that would have left my mind before my pen met the paper. The rapid moment of thinking before I sleep became the source of a multitude of ideas. My writings are true to me, and in a funny way the most honest form of expression I’ve ever shared. I’ve travelled on this journey of writing about these universally relevant or closely tied experiences and from it have become apart of a MOMENT that whilst, ended I can now draw upon from saved e-mails, memories and a suave chin/nose mind-trick! And this “auto-biography” I almost want to save for years to come for an insight into a period of time I got to capture which I am grateful for! And that was the beauty I found in this writing experience and all I learned of who I am right at those moments and how I can progress in a few months! This is me, the journey I’ve travelled, the road I’m on and the places I dream of being in the future...

CONFidence

Appearance/Acceptance - Self Conscious - Getting It - Comparison

I see from my writing that confidence came into context because I wanted it so so badly. It seemed mysteriously foreign to have and develop. My lack of confidence is a mixture of feeling devoid of it at home and feeling insecure and my own beliefs of myself. I discovered how I get confidence is new experiences. Surprising myself, getting out there, instilling believe that I am worth something, capable and making me confident. But I see
from reading back that it is so normal not to feel confident at 16. On this rollercoaster of life, we’ve all dipped into a vulnerable place, my childhood years were solidified by my own identity I trusted in. Then teenage years came and I compared myself and questioned who I am. I want to have more confidence in school and my capability. School was a negative place for me, so I found it hard to concentrate with anxiety and support motivation to be self assured n grades and I was afraid to try as I compared myself to others. But I’ve understood the more I experience and stop putting others on pedestals. I see I’ve done this alot through comparison and it is pointless and we are all worth hard work and striving towards things we want to do and deserve. I see how silly fear around other’s opinions are and fear of failing. I appreciate I’ve finally understood failing is apart of life, confidence is deserved by all and we all have insecurities its just how paramount we see them to our life. If we see them as barriers to stopping us from doing things OR as a human quality that is small, life is so much valuable then terrorizing yourself over a flaw that makes me who I am.

Discovering Who I Am....

*My Feelings - My Dreams - My Life Journey*

It’s something I’ve expected out of life, but as I’ve learned it’s not a voyage we take as humans and reach a moment of clarity. Because as I search towards living in the future, thinking of being someone else, I’ll be forever travelling in this exterior life and I’ll never reach this Epiphany of being this person, there is no point in making these attractive plans for a future I’ll never be able be apart of. It is this nostalgic trick of safety. This voyage never reaches perfection, I will not come to a halt and breath a sigh of satisfaction “I’m here!!!!” As the moment is here, I am alive in the present and it is this I must enjoy. Not when I’m more confident, or successful, skinner of somewhere else, it is this safety of preparing for a life I’ll never enjoy because I am not living for the day I’m in.

I am constant, I’ll shift and change and I have arrived, I must appreciate the morning I wake up in and focus on who I am today, not who I will be. I’ve discovered the comfort of fantasy and the waste of me it risks.

All my faults, the mistakes and the regrets, dissatisfaction with the life reinforce who I am. You make these boundaries and expectations, impossible to withstand - and it’s all I know.
So I feel like I'm losing myself and that I want to go back. But I'm human. To begin with I regret all that goes wrong and really despise all my weakness! But then I learn and grow and I would not be me without all these scars and bumps in life.

((C.O.N.T.R.O.L))

*Masking - Limiting - Being Authentic - Afraid of Judgment - Trust*

My grasp on having control over how people see me, was and still is apart of me. To a lesser degree these days. The issue of controlling my feelings, my personality my impact on others and I was viewed was always in school. Around my classmates and friends- it was my way of protecting who I am.

My safe place to be and from reading back I’ve seen how much I stifled myself from growing. Stunted growth of me simply as a person. How I wasted so much time on trying to contain my life at home. It was based upon my impression everyone else seemed at ease with themselves and not being questioned. Their lives at home must be okay, they;re such rounded individuals I used to think. Mine isn’t actually all that similar, it’s dysfunctional I believed. So I felt like I couldn’t be me because I couldn’t relate or enjoy the atmosphere of my home life.

So I protected as much of myself as I could. This retreating wasn’t making me feel at ease or secure - the less authentic I was being the more anxious I became. I see from my writing that I didn’t feel like the luxury of being the multi-dimensional person I am because I wouldn’t be accepted. I see that I was terrified of having a “transparent” personality with sadness and pain because school seemed a place for being chatty and happy not an introspective place for sharing our unhappiness.

But releasing control has made me feel more authentic, taking baby steps s and understanding EVERYONE is dealing with something and over thinking so much waste the natural human qualities I share with the world, showing me I’m not so different and alone!
THE past

*Pain - A Part of Me - Acceptance - Forgiveness - Not Dwelling*

The past makes me who I am: I reflected ALOT and it has made be so aware of who I am and shows me how I've learned. Everything that has happened in my life to this present day has made me who I am. The journey of my life, the unique experiences, the people and all the emotion is all I have to form my opinions, views and thoughts on the world. It is what makes us who we are, but shouldn't limit all we can be, we learn and progress the point of the past is not to let it encapsulate who I am and allow me to become lost in days I can never change. The past I've seen is something I’ve obviously struggled to embrace but it is ingrained in who I am and acceptance and forgiveness are the unclenched fists I decided to embrace. It is so much easier to let go and learn something from the past than to stare it in the face and glare at it with bitter eyes of questions. I've always missed the best parts of movies when my head was turned... this is something I think could be applied to life! I am missing the beautiful present moment of being who I am right at this moment today when craned mind is turning it’s neck to the left - the past and the right, the future. Learning from my writing to be comfortable with a centered mind - focused on what's in front of me, deciding what I will I do today rather than what I should’ve done or could’ve done. The time is now.

**ANXIETY.**

*Link With Past - Pressure - Embarrassment - Control Its Effect - Embarrassment*

In looking back on my anxiety, its intensity and how it has become much more involved in my life I see how at times it caused huge intense pressure, and this pressure was self imposed. How it a part in who I am, whether I like it or not it makes me who I AM. I suppose I realised they’re was a temporary feeling based around my fear of reading aloud and the anxiety it caused me, as when I am older it won’t be such a huge task. But reading over this, I have realised that it’s not some random occurrence that I am anxious of performing a task in front of others, as its something I have done for a long time. The anxiety I have felt about how others viewed me, and how much of myself I was giving away manifested itself into this anxiety. I’ve seen how closely its tied in with control. School is a huge factor in this, as it sometimes feels like my performing grounds for
pretending I’m fine. So of course the place I will display anxiety is here! But I have unlocked some sort of puzzle, and baby steps actually don’t feel like I’m doing things half-heartedly, as I sometimes would rather take a big leap and get things over with. I took baby steps to not wanting to read aloud, and choosing not to for the moment and this was a relaxation. Baby steps to accepting I don’t need to worry and watch cautiously if I’ll be asked. But the secret to me staying afloat in the drowns of anxiety is to feel like I’m being more myself with less to hide and to be more authentic. I am most anxious when I feel I need to put on a false display, and I learned two things. It is much better to be uncertain than ambivalent, it is so so much better to be in a situation and FEELING something, unsureness or anything than to be procrastinating and never knowing. At least uncertainty brings experience, and with experience I see brings confident. The second thing I learned that through these experiences, my anxiety disperses when I feel I am being honest about who I am. I had a school presentation about this year, and baby steps towards being honest didn’t mean having to tell my life story but I could elaborate on how I truthfully felt about being put in a new class and how I was unhappy yet over came it and stayed put! I had dreaded this presentation and I’m actually still quite shocked I wasn’t a jittering, stuttering nervous wreck but its a lesson learned.

I am so grateful for being apart of this. I used this sub-consciously as a form of therapy and expressing and it was a scary risk with no risks taken that I’m aware of. I always would have felt exposed and unnerved by revealing things I hold close to my heart despite wanting to say it because I know it’s who I am. This has been instead a cleanse of everything I’ve wanted to explore with free reign and letting the fluid of my truths flow. This has been such a positive project of loosening my control. Reading back over pieces by a girl that was afraid of handing over her first piece which was the most relevant thing to me because it wasn’t safe. It was the class room experience I learned most about myself and truly looked forward to, feeling enveloped with huge passion, fun, inspiration, interest and a realness, it’s a comfort to know they are teachers out there like this! The reward of stepping outside my comfort zone has injected an understanding of who I am, who I thought I should be and why. It’s shaped me and left me with answers I had myself, the inspiration to go for things and just write!
And with this paragraph and the last turn of the page, so ends my time in Christy's life. A relationship based on paper exchanges, emails, and the briefest of face-to-face interactions over the course of one full school year is at a close. Christy's experience is chronicled in her writing; mine is chronicled not only in my lesson plans, reflective journals, and this PhD, but in the way knowing her self has changed my self. For both of us, it has been a year of growth and change, questions and answers.

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5.3 DATA COMMENTARY

While this commentary will be informed and guided by the frames used in the previous chapter, Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional frame, Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self and the literature (see Chapter 3), this section will be done more ethnographically and from a place that parallels the risk of self taken not just by Christy but by all girls involved in the unpacking of self at the heart of this study. It is my intent that this section reads as Christy’s does, with the heartfelt honesty of my own voice as a life, a self, a teacher, and for the moment, a researcher.

Sitting here now, bringing first day Christy into my mind’s eye, I picture a girl tentative and kind, wanting to blend into the backdrop but with a smile so bittersweet it begs a directed recognition - an ‘I see you’ not just as a body in my classroom but as a life in intersection with my own. And as I look back at her work, to see my own writing – my immediate responses to her work – sharing the pages, I remember my delight at hearing such a voice, my care in encouraging trust, constantly acknowledging and thanking, affirming and directing reflection. And I remember the wait. The wait for the next piece, the next layer of self. A feast for Ms. Kipp’s eyes, a test for Kathy’s heart.

Because I know what it is when a soul cracks open. It has happened before in my teaching career and I have shared in pain, sorrow just as I have shared in celebration, triumph. And I have learned what those first tentative toe dips into the pool of self-revelation look like, always hoping for the dive in to growth. And I knew – from the moment go – that if I did my job right, with Christy there would not be just the picture of ‘what’ her life was, but also of the ‘how’, the ‘why’, and of the life-pausing ‘if’. And when the data identified her
as the self to share, it was with a heart jolting ‘yes’ that I processed the news, so so aware of the resonance of her words, the exquisiteness and art of what she has shared, the packaging of the ordinary within the extraordinary. But there was also a screaming ‘no’ inside me. An understanding that Christy did not share her life story for others, she shared it with me; Christy had trusted in Kathy. Such has been the personally affective nature of this research, Christy’s words, her life, and this experience.

And so before moving on to commentary of story and self, I find it imperative to pop the bubble and say that the very private and controlled Christy knows of this disclosure, has agreed to this disclosure, and will offer her own reflective commentary on this chapter – her chapter – in Section 5.3.2.

In my own commentary, then, I will first speak to Christy’s voice, reflecting on her artful expression as well as her metacognitive articulations. Next, Christy’s status as an outlier will be reflected upon before I look at her writing through the three-dimensional viewing frame (situation, interaction, temporality) of Clandinin and Connelly (2000). I will then look at one specific thread within Christy’s story – that of parental addiction – with Bruner’s indicators of self (commitment, resource, social reference, evaluation, reflexive, positional) as my guide.

5.3.1 Researcher Commentary

It is easy to call Christy a beautiful writer but I think this is an insufficient and incomplete compliment. Christy’s writing typifies the phrase ‘voice’. Each word she pens crafts a picture of self every bit the sixteen year old girl...with perhaps a Confucius-in-training tucked inside! And as she speaks to her personal artefacts of self, Christy’s phrases also work to build a picture of her self. The thought behind every word, the care of phrasing, showcases Christy as both an artist, creatively expressing and crafting her self in this shared medium, and as a thinker who values appropriate expression and the true articulation of her thoughts and feelings. Her ability to not only articulate what her life has been, but how this life has shaped her is a key to Christy’s writings. Her self-awareness, critique and construction, and ability to step outside her life speak to a maturity beyond her years, a maturity shaped by her innate self and the experiences of life that she carries with her. Christy’s voice is one of thoughtful responsibility – she does not lay blame – and self-
knowledge and possession. It is of resilience and hope. And it is through her voice that the first and most immediate glimpse of Christy’s self is given. Laid upon and between this core foundation and insight into person, then, are the actual instances of self Christy chooses to share with these revealing words.

Selected as the outlier due to her topical and thematic selections (see Section 6.2.2), the most striking and general initial observation I can make is that Christy is not an outlier at all; she is instead an ‘in’lier. In Chapter Five, analysis centred on the topical/thematic combinations of Friends/Trust, Family/Love, and School/Pressure. While Christy does not identify these combinations in this fashion nor pairs these terms together, it is very clear that these topics and themes are central to her life. In fact, the argument could be made that these topic/theme combinations are more relevant to the story Christy tells then some of told by her peers. Christy, however, takes each of these labels one step further internally, identifying the core connections and intangibles that give the topics of friends, family, and school depth, weight, and a pertinence to not just any life, but her life. For Christy, it is confidence, discovery, control, the past, and anxiety within each of these three pairings that define the frame of the self that she has shared; these choices reinforce and frame her self-tellings of peers, privacy, parents, counselling, control, and curiosity. And in many ways, Christy’s reflection on her writing, her own product on her process of unpacking her self, provide a commentary more powerful and more inclusive – more soul-seeing and self-searching – than anything I could muster.

Considering Christy’s position as an ‘in’lier and applying the first frame of the three-dimensional framework, situation, when sifting through all Christy’s topics and themes of self, it becomes quite clear through her own articulation of a ‘double life’ that her true self is caught between two distinct places – home and school. It is also apparent that a relational factor exists between the selves of these two places; Christy’s self at school works to protect her self at home, though neither self seems to breathe easily. This duality of self ripples into – at school – Christy’s construction of controlled friendships, an anxious classroom self, and a lack of conviction in who she is amongst her peers. In connection, while many of the other girls seem to articulate a freedom of self when they are home, for Christy this freedom has been mitigated over the years by parental strife and struggle creating an environment that lacks stability. Christy’s home self has experienced shame, a yearning for privacy, and a consistent want to be able to fix what broke – all
without, in her writing, casting blame or looking for pity. And when the addiction is gone, Christy finds her sense of self at home in question, but with the want to love, accept, mend and grow. Caught between these two places is the most authentic version of Christy, the self that acknowledges how she controls and is controlled by her environments and those she interacts with within them.

This awareness of others and the influence they have on Christy’s shaping of her self – or interaction in the three-dimensional viewing framework – is a topic that she consistently revisits in her responses. However as Christy writes throughout the year, we travel from the standard point of teenage angst and general self-consciousness to a place where Christy very clearly wants to be her own source of value. Christy does not just bemoan her situation and deem it beyond her control, she chips away at all the instances of self layered and littered around this conflict. Time and again, Christy speaks to wanting to shut out the chorus of others, to have her actions be guided by her own wants and wishes, her own core values and beliefs. Yet she also acknowledges the duality in her self, the split between who she is for others and who she is trying to be for herself. And she fiercely articulates a want – and a hope – to be just Christy, Christy without artifice or construction, without the baggage of others or of who she has been in her past.

Temporally, who she has been in her past, the self that has gone from girl to young adult, is a person that Christy is so mindful of, so aware of that ‘the past’ is one of her identified topics of self. Within this topic, Christy, upon reflection, identified the themes of pain, a part of me, acceptance, forgiveness, and not dwelling. For Christy, the enduring understanding which I crafted the curriculum around – past experiences formulate present realities influencing future possibilities – is an enduring stratum of self. Christy is entrenched in temporality, which is perhaps due to the fact that she has lived through ‘haunting periods of time’, making her hyperaware of how life events can stop, shift, and alter time. However, through her writing and on reflection, Christy has discovered a sense of motion; instead of being shackled to her past or busy building a fantastical future, Christy is beginning to embrace the reality of her present. Instead of living for a self that has been or that is next in the ‘pipeline’, she is on the verge of accepting what her self ‘is’ without qualification. And she accepts responsibility for her future, the investments in her future self she can make by accepting and embracing not just the past places of Christy but of others as well.
Perhaps the most substantial topic of self that has a temporal, social/personal, and situational legacy within Christy’s story is that of her parent’s addiction. Generally, in her first writings, Christy gives a nod to a familial situation that is less than ‘normal’; as she continues to write, Christy’s willingness to articulate and explore this topic, share the reality and the residual of it, and to trace a trajectory around it speak to a growing self confidence and want to acknowledge the truth. As the ripples of this life reality are laid throughout her narrative, Christy’s understanding of how this has impacted her self is clarified. She acknowledges through her own articulation and reflection how her relationships, school work, and social self have been shaped by this experience and *vice versa*. She also speaks to the rollercoaster of emotions she has been on through this and the void left by addiction’s absence. And there is a true sense in Christy’s words that while the affects of this will never stagnate, she has come to a point of departure in how she lets it define her.

The specific repercussions of addiction on Christy’s self and her indicators of self based on Bruner’s template (1997) are far reaching and all encompassing within her writing.

Christy’s commitment to containing and controlling her life – of managing information and the way in which her life and self are perceived and received – is the predominant feature of self to which she dedicates all her resources of self. This commitment works to split and contain Christy’s selves (home and school) and becomes so far reaching that it manifests itself into a fear of public speaking, a fear that is more about inadvertently letting the truth of her self and her parent’s reality out than being heard by others. Christy’s telling of her behaviours and her story of life paint her as resolute in this course of action, though on the verge of departure from ultimate control. Even in the relationship Christy formed with me there was a sense of control and management as all sharing was done on paper and remotely with very few words ever being exchanged in person; while the walls were let down and trust established, Christy still maintained a sense of caution and reserve with me in the distancing of her actual physical self.
A key factor rippling in Christy’s resolve to control comes from her perceptions of her peers and how their lives, selves, and behaviours legitimize this course of action to preserve and guard the privacy of her life and self. Christy believes in the ‘normal-ness’ of her peers lives in comparison to her own—though on reflection she does admit to intellectually understanding that her life circumstances are not unique—and she allows this point of social reference to guide the life she creates for herself when with her peers. She also uses her experience with the ‘Chinese Whisper’ phenomenon of teenage girls to legitimize her need for an isolation of self and a protection of her parent’s addiction. In many ways, Christy has evaluated her life from a third person point of view and made decisions of self accordingly. To maintain a positionally equal self with her peers, Christy modifies who she is and the story that she tells in public. However, internally, Christy’s experience with a parent’s addiction has led her to feel like an outsider both at home and at school.

Christy’s writing also shows an evolution of thought and action as she shows herself becoming an active participant in her life. Both an agent of change and of self, Christy’s reflective writing – inclusive of her formative and summative work – begins to articulate commitments to her future self and journey. She is interested in redefining her values of self by putting her own value of self above others and establishing herself positionally as her own leader of life. She is rethinking how she has compartmentalized her self in the past, dealing out pieces and parts of the deck while keeping most cards close, and has a want for vulnerability, honesty, and the eventual relief of merging all of her selves, of laying all cards on the table at once. Christy identifies her self as her greatest resource, and the self-talk she showcases throughout shows an openness to try, a recognition of the coherence of self she hopes for. Christy’s future is not about the unattainable dream, but about the appreciation of the journey and the opportunities life—and her own volition—will lay in front of her.

This experience of telling, reflecting, and analysis has been for Christy a ‘form of therapy’. In her writing, she has let down her walls and approached her self in a methodically metacognitive fashion, sharing repeatedly on her parent’s addiction. As an outsider on the inside, I became a confidante for Christy, perhaps the first recipient of a truer version of her self, a fact I realized while the hand over was in progress but truly appreciate for the
gift it is now in this present. In these writings and for the audience of, I believe, her self first and my self second, Christy dismantled her perceptions and references and confronted her realities. Whether it was the curriculum, the environment of trust and care we cultivated, or even myself is debatable in regards to this revelation of self. It may just have been time for Christy to release the pressure valve and allow her self the chance to breathe.

5.3.2 Participant Commentary

At the close of writing this chapter, I sent the entire document to Christy. I felt it was necessary for her to not only know what information of hers was being shared, but also what was being said about this shared information. In seeking her consent and approval for the chapter, I was also interested in what she would have to say – about the chapter, the process, her experience, the research, etc., whatever it was that she felt and thought after reading through what was written. And so I asked her if she would comment as I wanted to know, and to share, what was most important to her at the end of it all. Christy writes:

Two years ago, I was given a unique experience. An opportunity shared by a class and teacher, yet individual for each person. The criteria was simple, freedom to write about anything. This freedom came during a time in my life when just being was messy, dangerous and terrifying. I had a decision to make, it was profoundly important and a wonderful catalyst for change. Changes occurred in my life, and questions were tumbling over each other trying to make sense of this transition. During this year I felt muted, yet charged internally waiting for a safe place for expression, a spark to ignite words that I’d fought to say. Then, at the right moment, magnetism of a negativity attracting a positivity made my decision easy. Yes, I am ready to share. I could call it fate, a coincidence or luck yet it was perfect timing for a teacher like, Ms. Kipp to walk into my life.

Fragments of my life were scrawled on pages of A4, or e-mails amounting to the story of my life. Letting each bookend of secrecy that held up my life slowly loosen. I opened the archives of my life, bookmarked with significant people, memories and the occasional doodle. Each writing given with the apprehension of a top government document. Yet here were my handwritten truths, in a classroom with only one subscriber, I was anxious.. what if they float away!? During these classes I was engaged, enriched and inspired to think about each topic endlessly, meandering off into lanes of thought. I never fully articulated why I trusted you. I had never been taught by a teacher who garnered the respect of one, yet interacted with openness and ease among her students whom you treated as individuals. Many a time, students would gawk at seeing teacher’s in a supermarket, or conduct a flurry of whispers when hearing their first names. Often their teachers were on a pedestal of rules and regime, grades hanging in the balance - exuding an atmosphere that did not benefit learning. However you seemed to teach instead of work as a teacher.
In your classroom, I trusted you because I felt valued, as with the rest of the students, not another name on the role call. There was a mutual understanding that nobody shedded their thoughts, worries, dreams and entered the class with a vacant mind ready for learning. Our experiences were there to benefit our learning, their was no separation of the student and the person. This was hugely important to me, and I felt a duty to use “who I was” to attribute to the class, encouraging a confidence. As I read my highlighted quotes, I expected to relate to each word, as though I was stagnant in time. Yet change occurred, so gradual yet significant. I feel the spill of emotion, of what I was containing and I realise I was carrying this to school. Once a week creative writing, was unmissable, it made my beforehand dreaded History class of reading aloud bearable. What if this approach was applied to teaching, would there be such a thing as a dreaded class? I read back over anxieties of speaking aloud, and relieved I don’t feign sleep for it anymore. I see a responsibility to partake, be hopeful and free, to let down guards and to like myself. Why not? In my last year of school, it leaves me questioning the constructs of learning and education. Whilst there isn’t a school out there lucky enough to have a teacher like yourself, truly passionate and invigorated by teaching, I feel like the classroom atmosphere could be captured. I feel a little down-trodden, that students are moulded by the classroom and the individuality is irrelevant.

Your teaching, classes and encouragement were one of huge significance to who I am today. I would like to thank you because, with further reflection on everything— you had a really important impact on my beginnings to trust, acceptance and growing. So I thank you for the inspiration (ALOT) and how understanding you were with my privacy. You provided me with a lot of drive to continue writing and sharing, and it was a decision I am truly so so very grateful for. THANK YOU!!!

On receipt of this reflection, my first reaction was embarrassment; it hadn’t been my intention for this to be a personal response from Christy to me that would be shared for all to read. Yet, upon my own reflection I realized that, in reality, it could be nothing less. This project - this research - at its core was driven by the belief that a classroom is for people, for lives, for individuals coming together to share experience and knowledge; this response shows that that is exactly what happened

5.4 CONCLUSION

There is both a need and a benefit to allowing for a solo voice to exist and be heard among the choir, to allow individuals to lead the way within the communal corners of our classroom, particularly in light of the research questions that frame this study. When given over such a story, such a life as Christy’s, there are certain conclusions that can be made within the frame and guiding features of this research that work in tandem to those of the previous chapter.
In the specific terms of the research questions, then, the themes that have emerged from this self, Christy’s self, are the themes of the collective self explored in Chapter Five. Christy’s story supports and specifies the topical/thematic groupings of Friends/Trust; Family/Love; and School/Pressure as the topics and themes that emerge for this population of ordinary teenage girls when asked to tell, reflect, and analyse their story of self.

In regards to the second research question, the relevance of these themes on the educative relationship from Christy’s desk can be found in cultivating the student-knowledge relationship in regards to self-reflection and self-disclosure. In addition, Christy’s story speaks to the power of trust within the student-teacher relationship and how this relationship can foster growth and create learners of self and life.

In light of these research questions, more specific conclusions can additionally be made.

The first is simple. Behind every face and within every body are a multitude of surprises as well as a richness of self. No matter the age, place, position, a life is a life and there is value within the telling – and hearing – of every single one. And this act, the recognition of students as single voices – individuals within a community – is central to the philosophical stance of this project and the underpinnings of the educative relationship. It is why the choice was made to reveal one student, Christy, so thoroughly. And this sort of research, this sort of data, has a personal affect due to its individual nature. A legacy is left behind, a fingerprint of the life that was shared. I will be thinking about Christy, the story she shared and the story she has yet to create, for years to come. Her story, her self, now have space within my own story of self.

As a research-practitioner, the value of such data and of a personal affect is the reminder that each and every student is more than a number, a mark, a percentage and that there are contributing factors – significant contributing qualifications – to any quantifiable number. Christy stands as a single life among a group, the members of this group being both her peers whom participated in this study and her ‘generation’. As a sixteen-year old Irish female within an ‘ordinary’ non-advocacy identified population, Christy represents both the uniqueness of life as well as the reality of what ‘ordinary’ can contain. Her story is one of community, independent functioning and societal staples of self. Just as there is
extraordinariness in Christy’s story there is also legitimacy in it as a representation and an answer to the research questions. Not in regards to the specific factual instances (though two other girls out of the seventeen also were faced with parental addiction), but in validating the sense that this age in life comes with both experience and wisdom. Within this, Christy also validates the topical/thematic selection of her peers (see Chapter Five). As previously mentioned, while she does not articulate these pairing within her story, they are foundational issues, conflicts and realities vividly woven into her current self. Just as she stands alone in her self and her story, Christy is also a member of the greater collective voice of her peers. And from this comes the understanding that these topics and themes of self (Friends/Trust; Family/Love; School/Pressure) are relevant, pertinent, and at the heart of what it means to be both a self in, and member of, this ordinary group. And with this knowledge of what is at the heart of both an ordinary individual and ordinary group, these topical/thematic choices extend their relevance into the student-teacher-knowledge relationship.

From Christy’s voice in isolation, and as a strand of the collective, comes the realization and affirmation of students as lives with personal knowledge and experience. The repercussions of this conclusion in regards to the classroom, teaching and learning are wide ranging. It seems that one of the greatest faults within teaching, learning, and curriculum creation is the lack of acknowledgement of the student as a possible co-contributor in regards to the experience and knowledge they have to offer. After sharing in Christy’s life and the lives of her peers, the realness of her self as a young adult is clear. She is not a blank slate nor is she a receptive vehicle. She has her own thoughts, opinions, and experiences that are solidly within her and attached to her self as a student and a learner. Who she is in the classroom is directly related to who she has been and currently is in life. If teaching, learning and curriculum worked with this fact the repercussions for ownership, engagement, and investment would become, just as Christy says in her own response, classroom tangibles based on depth as opposed to classroom hypotheticals based in entertainment.
6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Krebb’s Cycle. ATP. Protein synthesis. These three terms have been floating around my head for the past twenty years. And not because I have a firm grasp on what they are, constantly delighting in myself as an energy producing being, but because that was the day in Advanced Placement Biology I decided to ask, ‘Why do we need to know this?’ I had gone twelve years without ever asking, but that day — that topic — cracked me.

And when I became a teacher, that was the question I secretly dreaded my students asking until I met Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005, 1998) and they gave to me the concept I needed that day in Biology and have used ever since as a teacher — the concept of ‘enduring understandings’ and my answer to the question ‘why’.

While a curricular tool used within the methodology of this research, the concept of an enduring understanding is something that reaches far and wide. And its definition is just that, something that reaches far and wide, lasting beyond instruction to become contextualized and applicable beyond the classroom. Within this chapter, then, are the enduring understandings of this study, the findings that have come from the literature, data, and analysis in light of the research questions and the knowledge contributions and recommendations for practice based on these discoveries. All of which I hope reach far and wide to answer the question of ‘why’.

6.1.1 Restatement of Research Questions

As this study was created for and designed around two research questions, it is around these same research questions that the findings and recommendations will be given. Specifically, the two research questions of this study are:
What themes of self emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student-learner) of a personal narrative?

What relevance do the student learners' emergent themes of self have to the student-teacher-knowledge relationship?

While some preliminary answers were given to these research questions during the data discussion with the dual data analysis chapters (Chapter 4 & Chapter 5), this chapter will consolidate and extend the commentary and conclusions of these chapters around these research questions, using student experience and expertise to offer a nuanced understanding of their everyday, ordinary life (Thomson & Gunter 2007).

Prior to the specific findings and contributions, however, it is necessary to restate the value of these research questions within the educational setting. The intention of this research was to focus on the student element within the student-teacher-knowledge relationship and to bring to light the reality of selves sitting at Dewey's desk. In looking into the life of our student-learners, the narrative approach was appropriately selected and from it, the stories that emerged provided a frame – the themes – through which to view and understand the experiences and realities of those to which our educational efforts are directed. It is for this reason the second research question becomes relevant as it is the implications of student life within the educative relationship that is of most interest to practitioners.

6.1.2 Limitations of the Research

Prior to presenting the findings, contributions, recommendations and conclusion, it is necessary to recognize the limitations of this research.

Firstly, one limitation of the research is within the population of the study. As a simply ordinary population within the particular context of an all-girls Irish secondary school Transition year that is not representative of any specific interest, the findings of this study are not all-inclusive and cannot directly extend to other interest groups or populations. In addition, the findings of this study come from a classroom environment and a student-teacher dynamic, both of which are factors that may have influenced or biased the research
in a fashion. Consequently, as the findings are based mostly in the situation of classroom environment and the educative relationship, they perhaps do not extend to the self of teenaged females outside this situation or moment of self. With this, then, an additional limit lies within the philosophical stance of the research as a whole and the perspective from which the data and findings are presented. Specifically, the Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Bruner (1997) frameworks used within this study may have coded my data in a more restrictive way than was ultimately useful. Another limitation of the study is that by trying to situate the research within both theory and practice, a true depth of interaction and knowledge of either one may have been sacrificed. Finally, within these limitations there is also the recognition that this research may be limited in its contribution as it may be preaching to the choir in regards to the practice-based research on student self within the classroom.

6.1.3 Chapter Contents

This chapter will extend the commentary and conclusions offered in Chapter Four and Chapter Five by first presenting the collective findings under the headings of each of the research questions. At the closing of the findings section, the articulated findings of this study will be matched to the relevant literature as a means of validating and articulating the gap in knowledge this research fills. The contributions and implications of the research will then be presented underneath the headings of ‘theory’ and ‘practice’. Within the theoretical contributions, a critique of the frameworks used within the study, that of Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework for narrative understanding and Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self, will be offered. Based on the findings, recommendations for practice are then given for each facet of the educative relationship. Finally, this chapter and this thesis will close with a conclusion on my process of self within this endeavour.

6.2 FINDINGS

While observations and commentary were given at the conclusion of each data section as well as each data chapter, the intention of this section is to synthesize the discoveries of the two data chapters under the headings of the research questions as well as situate the
findings within the literature. Within this section, the major findings of this study are discussed under their respective research question and contextualized within the section conclusion.

6.2.1 Findings within Themes of Self

The first research question of this study is interested in the themes of self that would emerge from the telling, reflection, and analysis (on the part of the student) of a personal narrative.

To arrive at these emergent themes, the student participants engaged in a thematic analysis of their own data and then created a reflective narrative using Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) viewing frame. From this student-led process, the three themes that emerged across the data set as a whole (Part One) and were supported by a deeper examination of one individual’s data (Part Two) are the themes of:

- Trust (within the context of Friends)
- Love (within the context of Family)
- Pressure (within the context of School)

These three themes provide the basest answer to this research question. They also reinforce this as a study into the ordinary as the beauty of this finding is in its expectedness. Friends, Family, and School are no great surprise as the contexts of these teenaged lives, and trust, love and pressure are no great surprise as the themes within these contexts. What makes these themes findings, then, are not the themes themselves, but the self revealed within these choices. When considering the narrative data collected, the multi-faceted analysis of this data, and the interest in these themes as themes of the ordinary self of a teenage girl, the findings surrounding and supporting these themes of self are rich and complex.

The major finding linked to these themes and the research process is the deep-rooted attachment that this population shares between self and the relationships that exist (or do not exist) around that self – these girls have narrated a relational self. Specifically, when considering the three themes self-selected by the girls, the context in which these themes
reside, the *interactional* (3-D framework) focus lent to their narrated reflections, and the strength of the *social reference* and *positional* self indicators (Bruner), the contribution and affect relationships make to the definition of self at this age is clear.

*The Relational Self*

Within the data on ‘trust’, and considering this relational self, the girls narrate the complexities of building and maintaining a trust relationship with peers, acknowledging the way in which such relationships influence self-confidence, self-acceptance, and self-comfort. Their stories tell of the precariousness of trust and a learned caution in and around friend relationships. Their definition of trust is fluid, constantly evolving based on personal experiences; as this definition is directly changed and modified, so is the self. *This theme of self becomes relevant within the educational setting as it reinforces the need for a genuine trust between the student and the teacher as well as brings to light the need for the students to trust in the value and relevance of the knowledge at hand.*

Within the data on ‘love’, and considering this relational self, the girls tell the story of a ‘free’ version of self allowed an easy existence within the familial relationship; when with family, the girls can be ‘themselves’. The repetition of this ease of existence is refreshing in validating the tangible influence an ordinary family has on the creation of an ordinary self, and the girls narrate a familial relationship that directly influences capability, confidence, and comfort of self. The acknowledgement of a divide between the self ‘allowed’ to exist within a loving and stable familial relationship (or even a family struggling with parental addiction) and the self that exists for others outside this unit was a strong finding of this research as was the girls articulation of working to manipulate this partition. *This theme of self becomes relevant within the educational setting as it speaks to the value of a classroom environment that cultivates a freedom and ease of self on the part of every student; the teacher’s role is to work to create this environment through thoughtful methodology and a mindful instructional strategy whereas the role of knowledge is to become accessible to the individual and real selves of each student-learner.*

Within the data on ‘pressure’, and considering this relational self, while the girls set the theme within the context of school, the reality seems that for most, this pressure is set
solidly within the student-teacher segment of the educative relationship. While they do tell of pressure linked to academic tasks, this pressure is also mediated for the girls through the teacher’s attitude towards: her job as a teacher, the capabilities of the student, the content being taught, and the student as a person. For the girls, the relationship they have with the teacher is based in this attitude, and this relationship can either cause or alleviate pressure, dictating a sense of self as a capable contributor or as a failing receptacle (to be explored further within the findings of the second research question). This theme of pressure becomes relevant within the educational setting as it speaks to the imbalance of power within the student-teacher relationship, the students’ awareness of this imbalance, and the need for the knowledge component to work to equalize the tension between the two other points in the triad by being relevant, accessible, and open to ownership.

In support of this finding, the analysis of the data by theme also points towards these girls possessing a self that is influenced, manipulated, built, crushed, supported, and created by the relationships surrounding it.

To further this finding of the relational self, in regards to the three-dimensional framework used by the girls as a means of analysis and by myself as a means of synthesizing data, the one dimension consistently at the forefront of reflection was that of interaction, the examination of the personal and social. This dimension is the dimension attached to the ‘other’, to the relationships and self that exists externally. Throughout their writing, the girls consistently had the most to say within this portion and when summarizing their data it is the section that I found myself with the most specific observations and commentaries. For the girls, the selves they narrated gain dimension in relationship to others. Compartmentalizing self, testing self, revealing self, building self, questioning self, or confirming self depends on the relationships they have (or do not have).

Additionally, in validation of the finding of the relational self, in considering Bruner’s (1997) indicators of self used to view the selves revealed through the shared narration, two of the more consistent and apparent indicators were that of social referencing and positioning. While social referencing refers to where and whom one looks to for legitimizing actions, beliefs, and resources, positioning is interested in how one locates herself in time, space, or the social order. Both of these indicators are relational and were consistently rich in each data set in terms of how the girls were using these to articulate
and define self. Whether it was peers, family, or teachers (the very contexts framing each theme!) that were being referenced, or a sense of equality or inequality articulated in regards to social position, these relationship-based factors clearly influenced the girls perception and feelings on self as they were the factors most specifically articulated.

This finding is supported by theories of domain-specific self contexts and the idea that a self, specifically the adolescent self, has a different definition of self-worth, strengths, and weaknesses depending on the relational context (Ludhra & Chappell 2011; Wickenden 2011; Knox 2006; Sedikides & Brewer 2001; Harter, Waters & Whitesell 1998; Davidson 1996; C. Taylor 1989). As Vygotsky said, it is the recognition that ‘through others we become ourselves’ (1987).

The Process of Self-Revelation

In addition to this major finding around the relational nature of the themes of self that emerged in response to the first research question, there are other pertinent findings attached to the process – telling, reflection, analysis – of the girls arriving at their answer to this research question.

Specifically, when considering the girls’ narratives and articulation of self there seems to be an acute awareness of the transitional stage they currently exist in. Within their narratives, reflections, and analysis, the girls show a clear understanding of the temporal and their current position as a transitional self. Within the writing they speak to future selves, experiences, and contexts that will be different from who, what, when, and where exist in the now. This sense of future and acknowledgement of the transitional stage of the present seems to help mediate the tensions they currently recognise around trust, love, and pressure (as well as self-confidence and acceptance) as they have a resiliency based on their hope for the future. This awareness and articulation of the transitional self and the shift and growth in identity that comes with age and the ‘future’ is also supported by current theories of identity construction (Hutchinson 2011: 235; Oyserman, Terry & Bybee 2002: 319) as well as research being done on the mutable teenage self within technological mediums (Livingstone 2008). In addition to this, the duality of self and the management of self for peer relationships - specifically on social networking sites - versus
the self shared with the family has been of interest to studies on teenagers and identity creation (Mazur & Kozarian 2009; Livingstone 2008; Bortree 2005).

In conjunction with this, despite the tensions and conflicts connected to trust, love, and pressure, within the girls’ initial narrations and summative reflections a strong and stable sense of self is conveyed. This concept of a stable and supported self identity being rooted in the family unit is a highly researched topic typically focusing in on delinquent behaviours while promoting the need for the perception of a strong child-parent relationships on the part of the adolescent (Fosco et. al 2012; Wickenden 2011; Bohanek, Marin & Fivush 2008). While there is, as stated in the previous paragraph, the articulation of a transitional self, there is no sense, either in the collective or individual shared data, of a fractured self. Even in the face of personal illness or family tragedy, the telling of self remains solid. This may be attached to age, gender, demographics, either way, there is a clear voice that is being articulated, one of thoughtfulness and self-interest.

The process surrounding this first research question also leads to the finding that there was a clear need within this population to talk about the self, the evolution of self, and the affect of the personal themes of self on self, school, etc. In conjunction with this is the clarity that these girls possess a self of experience, and experience they are able to relate and apply. The ability to engage in the creation of a quasi-autobiographical tale and then to look back at what was created with both a reflective and analytic mindset was a process that the girls were grateful for, rewarded in, and empowered by. This need for self-disclosure and the process of narration being one of hope and empowerment is also present in much of the research on teenage narratives and narrative telling in general (Ludhra & Chappell 2011; Chan 2007; Xu et. al. 2007; Goodson & Sikes 2001; Harter, Waters & Whitesell 1998). The opening of self for self (and for the teacher) seemed to have given the girls not only a sense of liberation and achievement, but a sense of personal pride in their experienced self, a finding of great importance to the first research question but perhaps even more relevant to the second as this shows a readiness to engage with knowledge at the most personal of levels.
Summary of Main Findings for Research Question One

A relational self, a transitional self, a hopeful self, a stable self, and a self full of experience ready to own her story, to tell her story – these selves are the selves tucked within the emergent themes and the findings of this data. These themes open a window into the student point within the educative triad and allow for teachers to understand and acknowledge the depth of life and experience within their class mates. These themes act as a starting point for a base of mutual dignity and respect to be cultivated within the educative relationship and illustrate the point that student-learners are not just receptive bodies but have the possibility to be dynamic contributors. It is based on these findings that the recommendations made in Section 7.3 will be based.

6.2.2 Findings within the Educative Relationship

The second research question of this study is interested in the relevance of the self of the students and the themes of self they identified above (trust, love, pressure) to the student-teacher-knowledge (educative) relationship; it is within this section that the main insights into classroom practice are revealed.

While the three points of this relational triad exist independently, when considering the three components of the educative relationship and the relevance of the themes of self (trust, love, pressure) to it, there are three specific and co-existing relationships of interest, the relationships between:

1. Student – Teacher
2. Student – Knowledge
3. Teacher – Knowledge

With the first research question’s major finding of the girls as a ‘relational’ self, the relevance of the concept of the educational relationship - and the triad of relationships contained within it - carries an additional weight. Due to this added importance of the relational nature of the educative relationship, the intersection among these three relationships and the affective nature of the educative relationship on the student’s self
strengthens the connection between the findings of the first research question with those detailed below.

In response to this second research question, the findings speak to teacher attitude, the recognition of the student's self within the classroom, the need for curriculum to have personal attachments, the ability of students to be co-contributors of and to knowledge and experience, and an educative relationship built on trust and care. These findings are greatly supported throughout Pádraig Hogan's *The New Significance of Learning: Imagination's Heartwork* (2010) and his exploration of the different types of relationships that exist within the learning environment, the place of care identified within these relationships, and his interest and passion for the humanness of education and the right of the student as a life within the educative relationship.

First, in regards to the findings under this research question, it is necessary to consider the relevance of each of these themes of self (trust, love, pressure) to each separate point of this relational triad (student, teacher, knowledge). In regards to the student dynamic, these themes relate to the transformative power of student into learner (see Section 2.2.2) by bringing to the forefront life experience and personal wisdom as a means to owning education. In regards to the teaching dynamic, these themes were cultivated in response to a non-directive teaching model (see Section 2.3.4) and specifically speak to the power of trust, love, and teacher-attitude on the learning environment. In regards to the knowledge dynamic, these themes speak to knowledge and learning as personal endeavours and what self-knowledge (see Section 2.4 & 2.5) is of most value to the research population.

**Student-Teacher Relationship**

In considering the relevance of trust, love, and pressure on the *student-teacher* relationship the major finding came from within the 'pressure' data set and deals with the influence of the student-teacher relationship on the girls' experience of school and the repercussions of this relationship and experience on self. Narration under this heading was dominantly directed at teacher behaviour and attitude and the girls' sharing within this context was passionate. This exploration of student perception of teacher attitude and how students link this to their own classroom successes as well as the importance of a personal student-teacher relationship on a positive learning environment is a finding supported by the
literature (Maulana et.al. 2011: Jennings & Greenberg 2009; Petty 2004; Noddings 2001; Frymier & Houser 2000; Brooker & MacDonald 1999; Teven & McCroskey 1997; Rogers and Freiburg 1994). The girls’ ability to articulate what they wanted from this relationship, how they want this relationship to be cultivated, and the actual specifics of how this relationship should look was specific and consistent across the board. Their want was for a student-teacher relationship based in care and interest, founded in a recognition of themselves as individuals, a point that is extremely relevant to practice. When these elements were present within the student-teacher relationship, the pressure of school was lessened as there seemed to be a ‘we are in it together’ mindset as opposed to the ‘us versus them’ feel that comes with an impersonal classroom. A positive, supportive, and receptive student-teacher relationship fostered confidence, care, and interest within the girls while also cultivating self-worth.

**Student-Knowledge Relationship**

In considering the relevance of trust, love, and pressure on the student-knowledge relationship the major finding has to do with the girls understanding and articulation of the role self must play in the classroom. In considering both the formative and summative data of all seventeen participants in its entirety, there is almost no mention of specific classes, content or curriculum. For the girls, the traditional view of knowledge within the educative relationship is irrelevant, a point that is could be extremely relevant in regards to how teachers approach knowledge, content and curriculum. The view of self-knowledge as a classroom cornerstone, however, is relevant and a point that can not be emphasized enough in regards to role knowledge plays within the triad. This point is articulated within the girls’ views on teacher’s role as well as in their need to share, reflect, and analyse self. Within their narratives, the girls ask for their self to be acknowledged within the educative relationship, a statement that offers the message to all within educational practice that while it may not be necessary to engage with their students at the level of intimacy achieved in this piece of research, it is necessary to acknowledge that such depth and experience and is implicitly contributing to the educative relationship.
In considering the relevance of trust, love, and pressure on the teacher-knowledge relationship the major finding has to do with the girls looking for teacher recognition of their individual selves as co-contributors and constructors to and of the educative relationship and learning community. With teacher acknowledgement of both the student self (and their own self) within the educative relationship and as a knowledge commodity, the girls describe an environment where they exist as learners and lives. This has great implications for teachers and how, if they are curriculum makers, choose content as well as how they choose methods and strategies for instruction. While the content must be driving force, teachers need to be mindful of how they frame the content and how they allow for and build student ownership into instruction. The need for the student self within the knowledge realm and the ability for student experience, voice, and action as a valuable contribution to authentic research is also a theme within many studies interested in this age grouping (Kauchak & Eggen 2012; Garratt 2011; Ludhra & Chappell 2011; Symonds 2008; Flutter 2007; Chan 2007; Thomson & Gunter 2007; Xu et. al. 2007; Oyserman, Terry & Bybee 2002; Bruner 1960).

Summary of Main Findings for Research Question Two

In considering the themes of self identified by the student-learners and considering the findings associated with them generally and in association with the educative relationship as a whole, the major finding is in the possible use of these themes and connected contexts to help build, cultivate, and support a maximized learning environment that recognizes both the communal and individual selves. It is about allowing the student-learner point of the triad to be maximized in regards to what it has to offer to the educative relationship and moving beyond the identified themes of trust, love, and pressure to embrace all realities of experience the students have to offer. While this connection is not explicit in the data, it is worth consideration and will be examined within the recommendations.
6.2.3 Conclusion

When considering the research questions and the enduring understandings articulated in connection to both of them, the main conclusion of these findings is in the link between the girls' articulating a relational self and the want for both a communal and individual relation with each point (teacher and knowledge) within the educative relationship. By narrating a self that is primarily relational, the girls reinforce the necessity of a mindful educative relationship that cultivates strong relationships grounded in self-knowledge, expression, and recognition. The implications of these findings for educational thinking and practice is an acknowledged shift in the perception of the student-learner's role by the teacher and a resulting shift in their approach to the formation of the classroom as an environment for learning.

6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research questions, the data, the findings and their positioning with and against other research, there are clear contributions and recommendations that evolve from this study. Generally, this has been a study in the internal (first research question) and external (second research question), a study seeking answers to the self sitting at Dewey's desks as well as to the factors surrounding her. The implications of the research, then, are both internal and external, with the theoretical contributions situated within the narrated self and the practical recommendations situated within the educative relationship.

6.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

In considering the subjects of this study – teenage girls – and the drive of this study as a non-advocacy based journey into understanding the ordinary, the contributions under this heading are theoretical in nature, evolve from the methods of this study, and are geared towards the way in which the female teenage self is understood as a life and a learner.
What was learned from the data and the findings is that the ordinary teenage self studied for this research is one of complexity and experience, a complexity and experience that is wonderfully individual in the specifics but comfortingly collective in the generalities. As the findings dictate, the data tells the story of the girls as a relational self, a transitional self, a hopeful self, a stable self, and a self ready to own her story. Within theory and the frames that are available for the narrated self, my main contribution and recommendation is for a space and recognition of the nuances of self contained within the teenage girl.

**Framework**

While the frames were chosen at the start of the research as the best suited to the intentions of the research question, a criticality of them after the use leads to specific recommendations.

Firstly, when considering the findings of the narrative self and Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional framework for viewing narratives, recommendations will be given on each individual dimension of situation, interaction, and temporality before an overall recommendation on the use of the framework as a tool for reflecting on the narrative texts of teenaged girls is given.

In regards to the self at interest in this study – the ordinary female teenager – the dimension of situation seemed to have little variety and range of self. While this could be attributed to the fact that I had no specific reflective question within the summative assessment attached to situation, it also may be attributed to the reality of the narrated self within this study. While the girls clearly – and repeatedly – articulated the places of home and school as places of self, there was no sense of place or motion outside these locations. There was little to no mention within the formative data of friend’s homes, team training or matches, shopping centres, coffee houses, concerts or the like in regards to self-determination. While home and school proved to be situationally significant – as evidenced in the girls’ selection of ‘school’ as one of their most important contexts – there was little given beyond these two end points. **In regards to the situation dimension of the framework, then, the recommendation for the consideration of this population within it is for a more stratified dimension that offers more exploration of the two key places of home and school while opening the door for an articulation of other situations of self.**
When thinking of the *interaction* element of this framework, as discussed in the findings of the first research heading, this was the element that dominated the girls’ narrations. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) divide this dimension into the personal and social with the inward concerned with the internal condition and the outward concerned with external conditions. Within this dimension was the major finding of the girls as a relational self whereas the relationships in the social portion of this dimension had massive impact on and in the internal. For the girls, these two conditions of the dimension function as an ‘if, then’ determinant of self (Anderson & Chen 2002); if a specific relationship is present with specific elements, then my self is determined in the following ways. *In regards to the interaction dimension of the framework, then, the recommendation for the consideration of this population within it is for a greater allowance for the relational nature of the two internal divisions of this dimension.*

In considering the *temporality* dimension of this framework, what becomes obvious through both summative and formative data as well as the analysis is that while the girls have a temporal awareness of their selves in transition, their articulation of the temporal is incredibly stunted. Specifically, their sense of self is immediate, with the present holding the largest portion of narration, reflection, and analysis as well as thematic identification. While they do speak to the past, the past is a means of arriving in their story’s present. While they do speak to the future, the future is a hope of moving beyond their story’s now. There is no longevity in either the past or the future. Certainly a product of a short life span, this is also telling of the natural self-absorption this population has in the now. The only time that the temporal does seem to be of narrated relevance to the girls’ self is when there are significant events that have had a ‘time stopping’ effect. *In regards to the temporal dimension, then, the recommendation for this population would be to either create more specific links between the past, present, and future in questioning or to allow for the natural interest in the present to be explored more thoroughly through a shorter time lens.*

In summary, while at the onset the frame seemed to have strength based on the popularity of it and the author’s in similar research and theoretical areas (Chan 2010; Clandinin & Huber 2002; Goodson & Sikes 2001;), when used for viewing the female teenaged population of this study, it was limited in fully teasing out what was truly relevant to their narrative self. With that said, it did provide an easy structure to transfer to the student’s for
their portion of the analysis and within the flaws of the frame are relevant findings. Because of this ease of use, my contribution in regards to this as a recommendation is for a modification of this frame based on the above versus searching out an alternative frame. Specifically, reflecting the findings of the data, each dimension would narrow its focus on what is relevant to this population in regards to opening up a deeper exploration of self.

When considering the findings of the narrated self within the second frame used for that study, Bruner's indicators of self (1997), I found the frame to be strong and the indicators of worth to the understanding of the selves of interest in this study. While I modified the frame, pulling out three indicators from Bruner's list, the indicators I did use — those of commitment, resource, social reference, evaluation, reflexive, and positional — gave both shape and substances to the selves at the heart of the narrations.

Research Methodology & Student Voice

Moving beyond the frames used for viewing the data, this study also makes a contribution to educational research methodology. Through the creation of a curriculum designed for the dual purposes of data solicitation and student learning, this study allowed for the natural setting of the classroom to exist as a research tool. This, then, in conjunction with myself as teacher allowed for a more ethnographic approach without necessitating action research. This methodological device is also what allowed for the students to become co-contributors in the research process without there being a separation between research purposes and learning purposes; the students' self-analysis which created the summative data set was done within the course's assessment of learning. In addition, the creation of a curricular tool for soliciting data allowed for the type of revelation of self achieved within this study to occur within an everyday classroom environment and within in a student-teacher (as opposed to student-researcher) relationship.

Due to this chosen method, this research also contributed a new means for getting at an authentic student voice and allowing the students to share their story, self, and thoughts—both personal and educationally directed — in a means that was natural, comfortable, and able for evolution, trajectory, and reflection. By including the student-learners within the analysis, this method also allowed for the data collected to be reflective of the student
voice as opposed to traditional means of the researcher imposing their own voice on top of the data.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Practice

One of the main wants of this study was for the theory surrounding the first research question to inform the practical concepts implicit in the second research question. With this mindset, the narrated self revealed within the identified themes must be used to impact the student-teacher-knowledge relationship. The recommendations in this section are then geared towards impacting the educative relationship through the findings of this study.

Firstly, before delving into the specific recommendation for practice from the research findings, the implications of this study as a whole on practice must be articulated. When considering the personal nature of the data in this study, it is clear that this level of intimacy between teacher and student is not necessary for the educative relationship, however it does offer a depth of life that is rarely seen within the classroom and the message to teachers and educators is not in the need to solicit the most intimate details of our students lives but to acknowledge that these experienced selves do exist, that stories such as these are a reality within any classroom. Teachers and educationalists must acknowledge the rich, deep, and complex lives students’ possess and in this recognition aim for a rich and meaningful development of the educative relationship. This study is remarkable and unique in what it brings to life and while the expectation is not that such intimacy needs to emerge within the educative relationship, the implication is in the need to allow for the foundation of the educative relationship to be based on the acknowledgement of the existence of the rich and storied lives of our student-learners. Teachers and educationalists need to be sensitized to this and the message of this research: that these learners are more complex than we may allow for in our interactions, methodologies, strategies, and curriculums and that a stronger awareness of this may enhance not only a sense of mutual respect and dignity within the classroom but allow for more genuine and personal learning to take place within our classrooms.

Considering the major finding of this study, then, and the relational nature of the female teenaged self at study within this research, the strength, necessity, and positive nature of
each component of the triad and the relationships contained within it become essential to the vitality of the classroom and life-affirming, guiding nature of education.

Curriculum Design

Firstly, considering the knowledge aspect of the triad, the best use of the findings from this study is in re-thinking curricular priorities and revising content with an eye towards student ownership and investment. Currently, curricular decisions seem to be guided by standardized test scores and quantitative measures of student performance. This sort of mindset, as described by the data, leads towards an educative relationship that is transactional and alienating. Knowledge is given, received, and regurgitated full stop for the purpose of testing with little to no acknowledgement (teacher) or investment (student) of self and no element of life-long learning. By incorporating student experience and legitimizing the contexts in which they live within the curriculum, the findings support that learners will then be created as learning will be attached to self and the relationships of the classroom. The recommendation, then, is to shift curricular design to embrace student experience, creating a space for learners to exist as co-contributors and constructors of the knowledge experience; generally, instead of constantly struggling to create knowledge experiences for students, students prior experiences of ‘knowledge’ should be given credence and freedom within the classroom. To achieve this, this study used a thematically designed spiral curriculum built upon Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) enduring understandings. While it is not necessary for all curriculum design to utilize this template, it is imperative that whatever template is used does not just give service to the idea of student engagement, but actually allows for the topics/themes of the learners’ selves to enter into the classroom. In addition to this, curricular choices and instructional and methodological decisions (see teacher recommendations) must allow for the idea of curriculum as a window to the world just as it is a mirror to the self (Style 1988) to be actualized; the data and the findings support the students’ desire for personal reflection and connection to enter into the educative relationship. The data and findings also support that when these personal elements are at place within the student-teacher-knowledge relationship, the girls are willing and able to become learners, engaging in and owning the content they are presented with, an engagement and ownership that should lead to desired test scores. Conclusively, this research demands for the recommendation of a curricular
experience that recognizes the legitimacy and actuality of our learners' lives, meeting the
demands of the individual as well as the community of learners.

Teacher's Role

As the primary articulator of the curriculum, then, the teacher's role within the educative
relationship must also be re-examined based on the data, conclusions, and findings of this
study; teachers need to allow for students to 'exist' within the educative relationship.
While many teachers will point out the obvious nature of this and make the argument that
they are already seeking student experience and self as an addition to knowledge, the
student data, analysis, reflections, and findings from this research states that this is not a
consistent reality within the learning environment. Beyond the curricular shift designed to
help teachers accomplish this, to assist the teacher in ushering in the students as co­
contributors of experience and knowledge and maximizing a ‘mirrored’ curriculum, it is
recommended that both initial teacher training and continuing professional development
opportunities be revisited. Particularly, in initial teacher education, within the key
disciplines and pedagogy courses the concepts of students as relational and experienced
selves must be integrated. Methodology courses must spend time on strategies designed to
evoke the selves of the students as learning tools (such as metacognitive questioning,
inquiry based learning, modelling, etc. – Kauchak & Eggen 2012). Additionally, time
needs to be spent on the importance of trust and care within the educative relationship (see
Carl Roger's non-directive teaching model) as does the view of self-knowledge as a
curricularly viable topic for exploration. A proactive selection of the appropriate teaching
model for the content and the student must be mindfully done on a daily basis. In
conjunction with this, practising teachers must be given professional development
opportunities (within in-service days and continuing education courses) in these same
theoretical priorities. An additional recommendation for both teacher-trainees and teachers
is the creation of session where students take the teacher role to talk about their experience
of the educative relationships. Based on the data and findings, it is imperative that
teachers learn to cultivate the appropriate approach (based on the student population and
key knowledge) towards the educative relationship that is inclusive of the students as
learners and selves of experience.
Student-as-Learner

To support these recommendations on the knowledge and teacher components of the educative relationship, the student component must also grow to accommodate the shift in the classroom. While these changes can not be as prescriptive as those offered in the knowledge and teacher components, there is work to be done in regards to shaping student beliefs in themselves as learners, contributors, and selves within the educative relationship. Specific recommendations based on the data, conclusion, and findings then speak to the need for students to place themselves in the classroom in regards to taking ownership of their rights as learner. Utilizing existing learner profiles such as that used by the International Baccalaureate schools and giving students not only the language of what it means to be a learner, but also the training in recognizing, articulating, and enacting the habits of inquiry and life-long learning is essential. *By teaching students what a learner is and then providing them with opportunities to be learners, the student contribution to the educative relationship will be empowered and definitive.*

6.3.3 Conclusion

With research interests in both the theoretical and practice-based realm, this study has strived to contribute new knowledge to both areas. The main contributions of this research are to the theory of the ordinary teenaged female self as well as to the methodological use of a curricular tool for data collection. In addition, this study contributes to practice in its recommendation for the acknowledgement of these themes of self within the educative relationship on both a communal and individual level.

6.4 CONCLUSION

There is something very fitting about not being able to write a conclusion, to stare blankly at the cursor for days, until flipping back through the pages leads me to find not a piece of research, but a piece of Christy and all the others laid out before me, inspiring and speaking to me in the way that endeavours of the heart always will.
And within these pieces - these fragments of self - my conclusion and *my self*. Their stories are my story in both the reality of my lived experiences and the certainty of my future. While I started this journey on my own, surrounded by the memories of Ryan, Justin, Jackie, and Alicia from the introduction to this work, I have ended it filled, changed and joined by these girls, these pieces, in what has come to pass as a project of self that I must also call research.

Christy speaks in her end commentary of coming into our shared classroom with her thoughts, worries, and dreams in tow without the need to vacate the person in order to make way for the student. And such has been my experience of this research, this process. At first I thought I needed to shed my mantle of teacher, to step away from an identity so ingrained in me that, as Christy also says, I seem to teach instead of working as a teacher. I was lost, wandering through the literature like many students faced with a classroom and a content they believed was beyond their selves and abilities. I struggled, pretending to know without any knowledge. And my self was challenged. But as the process rolled on, the girls were met and a reconciliation began to take place. I knew that I was growing throughout this experience of uncertainty and faith. What started as a naive pursuit to change the world has ended as such, but the person at the core of it, the self that initiated it all, is a much richer, deeper self.

And through this growth, my own themes of self emerged - trust, love and pressure to cheekily name a few! And with these themes comes the knowledge and the certainty that I never need to vacate my self in order to do anything, let alone become a researcher. Research does not lack thoughts, worries, and dreams nor is it void of self. In many ways, I have come to learn that that is solely what it is about - my enduring understanding of this endeavour, so to speak.


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AUTHORING OUR CULTURE:
Using Narrative to Explore the Student-Learner’s Understanding of Self within the Educative Relationship

APPENDIX

Kathy Kipp

Supervisor: Aidan Seery

A thesis written in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy (Ph.D.)
September 2012
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APPENDIX A

Correspondence, Consent & Ethics

A1 Letter/Proposal to Schools
A2 NCCA Template
A3 Letter to Student – Introduction
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A5 Student Consent Form
A6 Letter to Parent/Guardian
A7 Parent/Guardian Consent Form
A8 Statement of Ethics
APPENDIX A1 - Letter/Proposal to Schools

April 2010

Dear Principal ____________:

My name is Kathy Kipp and I am currently studying as a PhD student in the School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin. Before this, I was a secondary English teacher for ten years in the States. One of my passions during this time was helping students discover their personal potential by giving them the chance to have a voice in their learning experience - easier said than done! With this as my background, I am currently working with my supervisor, Dr. Aidan Seery, on a project that focuses on a student’s experience of his/her self and education. It is our hope that this project will be able to give second level students an opportunity to talk about their lives and learning in a way that hasn’t been represented in Irish Educational Research.

As part of this project and with your cooperation, I would be looking to work with volunteer students within a Transition Year English module (using the attached unit created on the NCCA TY template). Generally, I’m looking to put together a small class of up to ten students (in a number of schools) to engage in a process of personal and creative exploration. My hope would be to present the project to the students during the first weeks of the 2010-2011 school year. After identifying the student volunteers, I would then orient them to the process, instructing on the writing, thinking, and reflection necessary for the project and taking any questions that they, the school, or parents have about the project. I would then come to your school twice a month (I am very flexible with this timeframe and will allow you to guide it) to facilitate, mediate, and guide student work. Hopefully, a community of learners will be created, and students will feel comfortable reflecting on their findings in an open forum. In the weeks separating my visits, students would be engaged in narration exercises asking them to tell the story of themselves and their learning; much of the student narration will be written and take the form of a loose autobiography. Students will also be asked to express themselves creatively by contextualizing their life through TV, film, image, music, and technology. My intention is to also guide the student experience with the concepts of learning as a process of ownership, a product of relationships, and an event of transformation. At the end of the year, students will walk away with a tangible autobiographical portfolio they can be assessed on. Hopefully, they will also walk away with a set of intangibles – a sense of pride in themselves, an understanding of how their life has been shaped by internal and external factors, an ability to connect who they are as a person to who they are as a learner, and a sense of empowerment to be an author of their culture.

I would be happy to meet with you and/or your Transition Year coordination to more fully discuss this project, the projected timeline, ethical considerations, and the value such an experience would hold for the students and your school. To set up a time, you can reach me at either kippk@tcd.ie or 087 970 1987. You may also contact Dr. Aidan Seery at seerya@tcd.ie or 01 896 2433.

Respectfully,

Kathy Kipp
PhD Student
Trinity College, Dublin
APPENDIX A2 - NCCA Template

TRANSITION UNIT TEMPLATE

UNIT DESCRIPTOR

1. Title of transition unit
   Authoring Our Education

2. Area of study
   Maturity, Creativity, Personal Achievement

3. Overview
   This unit will help students self-reflect on who they have been as a learner, who they are as a learner, and who they can be as a learner. They will be self-directed in looking at how both internal and external factors affect their personal learning and they will offer feedback on the world of education. Through the creation of a personal narrative (using diary, blogging, etc.) and engagement in bi-monthly teacher-research led focus groups, the students will be developing and offering up their voice in regards to the intersection of themselves and the world of education. Such self-reflection will help them determine what intrinsically motivates them as well as help them develop a true personal responsibility towards learning. Students will create an autobiographical portfolio and help contribute to a chapter of a PhD dissertation while guiding the lens that data is looked through. The students will also develop a sense of self-reflection and personal knowledge that will be invaluable to them in their coming years.

4. Related learning
   This unit seeks to build on knowledge and skills acquired by the student in preparation for the Junior Certificate English, specifically in regards to forms of writing. Tasks that students engage in will also help develop the critical thinking skills essential for the Leaving Certificate English essay responses. Links to other disciplines (Art, Film, IT) will happen during teacher-researcher guided focus group sessions. Links to local citizenship in regards to contributing to educational research can be used to reinvigorate the Irish School System.

5. Summary outline of the unit

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT:

After an initial introduction to the study (explanation of research, students' role, ethical questions and concerns), the concept of narration and what the task of narrating one's life and learning would look like, students will be given instruction on how to write in an autobiographical manner in a form of their choosing (diary, blog, etc.). They will also be given guiding questions to focus their writing (within the categories of ownership, relationship, and transformation). There will
also be discussion on the logistics of the project: when they should write, how often they should write, how much they should write, etc.

**BODY OF INSTRUCTION:**

Students will be asked to turn their work into the teacher-researcher on a bi-monthly basis for feedback and support opportunities. Feedback will contain both responsive comments in regards to content and general corrective comments in regards to writing. The purpose of feedback will be to establish a student-researcher dialogue, to guide students’ content choices, and to help troubleshoot problems with engaging in the work. This will continue for the entire year of the study with students entering previous entries into an autobiographical portfolio.

During the bi-monthly meetings of the focus group, students will interact with and respond to materials selected to promote personal reflection (film clips, graphic images, songs, current events, personal stories, etc). Opportunities for considering their personal experiences in a different light will be created and reflection will be the key aim of such sessions. Students will also be able to discuss any questions, concerns, and discoveries at this time. Much of these sessions will be directed by student need and voice.

**CONCLUSION TO THE UNIT:**

At the end of the unit, students will draw upon their personal stories to create both a framework for learning and a reflection piece on their ability to self-manage, self-monitor, and self-modify. They will present their findings to the focus group and the teacher-researcher using a ‘celebration of life’ perspective. All materials will be included in an autobiographical portfolio that may be assessed.

6. **Breakdown of the unit** *(How timetabled)*

Class contact: One English class every two weeks for the entire year

7. **Aims (maximum 3)**

*This transition unit aims to:*

- Empower students to find and express their ‘voice’
- Encourage students to seek personal reflection opportunities
- Deepen students appreciation of themselves, those around them, and the power of learning

8. **Learning outcomes**

*On completion of this unit students should be able to:*

- Write autobiographically for the purpose of self and others
- Make connections between personal events and public events
- Identify significant moments of self-history in regards to personal development and interest
- Identify different types of influences on learning
• Reflect on personal writing, discussions, and activities in a way that creates meaning and purpose for future endeavours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Key skills</th>
<th>How evidenced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>information processing</td>
<td>Reading and reflecting on their own writing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interaction with research selected materials in regards to creating connections and synthesizing experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyzing personal information to create personal and public conclusions on learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>Composing, editing, assessing, and reflecting on personal writing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interaction with research selected materials in regards to creating connections and synthesizing experience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consolidating peer and personal findings into the creation of a framework for learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creation of an autobiographical portfolio that utilizes writing, image, film, songs, etc. to convey self</td>
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<tr>
<td>communicating</td>
<td>Composing, editing, assessing, and reflecting on personal writing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creation of an autobiographical portfolio that utilizes writing, image, film, songs, etc. to convey self</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Focus group discussion on specific topics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Informal presentation on personal findings (mid-year)</td>
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<td>Formal presentation on personal and group findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>working with others</td>
<td>Focus group discussion on specific topic</td>
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<td>being personally effective</td>
<td>Reflection tasks in regards to personal life and learning</td>
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<td>Utilizing feedback and providing constructive peer feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-managing, self-monitoring, and self-modifying in creating an autobiographical portfolio.</td>
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</tbody>
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10. Teaching/Learning approaches

While the main instruction of this unit is student driven and takes the form of independent learning through journal creation, several methodologies will be utilized by the teacher-researcher during focus groups sessions. These may include (but are not limited to): independent
work, pair work, group discussion (guided and open ended), and C.R.I.S.S. strategies for instruction (http://www.projectcriss.com).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. Assessment approaches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student and teacher-researcher assessment of written work (formative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-year informal presentation on personal findings (formative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autobiographical portfolio assessment by both student and teacher-researcher (summative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year end formal presentation on personal and group findings (summative)</td>
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<tr>
<th>12. Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be asked to evaluate their experience by creating feedback on the process of being involved in a research study. They will also be given the opportunity to comment on the final presentation of their contribution in the researcher’s dissertation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>13. Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students will be the main resource for this unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional resources will come from television, film, short stories, graphic images, internet sites, music, etc.</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX A3 - Letter to Student – Introduction

Dear Student,

My name is Kathy Kipp and I am currently studying as a PhD student in the School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin working under the supervision of Dr. Aidan Seery. Before this, I was a secondary level English teacher for ten years at Naperville North High School in Naperville, Illinois, USA (go ahead and google it!).

This year, I will be teaching a Transition Year module at your school. This class will be a chance for you to write about yourself, your life and your experiences as a student. After being a teacher for so long, I would like your help in remembering what it is like to be a student; specifically, I am interested in looking at a students’ perspective on school, learning, and life. To do this, I need your help and your willingness to participate in what will not just be my research, but what will end up being our research. (And, if you are wondering, the title of our research project will be AUTHORIZING OUR EDUCATION: Using Narrative to Explore the Student-Learners’ Experience of Learning).

To get at what our research is looking for, there will be two parts – your part and my part!

**YOUR PART:**
In class, you will be creating an autobiographical portfolio and a personal construct of learning (don’t worry if you don’t know what these are yet...you will!) by responding to the classroom activities and experiences we create. You will ‘show up’ to class and do your best to make it count. Outside of class, you will be writing (in whatever forms suit you) about yourself, your life and your experiences. All of this writing will be contained within your autobiographical portfolio and will help to create your personal construct of learning.

**MY PART:**
In class, I will be working to create experiences that will help you to think about yourself, your life and your experiences and what it means to be you as well as what it means to be a student and a learner. We will be engaging in a variety of activities (from listening to music to painting pictures to looking at movie clips to pen-on-paper writing) that will help you to help me! Outside of class, I will be busy responding to your revelations and creations, comparing your ideas to those of researched academics, and creating a place and space for student voices to be heard. I will also be writing up everything you have to say (in anonymous fashion as your name and that of your school will be kept confidential) to be included in my PhD dissertation and/or scholarly articles and journals.

Generally, I am interested in helping both of us understand how who you are contributes to how you learn as well as what learning is from the learners’ point of view. If you decide that you are interested in taking this module and being a part of this project, consent forms will need to be signed by yourself and a parent/legal guardian. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me at kippk@tcd.ie. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Aidan Seery, at seerya@tcd.ie.

Kindest Regards,

Kathy Kipp
PhD Student
School of Education
Trinity College, Dublin
Dear Student,

Thank you for volunteering to be a part of this project during your Transition Year.

As this module and the activities, products, and assessments from it will be used outside the classroom it is important that your consent and the consent of your parents be obtained.

The information that is obtained during this project will be kept confidential. This means that neither your name nor the school you attend will be named at any point in the sharing or publication of this projects’ findings. Any activity that may identify you (focus group meetings with other schools, presentation to teacher training course, etc.) will be entirely optional and separate consent must be received to participate in those activities.

In order to participate in this project, consent must be given by both yourself and your parent/legal guardian (see attached forms). Once signed, these consent forms should be returned to the school and copies will be kept on file for the course of the term. If at any time you wish to withdraw from this project, you are free to decline to participate and suitable arrangements will be made as determined by your school administrators.

I look forward to working with you this year and excited for everything I am sure to learn from you. I am very excited for what lies ahead and I thank you for willingness to collaborate on this project. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me at kippk@tcd.ie.

Kindest Regards,

Kathy Kipp
PhD Student
School of Education
Trinity College, Dublin
I, _______________________, (your name) agree to participate in a study of student learning and life being conducted by Kathy Kipp, School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin. This study will last the full term of the Transition Year as outlined by my school and follows NCCA guidelines for Transition Year study. The project is entitled: AUTHORING OUR EDUCATION: Using Narrative to Explore the Student-Learners' Experience of Learning.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have been informed of the nature of this project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that my name/my school's name will not be used in the reporting of information collected over the course of this study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that my participation is voluntary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that I can withdraw at any time without personal consequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that information obtained from this project may be used for a PhD dissertation, academic articles and conference presentations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that I will be given opportunities to participate in activities such as one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and teacher training activities that are additional and will require further permission.</td>
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OVERALL CONSENT:

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<th>YES</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have read the information provided as well as the statements above and give my consent to participate in this project.</td>
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Printed Name

Signature

Date
Dear Parent,

My name is Kathy Kipp and I am currently studying as a PhD student in the School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin under the supervision of Dr. Aidan Seery. Before this, I was a secondary school English teacher for ten years at Naperville North High School in Naperville, Illinois, USA. One of my passions during this time was helping students discover their personal potential by giving them the chance to have a voice in their learning experience - easier said than done! Your daughter has been invited to be involved in a project I am involved with at Loreto College.

The project will be offered as a Transition Year module and will use autobiographical writing to help your daughter self-reflect on who she has been as a learner, who she is as a learner, and who she can be as a learner. The module has been created using the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Transition Year Template and follows all guidelines for expected TY learning. Throughout the year your daughter will look at how both internal and external factors affect her personal learning as she creates the story of herself. Such self-reflection will help your daughter identify intrinsic motivations as well as help foster a true personal responsibility towards learning. At the end of the module, your daughter will have created an autobiographical portfolio, a construct of learning, and perhaps contributed to published research (in the form of a PhD dissertation and/or scholarly articles) and the curriculum of a teacher training course. Generally, the project is interested in helping your daughter understand how who she is contributes to how she learns as well as what learning is from the learners' point of view.

The information that is obtained during this project will be kept confidential. This means that neither your daughter nor the school she attends will be named at any point in the sharing or publication of this projects' findings. Any activity that may identify your daughter (focus group meetings with other schools, presentation to teacher training course, etc.) will be entirely optional and separate consent must be received to participate in those activities.

In order for your daughter to participate in this project, consent must be given by both yourself and your daughter (see attached forms). Once signed, these consent forms should be returned to the school and copies will be kept on file for the course of the term. If at any time you wish to withdraw your daughter from this project, or if she no longer wishes to participate, you are free to withdraw your permission and suitable arrangements will be made within your daughter's schedule.

I look forward to working with both you and your daughter this year. I am very excited for what lies ahead and I thank you for willingness to collaborate on this project. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me at kippk@tcd.ie. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Aidan Seery, at seerya@tcd.ie.

Kindest Regards,

Kathy Kipp
PhD Student
School of Education
Trinity College, Dublin
APPENDIX A7 - Parent/Guardian Consent Form

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM
for the participation of a minor in a research study

____________________________ (printed name of son/daughter) has volunteered to participate in a study of student learning and life being conducted by Kathy Kipp, School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin. This study will last the full term of the Transition Year as outlined by your son/daughter’s school and follows NCCA guidelines for Transition Year study. The project is entitled: AUTHORING OUR EDUCATION: Using Narrative to Explore the Student-Learners' Experience of Learning.

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<td>I have been informed of the nature of this project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that my son/daughter's name/student's school name will not be used in the reporting of information collected over the course of this study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that my son/daughter's participation is voluntary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that my son/daughter can withdraw at any time without personal consequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that information obtained from this project may be used for a PhD dissertation, academic articles and conference presentations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand that my son/daughter will be given opportunities to participate in activities such as one-on-one interviews, focus groups and teacher training activities that are voluntary and will require further permission.</td>
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OVERALL CONSENT:

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<th>YES</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have read the information provided as well as the statements above and give my consent to my son/daughter's participation in this project.</td>
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</table>

Printed Name of Son/Daughter

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date
STATEMENT OF ETHICS

This statement of ethics is taken in part from the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) issued by the British Educational Research Association (BERA)*

All research will be conducted with an ethic of respect for the following: the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research, and academic freedom.

1. All research will be conducted with an ethic of respect for any persons involved directly or indirectly in the research, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, political beliefs and lifestyle or any other significant difference between such persons and the researchers themselves or other participants in the research.

2. Participants in the research must give voluntary informed consent and agree to participate without any duress prior to the start of research practices.

3. Participants will be fully informed in regards to the research and the research process, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported.

4. Participants have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time (for any or no reason) and they must be informed of this right.

5. The researcher will work in accordance with Article 3 (the best interest of the child must be the primary consideration) and Article 12 (children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express them freely in all matters affecting them, commensurate with their age and maturity) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6. The researcher is under obligation to receive fully informed consent from the young adults engaged in this research.

7. The researcher is under obligation to receive fully informed consent from those who act in guardianship (e.g. parents) or as ‘responsible others’ (i.e. those who have responsibility for the welfare and well-being of the participants e.g. social workers).

8. The researcher will ensure that she complies with all legal requirements and school regulations in relation to working with school children.

9. The researcher recognizes the participants’ entitlement to privacy and will accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. Any circumstances that may impinge on this right will require a student and legal guardian acknowledged waiver.

10. The researcher will inform all participants both verbally and in writing how and why their personal data will be stored, to what uses it is being put and to whom it will be made available.
11. The data collected from this research will be kept securely and any form of publication will not directly or indirectly lead to a breach of agreed confidentiality and anonymity.

12. Any decision to override agreements on confidentiality and anonymity (due to illegal or harmful behaviour) will be taken after careful and thorough deliberation.

13. The researcher will bring these ethical guidelines to the attention of all secondary schools engaged in the research.

14. The researcher will keep the school management informed on the research process.

15. The researcher recognizes the school's entitlement to privacy and will accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. Any circumstances that may impinge on this right will require a waiver.

16. The researcher will offer a fully, honest and amenable justification on the final choice of methods in the research process.

17. The researcher will communicate the extent to which the data collection and analysis techniques (and the inferences to be drawn from their findings) are reliable, valid and generalizable.

18. The researcher will endeavour to communicate findings, and the practical significance of the research, in a clear, straightforward fashion and in language judged appropriate to the intended audience.

19. The researcher will protect the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring all research is conducted to the highest standards.

20. The researcher will communicate the findings of the research to other members of the educational research community through research seminars, conference presentation and proceedings and publication taking account of all issues of confidentiality and protection of research participants.
APPENDIX B
Curricular Resources

B1 Curriculum Design Template
B2 Formative Assessments – Order of Writing Prompts
B3 Summative Assessment – Autobiographical Portfolio/End Assessment
B4 Lesson Plans
B5 Lesson Resources (in-class and at-home)
B6 The Irish School System
B7 The Irish School System (Transition Year)
B8 Understanding By Design Template
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Title: Authoring Our Education</th>
<th>Subject/Course: Transition Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Self and Learning</td>
<td>Grade: 4th Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame: 18 weeks</td>
<td>Designer: Kathy Kipp</td>
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**SUMMARY OF UNIT**

This unit will help students self-reflect on who they have *been* as a person and learner, who they *are* as a person and learner, and who they *can be* as a person and learner through the interaction with various themes of self, learning, and life. They will be self-directed in looking at how both internal and external factors affect their development of self and of personal learning and they will offer feedback on the world of education. Through the creation of a personal narrative (using diary, blogging, etc.) and engagement in teacher-research led focus groups, the students will be developing and offering up their voice in regards to themselves and the main themes and topics that assert themselves in life. Such self-reflection will help the students to determine what intrinsically motivates them as well as help them develop a true personal responsibility towards self and learning. The students will also develop a sense of self-reflection and personal knowledge that will be invaluable to them in their coming years.

**STAGE 1**

**DESIRED RESULTS**

**Established Goals:**

*Course/Program Objectives (DES 1994: 2):*

- Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence
- The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning
- Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Enduring Understandings:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Essential Questions:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world</td>
<td>o What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How do I influence my story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities</td>
<td>o What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How do I influence my learning?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Students will know...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Students will be able to ...</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>o Their history of self as self</td>
<td>o Write autobiographically for the purpose of self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Their history as self as learner</td>
<td>o Make connections between personal events and public events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Their history in regards to the commonalities of human experience</td>
<td>o Identify significant moments of self-history in regards to personal development and interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Their voice of expressing experience (and the factors that influence it)</td>
<td>o Identify different types of influences on learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>o The key experiential moments of self and self as learner</td>
<td>o Reflect on personal writing, discussions, and activities in a way that creates meaning and purpose for future endeavours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The relationship between the identified history of self and moments of learning (past, present, anticipated future)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Tasks:</td>
<td>Other Evidence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Portfolio</td>
<td>Classroom discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Construct of Learning</td>
<td>Weekly teacher-guided journal entries</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Other Evidence:**
- Classroom discussion
- Weekly teacher-guided journal entries
- Self-generated journal entries
- Self-reflection on class work
- Informal presentation and conferences

**Student Self-Assessment and Reflection Opportunities:**
- Metacognitive writings reflecting on journal entries (formative)
- Creation of Autobiographical Portfolio (specifically the creation and designation of thematic units of self)
- Metacognitive writing on autobiographical portfolio (summative)
- Creation of Personal Construct of Learning

**ASSESSMENT TASK BLUE PRINT**

Both performance tasks (autobiographical portfolio and personal construct of learning) will assess and demonstrate student understandings as well as provide evidence of the desired understandings.

**TASK OVERVIEW – Autobiographical Portfolio:**
In the autobiographical portfolio, students are asked to reflect on the narrative writing they created for the course and identify five themes that emerged as essential to their life experience. Within each identified theme, the students are asked to create a chronology of experience, identifying items of the far past, near past, and relative present. They are also asked to include a section on hopes for the future (based on a critical look at the
past) that identify lessons learned and wisdom gained. The students are also asked to frame their portfolio with an introduction and conclusion, both meant to be acts of introspection and declaration. The students are also given the directive to include any artefact from outside of class (art, pictures, song lyrics, work from other classes, etc.) that they feel would contribute to the piece as a whole.

**TASK OVERVIEW – Personal Construct of Learning:**
The students create a personal construct of learning through reflection on both the narrative writings generated throughout the school year and the autobiographical portfolio. Specifically, students are asked to create and support a definition of learning based on the personal experiences shared within their narrative (and the validity of their life experience). Within this definition, students are asked to identify: 1. A general summation of what learning looks like, 2. factors needing to be present for learning to occur, 3. factors that influence learning, 4. experiences that create learning, and 5. how instances of learning can be identified.

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:**
Evaluation will be done using a student-generated rubric that uses the six factors of understanding as its categories for appraisal.
STAGE 3
Planned Learning Experiences

Learning Activities:

While the main instruction of this unit is student driven and takes the form of independent learning through journal creation, several methodologies will be utilized by the teacher-researcher during focus groups sessions to link instruction to the module’s enduring understandings.

General Questions for Framing of Instruction:

- What external factors influence the stories we tell?
- What internal factors influence the stories we tell?
- How do the stories we tell about others reflect our self?
- What are your personal perceptions of learning?
- What do I, as a student, have to offer the educational process?
- What is the daily routine of my life? Why is this the case? How does fear affect me and my life decisions?
- What am I thankful for (about me)? Why? How did this come to be?
- What life moments have shaped me? What are significant moments from my past?
- What does learning feel like? What circumstances make it easier?
- What in my life am I passionate about and invested in enough to confront it with resolve? What would I like to confront in my life with resolve?
- Where do I find comfort in life? Where do I belong? Where is ‘home’?
- What is important to me? What are the ideas that swirl around my life, giving me pause and making me question?
- How do I see others? How do others see me? How do I chose to see myself? Why do we chose criticality over positivity?
- What does trust look like? What factors influence trust and what are different dimensions of trust?
- How do we make friends? How can our friendship groups change over time (and what influences this change)? How does this affect the trust we have in them?
- What is empowerment? What relationships am I in that call for me to be empowered?
APPENDIX B2 - FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS
Order of Writing Prompts

1. Respond to the poem ‘The Invitation’ (and whatever else you wish to write on)

2. What do people see when they see you?

3. How do you look at others, how does this reflect something about you, what are the daily tasks of what it is to live their lives?

4. Who are you as a learner, what do you learn, when do you learn, where do you learn, why do you learn and how do you learn?

5. What are five things you know more about than me? Tell three stories where you learned something from your experience.

6. Write about the routine of your life (a little bit every day until our next session) and think about this idea of fear and how it might come into play.

7. What things are you thankful for in regards to yourself?

8. After drawing five significant events in your life, write on two.

9. What does learning feel like? What circumstances make it easier? (Chinese Whisper)

10. Resolve...what have you done, what would you like to do?

11. Where do they feel at home? What things, places, people make you feel at home, etc.?

12. Where we should go next...what ideas, issues, themes, concepts are ‘spiralling’ around them? Write your life.

13. What does it mean to be you? What have been your celebrations, your tragedies, your challenges, and your victories? Who or what inspire you? ground you? Where have you been and where are you going? Who are you? What is YOUR life about (in the deep places you exist)?

14. Consider the way in which you see yourself, the things that are important and deep and in you....consider your strengths, the things to be proud of....and not just the ways you are critical of yourself, but WHY you are critical, uncertain, or dissatisfied in these areas...and what can you do to turn that negative self-talk/thought around?!

15. Explore the idea of TRUST in your life...how trustworthy are you? who do you trust? who deserves your trust? who do you give your trust to? what factors influence how you build trust?

16. Write about the friendship relationships you have? Where does trust come in?
17. No Prompt – Just keep writing on whatever!

18. I statements and their place in the relationships you have.

19. The future...what do you want for your future...how will you celebrate your life?
APPENDIX B3 - Summative Assessment
Autobiographical Portfolio/End Assessment

STEP ONE

1. **Read through ALL your writing from this class!!!**
   As you are reading, underline important or surprising things you said, insights you had into your life, lessons you have learned, or interesting things you notice in your writing!! Make comments in the margins (just like I did!!). AND....*At the end of each writing, share any additional thoughts that may have come up as you were reading!!!!* Pretend it is a book on your life that you are editing, interacting with, and responding to!

2. **Identify FIVE TOPICS (FIVE ‘WHATS’) that emerge from your writing**
   So, I gave you stuff and things to write on. And you did. But you took your own slant and your own angle on each prompt and what you created reflects you and your view of your life...your imaginations and creations of self (so to speak!). So....*what topics do you find (now that you have looked at all your writing together) seem to come up an awful lot? What topics are essential to your life experience? Is it friends, family, school? These are your topics....not the topics I gave to you....but where you went with them!!!*

3. **Identify THEMES (‘HOWS’ and ‘WHYS’) that emerge from your topics**
   Okay, so you talked about your friends....but what is it that you are saying about these topics? How do you feel about this topic...how does this topic make you feel? How does this topic affect your understanding of yourself and your life? Why is this such an important topic to you? Why is this the affect it has on you? You may have multiple themes sprouting from each topic!!!
   *(FOR EXAMPLE: You identify your topic as ‘friends’, but your themes within friends could be ‘self-esteem’, ‘conflict in morals’, ‘dependent/independent’, etc.)*

4. **Record your FIVE TOPICS and resulting THEMES on the handy dandy chart provided at the end OR make your own!!!**
   *(CAUTION: Read Step Six before you go all kindergarten crazy!!!)*

5. **Go back to your writing and identify the TOPICS within each piece.**
   Here is a chance for some marker fun!!! Take your five topics from step number two. Assign them each a colour (make sure it is a colour you can
read through!!! Yellow = good; brown = not so much!!!). Flip back through your writing (specifically to the parts you underlined in step number one) and highlight the things that you said that were especially important in regards to that topic in that topic's designated colour! So if you assign pink to friends, then when you say something particularly important about friends, highlight it pink! If something works for more than one topic, rainbow your heart out!!!

6. **Quote yourself 😊**
Choose five things you said (that you really like, you found insightful, interesting, intriguing) and match them up to not just the TOPIC but the THEMES within each topic. So, if you have one topic and four themes for that topic, you would try to end up with twenty quotes (that are all from you)!!!

**STEP TWO**

1. **Write a reflection for each identified topic**
These reflections – to be typed – are meant to be the heart of this autobiographical portfolio and are intended to give you the opportunity to really think about the journey you have been on this year (and...honestly...where you have been in this journey we call life!)

In each reflection, please include your thoughts on this topic (and the themes you identified within each topic) in regards to:

- □ How 'you' fit into it all ('you' you and 'self' you and any other 'you' you come up with!). Consider internal conditions such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions.
- □ How 'others' fit into it all (think about all of those relationships you so aptly identified the day Marta was in with us!). Consider external conditions and things outside yourself.
- □ Where you have been in the far past, near past, and relative present in regards to this topic/theme (as identified in your writing or not). What lessons have you learned and what wisdom do you hold on this topic/theme?
- □ Hopes you have for the future based on where you have been in your past.

2. **Create a personal construct of learning**
Something wonderful that comes out of narrating your life experiences and imaginings is the chance to look back, reflect, and learn. With this, and all of our classroom conversations, in mind, you will create a definition of learning based on YOUR life and YOUR experiences (as identified in your writing and beyond). In essence, your life is what will support the definition you create!!! How's that for important??!!

For the creation of your typed opinionated definition, you should reflect on:
What learning looks like to you
Factors that need to be present for you to learn
Factors that influence how you learn
Experiences that create your learning
How instances of your learning can be identified
What can be done (in the future) with all the above knowledge
(Anything else you feel is important)

3. Write an introduction and conclusion to your portfolio
What are you introducing and concluding? Yourself and your writing (all of your weekly journal writings and all of the above writing). Have fun and be creative. Think of this as an opportunity to create a declaration of self!

STEP THREE

1. Make a cover
Think of this as your own book, CD, blog, etc. and give it a title and a cover! Be creative...be you!!

2. Put it all together
In some sort of something, put everything together!!! Start with your introduction, then include your ‘topic/theme’ chart, then your reflections, then your actual weekly writings, then your personal construct of learning, and finally your conclusion. Feel free to jazz it up with anything from outside of class (art, pictures, song lyrics, stickers, work from other classes, etc.) that you think will contribute to the piece as a whole.

3. Give it to me
If you are ready and able, complete this for our last class session:

MAY 17th!!!

If not, we will arrange for a time mid-June for me to collect it from you!

4. Email me
Please email me a copy of your:
☐ Introduction
☐ topic/theme chart (if typed)
☐ reflections
☐ any writings you have typed which were not previously emailed to me
☐ personal construct of learning
☐ Conclusion
☐ Anything else you want to email me!

5. Wait 😊!
Over the summer, I will be diligently making copies so that I can return the original to you when you return to school in the fall!!

STEP FOUR

1. Celebrate your life....your journey, your triumphs, your failures, your lessons learned and your choices made!

HAPPY LIFE!!! ☺
### TOPICS OF MY LIFE
(and marker colours)

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### Theme 1

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Ireland is one of my TOPICS. It is ‘what’ I have been writing about. You will have FIVE topics all together!

Self-Confidence, Dependence, Loneliness, and Fear are my THEMES of this TOPIC. They are ‘how’ and ‘why’ this topic (Ireland) has been important to me and something that I have been writing on, thinking about, etc. I recommend between THREE and FIVE themes as subsets (reasons) for this topic!!

‘Fight of Flight’ is a quote from when I was speaking on Fear. You would use direct quotes from your writing!! I would recommend, at minimum five but at maximum whatever you feel like including!!!
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week One (September 21st)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

'Unit' Question(s):
- What external factors influence the stories we tell?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Students were given a general review of the module, expectations for the module, and how the module would progress throughout the year.

I then told a personal story about my sister and myself driving to my grandparents and getting into a fight over ‘toll way change’.

Students were then asked to write a personal story about one of the topics that came up in the story I told (siblings, fighting, grandparents, driving, cities, etc.)

Students were then asked to brainstorm the differences between the story I told and the story they wrote. Assorted answers were given but the main one being that my story was shared aloud. Class then discussed how this would affect the story told in regards to
audience and perspective, eventually getting to how the fact that I was the storyteller influenced the telling of the story as well as who I was telling it to influenced the story

Students were then asked what they learned about me from my story. After answers were given, the conclusion was reached that most information was superficial or about other people or places. After re-examining their own stories, students drew the same conclusion about their own.

The class then discussed how we would be starting in this point of surface disclosure and working our way towards a richer sharing of self.

The poem ‘The Invitation’ was then read.

Students were given the instructions to respond to the poem (and whatever else they wished to write on) for the following week.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

The review of the module was necessary as this was the first class and I wanted to give them a sense of direction, ownership, and expectation.

The purposes behind sharing my own personal story were: 1. To set the class tone in regards to the expectations of sharing, creating a level of comfort, and promoting community, 2. To model the sort of story I was expecting – personal in nature in that ‘you’ were in the story, but not personal in nature in regards to what the story revealed, 3. To offer a common experience for discussion purposes.

In regards to the students sharing their own story, the purposes were: 1. To get them into the mindset of a story (which will eventually lead to narrative), 2. To help me learn a little bit about them (to be used in future lesson in regards to name recall), 3. To allow them to begin building a picture of who they are versus who they ‘say’ they are.

In discussion of my story and their story, it was my intention to introduce and focus on the influence of audience and perspective. Firstly, I wanted to start the class thinking about
the idea of 'who' they are writing for...themselves? me? the class? the world?...and how eventually it is my goal to get them immersed in the idea and belief that this will be for themselves as one of my interests is in the self-narrative. Secondly, I wanted them to be aware of how our individuality affects our perspective and how it is okay that we can all experience the same thing but relay it differently (for example, if my sister were to tell the same story). My interest in this idea has to do with encouraging the validity of their personal perspective so as to give them confidence later on in course tasks (creating a personal construct of learning).

I then asked the class what they knew about me from my story. After a list of items were shouted out, we determined that the list was very much on the surface and while necessary, not as interesting as some of the stories that exist within ourselves. I asked them to re-examine their own stories with the idea of 'what will I have learned about them when I was done reading them'. Students came to the conclusion that much of my learning would be about other people or other things. This set the tone then for the poem 'The Invitation'.

The poem 'The Invitation' was selected to help the students start thinking about the types of things we will be talking about as the year progresses....to help them establish a point of departure from their standard writing about themselves.

**Personal Reflection:**
The girls are ebullient and intrigued. This is going to be fun and I feel comfortable with the lessons I have set out to reach the established enduring understandings.

***In regards to what a narrative is – looking at the writing produced in this first prompt – the students instinctively understood the concept as they 'had nothing to say'...a story, as it is, cannot be forced but, so it seems, must evolve...however, the natural onus of storytelling has been perhaps stripped from students as they are often times forced to create whether or not they have the ability, the want, or the need to tell.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Two (September 28th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What external factors influence the stories we tell?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Instruction started with a review of the key points from last class (a story is something to be told – to or for ourselves, to or for others; personal perspective influences the story told; perception of audience influences the story told; most stories we tell reveal more about ‘others’ than ourselves).

The poem ‘The Invitation’ was then re-read to the class (from previous week) to remind them of what we are working towards – a disclosure of self for self. The class discussed that we are not to the point of the poem in regards to trust – yet – so we would start on the ‘easier’ things to talk about and share and work our way to this point. The concept of ‘external’ was introduced and used to introduce the writing prompt for the day.
Student were then asked to write on the prompt ‘What do people see when they see you?’

The class then played a game of matching four people from a picture (and from the life of the researcher) with the characteristics provided. After revealing the answer, the class talked about ‘what’ made them think this and ‘how’ and ‘why’ they made the decisions that they made. The class also talked about how knowing realities about yourself in regards to how others view you can be turned into a strength.

Students were then given the instruction to continue their writing on this topic at home and to return at our next session with a piece that not only tells the ‘what’ of the question, but also the ‘how’ and ‘why’.

Rationale (How/Why):
A review of previous instruction was given as it is good teaching practice and because the students will need to be familiar with these concepts to truly begin to write a narrative that is of themselves and for themselves.

Discussion of the poem was essential to sparking the discussion of public and private selves, of external and internal cultures of being. The students need to begin to wrap their heads around the levels of sharing that will exist as they begin to create and formulate their personal narrative.

The prompt ‘What do people see when they see you?’ was designed to be a starting point for sharing but with the viewpoints of others as the heart of the piece. This was intentional as it creates a ‘lack’ of ownership in regards to what is shared but also offers the opportunity to be reflective, critical, and communal about certain pieces of information. My intention is to create a door for the students to enter into deeper sharing without discarding these outer layers of influence on self.

The game was used to help activate the students’ prior knowledge and experience with the way we view others and make assumptions without the experience of them as people. This was also intended to give them food for thought in regards to their response to the prompt provided (when are we predictable, what are the surprises we hold, etc.).
Personal Reflection:

I think the girls walked away with a sense today of where this is all going and I truly believed that they were intrigued. They were engaged in the activities, intrigued by the prompt presented, and mindful of how ‘The Invitation’ was truly about all they would be accomplishing this year. While I asked them to come in with one written response to the prompt, it will be interesting to see who begins to create more than just the one response. I also believe that once the website system gets up and running, the girls sense of ownership and involvement with such prompts will, for lack of a better word, explode. I also know that at this stage, I need to encourage anything they do do, so at the moment my philosophy is expect the little things and hope for the big things. I also feel very positive about the rapport I am forming with the class and the community they have with each other. Many girls hung back at the end of class for general chit-chat and I saw one student on the street at the bus stop the following day and she stopped to talk to me about her day. I think the key with this group will be to keep them interested, engaged, and involved in a continuous dialogue.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Three (October 5th)

Class Profile:
24 4\textsuperscript{th} year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What external factors influence the stories we tell?
- How do the stories we tell about others reflect our self?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Instruction started with a review of the key points from last class (a story is something to be told – to or for ourselves, to or for others; personal perspective influences the story told; perception of audience influences the story told; most stories we tell reveal more about 'others' than ourselves; how others view us and what affect that has on our stories). We also took care of some housekeeping items.

A story was told about my experiences as a high school student (secondary school) and a particular student that was deemed a 'nerd' and treated like a nerd for the five years I had classes with him. In our sixth year of knowing each other, when I came to realize those things didn't really matter, it was too late...he wasn't interested in being friends with me.
The class then engaged in an activity where they created a paper airplane out of a sheet of paper. When they were done, their plane was passed to someone else. The second person then evaluated the airplane, giving it a mark on a scale from 1 – 10 (10 being the best). They then shared their evaluation, offering a rationale. I then shared with them my criteria for a sound paper airplane (very arbitrary) and they all were forced to re-evaluate.

The students were then asked what was the connection between the airplane activity and the ‘nerd’ story. A discussion was had then on how we evaluate ‘things’, who decides the criteria, how criteria can be arbitrary, how some things can be changed to meet the criteria and some can’t, and how we can establish our own criteria. In regards to story-telling, the students where asked to consider how they view others, what influences their view, etc.

As the next TY class will meet in four weeks, the students were given the task of thinking about how they look at others, how this reflects certain things about themselves, as well as the daily tasks of what it is to live their lives.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

A review of previous instruction was given as it is good teaching practice and because the students will need to be familiar with these concepts to truly begin to write a narrative that is of themselves and for themselves. Also, as the class will not be meeting for a month, it was important to remind the students of these initiating ideas of storytelling as they begin to work on their own.

I chose to tell a story of my own to firstly reinforce the foundation of this course, that of storytelling and the narrative. I also chose this story from my past experiences as it was relatable to the students in regards to content and because it coloured me in a slightly less than desirable light (as I was not very nice to the student in the story). It was also a story of making judgements based on external characteristics and qualities, the concept the class is currently exploring.
The activity of the airplanes was designed to get the students interacting with each other and generally having a laugh. It was also meant to show how we each create our own standards of value, though some standards are always desirable. We then used this to discuss how such standards are created for us and how we choose to follow (or not follow) them reflect on our personality.

The prompt that was given then was sufficiently vague so as to give the students direction but to also allow them a place for ownership and initiative. It was also meant to help them uncover the other side of last weeks assignment...that people see them in a certain way, but they also see other in certain ways...and both these things reveal things about who they are and their story of self.

**Personal Reflection:**

As this was my third session with the girls, the one thing I was most interested in was seeing how strong a community existed in the classroom and to gauge what level of rapport I was enjoying with the students. I spent a bit more time at the beginning (while I was handing back papers and they were turning in items to be marked) just generally ‘chatting’ with the students, interested in who responded, how they responded, and if there was an air of self-consciousness in their dialogue. I choose X-Factor as my subject (thinking that that was a sufficiently 15 year old girl friendly topic) and the room exploded with excitement. The girls talked over each other in regards to trying to convey their opinions to me and they were all very interested in what my opinion was. I judged their level of comfort quite high as they were also willing to disagree with me and my opinion, an act that made me feel as though they respected me as a part of the group. I also felt that a community was beginning to form as when we talked about how we wouldn’t see each other for a month, some girls actually let out noises of distress while others filled in me in on all the things that I would miss in the month (her birthday)!

The other thing that I thought was interesting from today was how the girls responded to the ‘vagueness’ of my directions in regards to what they should be doing in the three weeks we are away from each other. After giving them the prompt and what I was interested in them doing (which was purposefully vague as I want to see where they will go without my lead), I said that they could submit their writing (through the internet site) whenever they wanted to or just bring it in all at once at our next meeting. The girls questioned, ‘Well,
which would you prefer?’ and I responded, ‘It doesn’t matter to me.’ They continued, ‘But...would you rather we email as we go or turn it in on all at once?’ When I continued to leave it in their hands they were a little distressed so I told them that I was leaving it up to them as this sort of decision was part of the course and what I was interested in. This seemed to settle them.

In regards to the writing the girls submitted from last weeks prompt, they are starting to reveal themselves beyond surface qualities. I still need to do more work to help them begin to uncover themselves through their writing.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Four (November 2nd)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What are your personal perceptions of learning?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Instruction started with a reiteration of the aims of this project in regards to the students. An explanation of why they were being asked about their lives was provided (in regards to acknowledging that students are individuals as well as a collective body) and any questions they might have were answered.

I then referenced an activity I did with the students on the day I presented the course to the entire Transition Year class (putting their fist on their chin, but I put mine on my cheek...most of the students follow the visual cue and not the verbal) and said that we were now going to begin exploring this portion of the project.

I then put the words who, what, when, where, why and how on the board and asked the girls to think about learning as they approached each question. So, the who became ‘who are you as a learner’, the what became ‘what do you learn’, the when became ‘when do you
learn', and the where became 'where do you learn'. After they wrote on these questions, I showed them the Derek Redmond video and asked them to then write the ‘why do you learn’ and ‘how do you learn’ portions at home with some reflection.

Rationale (How/Why):
As there had been a three week break between the last and this one, I decided that this was the appropriate time to remind the girls about the purpose of this class and that there was more to it than just coming to class; I wanted them to remember that there was more value to everything we were doing and that they were in the driving seat more than I was (the girls are very directive seeking in regards to clear expectations and answers...they don’t trust in themselves enough...for example one girl kept saying, ‘Miss Kipp, I think I’m doing it wrong’ despite my attempts to assure her that there was no wrong!)

In regards to the writing prompt, after solidifying my research questions, it became obvious that I needed to ask the students for a general ‘pre’ sampling of their thoughts on learning. I decided on the who, what, when, etc. format as to just ask about learning and thoughts on learning can be very intimidating and somewhat alienating as it is quite a vast question. I thought the who, what, when format would still allow for plenty of room for personal direction while providing a general prompt. A few students noted that their answers overlapped (which I said was fine) but after the initial ‘ah’ of having to write, the girls settled down into responses.

After they had created their responses to who, what, where, when, I wanted to give them a bit more fuel for the fire, so to speak, and see if I could spark any depth in this reflection on learning by having them watch the Olympic competition of Derek Redmond (crosses finish line with his dad). After it played, I simply said that sometimes the most important lessons we learn come from the most unexpected places.

Personal Reflection:
This session with the girls reiterated something that I had seen in prior class periods – an almost inability to ‘think’ without guidance. I knew full well that the questions I would be asking them to respond to were vague and challenging at best and there was an almost palpable reluctance to complete the response when first given, not because of the challenge of the questions, but because of the ‘fear to be wrong’. As previously mentioned, one girl
continually worried about, ‘doing it wrong’ and the girl who I was helping write (due to broken fingers she is unable to write so she dictated to me) wanted to check with me – ‘right?’ – before she would say it was her completed answer.

This hesitation has reiterated to me that perhaps one of the things I need to be focusing on is encouraging the students that their answers are ‘right’ and valid in regards to what I am looking for. I think perhaps that I will start all future classes with the acknowledgement that they are the experts in regards to what we are doing and that they should feel confidence when approaching the questions they are asked.

One notable thoughts that came out of this session was that there would be a nice richness to interviewing the students as well (from my playing scribe to the one injured student).

It will be interesting to read what they write and how they complete the final tasks – how and why – of the prompt. I also think that I will now be asking them to begin their narration out of class while in class we explore learning.
Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What do I, as a student, have to offer the educational process?

Instructional Sequence (What):
I began instruction for the day by telling the girls that I had noticed a great concern on their part in our past classes (in both verbal and written exchanges) for creating – ‘giving’ me - a correct answer. I told them that I wanted to help them realize that in the context which we are working, there isn’t a correct answer.

To begin, I asked them to write a couple of sentences on what they thought of in regards to the student/teacher relationship. After they completed this, I then showed the girls a clip from the movie Good Will Hunting (46:03 -47:03) where the Robin Williams character says to the title character, ‘You’re just a kid, you don’t have the faintest idea what you’re talking about.’ I then asked the girls why I would play this clip after asking about the teacher/student relationship. The class responded with the ideas that in many ways, this is the student/teacher relationship...the teacher knowing more than the student and the student
having to listen. They talked about being put in the place of ‘being just a kid’ and how that was a difficult place to inhabit.

I then if this was the case...do they not know anything because they are just a kid? The girls said ‘no’ this was not true and so I had them write down five things they knew more about than myself. The responses were varied (from Harry Potter to gymnastics to my friends birthdays to my family) and a few students identified the direction I was trying to take them in regards to our course...that they know more about themselves than anyone else. We then watched the remaining part of the clip and I asked the girls to identify what Robin Williams’ rationale was for telling Matt Damon’s character that he didn’t know what he was talking about. I also asked them to write on how this rationale could possibly connect to the teacher/student relationship.

When the class was finished writing on this, I had them verbalize the rationale presented – that there is a difference between knowing and experiencing and the implication that experiencing something make it more vivid, more real, more yours. They also talked then on how many times teachers assume they have more experience but that may not be the case, that students have certain life experiences that teachers have never had and that these are real and have meaning. I then connected this back to the fact that they are experts on themselves and since I am interested in who they are, they will always be experts in the answers they give.

I then asked the girls to tell three different stories from their lives where they learned about something through experience for homework.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

This lesson was not specifically planned in this way in regards to the original scheme of work designed for the curriculum of the course but came about in response to the girls perception of their role in the classroom; specifically, this lesson was designed to open up a dialogue about the students’ need to provide what they deem ‘right answers’ (in the classroom setting) and their general sense of discomfort with open-ended questions/answers. **I do want to explore this idea of needing to provide a right answer, but I wanted to make sure the girls didn’t feel like there was a right answer to this answer!!**
The tasks at hand and the writing reflection that the girls were asked to do, however, were purposeful in helping them establish a valid and supported voice and it is my hope that this will help them in their future writing. By asking about the student/teacher relationship, I was interested in allowing them to voice their perspective, not just on their past experiences but also on the dynamic of our own relationships. With my next question, in regards to connecting with the ‘you’re just a kid’ line, I then also wanted to reinforce the fact that they do have authority generally, and in the course of what we are discussing and ‘researching’, the authority they have is implicit in everything we do, in every response they give. I then wanted to reinforce this discovery with the discussion of knowledge versus experience and the concept that their experience have worth (in whatever way they chose to perceive the concept of worth).

Personal Reflection:
I felt like this lesson was very effective in helping the girls begin to think a bit differently about themselves and about who they are in the classroom. Mostly, this comes from the general sense in the classroom when the lesson was finished, one of realization, excitement, and interest. This was then supported by the writing done within the class period, with the girls articulating their view and working to understand that do have something worth sharing. I am interested to see what they will write during the week and how they will feel in regards to their writing. I am also interested to see if their ‘language of doubt’ will change in the coming weeks.
Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What is the daily routine of my life? Why is this the case? How does fear affect me and my life decisions?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Today I started the class by showing a clip from the movie ‘Stranger than Fiction’ (start – 3:04). In this clip the daily routine of the main character (played by Will Farrel) is narrated in mundane detail by the author of his life (played by Emma Thompson). In the narration, the audience learns a number of inconsequential things about the main character – from the number of times he brushes to teeth to the exact time he goes to bed. From this clip, I asked the students to imagine what the narrator of their every day life would have to say. The class laughed as a whole to that question as we all imagined the details of our breakfast or our tea break being narrated to an audience.
I then asked the girls if they ever thought about their life at this level – the monotony and routine of it. When the class responded ‘yes’, I then asked why they thought that was the way it was. The answers given were ‘it is safe’, ‘it makes you feel comfortable’, and ‘because of being afraid’.

This then lead into the lesson for the day...a lesson on the subject of fear. I had a power point created on the topic which discussed: the claim that fear provokes a ‘fight or flight’ response and that instead, perhaps, more realistically provokes a general paralysation and inability to move; the divided between irrational fears and rational fears; a list of rational fears with the idea of FEAR OF FAILURE being highlighted; and the idea that knowledge is power in regards to the knowledge of yourself (your fears) and what control you have over your life. To help build trust, I shared personal examples on my dealing with fear, my experience of paralysation, and my work to overcome my fear of failure.

The students were then asked to write about the routine of their life (a little bit every day until our next session) and to think about this idea of fear and how it might come into play.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

In regards to narrative data collection, one of my intentions was to have a portion of the narrative be ‘real time’ in regards to what was happening in the students present lives...a general detailing of the day to day process of living. Hoping for a little more depth than just a bullet pointed list (extending beyond the what into the how/why), I placed the request at this point in our course with the hope that the rapport established and the girls interest in the course and what we have talked about prior to this class would help inspire that depth. I also felt that by prefacing the request for this task with the clip from the movie ‘Stranger than Fiction’ the girls would have a better understanding of what I was and wasn’t looking for. Also, when I posed the question about what if someone was narrating our lives, I was able to remind them of our narrative quest as well as open up the door for them to consider the mundane tasks that make up our days. I also felt that this clip paired with this question set up the topic I wanted to address with the girls, the topic of fear.
The thinking behind broaching the topic of fear with the girls was that, while I am interested in a day-to-day chronicle of the girls lives, I am also interested in the depth that lies behind these activities; I am interested in the turning points of their lives, the moments that have shaped them, the lessons that they have learned, the ‘things’ that are of interest and import. It is my belief that a conversation on fear will help to approach this based on my previous classroom experience on the topic. Specifically in regards to the way I chose to break down fear (fight or flight; paralysation; rational versus irrational; fear of failure; knowledge is power) I think that I was able to connect the topic in their life and how it comes into decision making (or lack of decision making).

**Personal Reflection:**

Right now, the one thing I wish is that I was able to meet with the girls on a more regular occasion...which is a great thing as it means that I am enjoying my time in the classroom as teacher-researcher AND that they are inspiring me in my work. I also know the girls are enjoying their time as the deputy principal came up and said that when they miss my class (due to TY obligations) they are very vocal about it and disappointed. I also feel as though they are enjoying the in-class material as they are commenting it on their way out – ‘thanks, that was great’ ‘that made me think’. In their writing, I feel as though they are expressing themselves as they think about school and their place within as a student, a learner, and a person.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Seven (November 23rd)

Class Profile:
24 4\textsuperscript{th} year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What am I thankful for (about me)? Why? How did this come to be?

Instructional Sequence (What):
For today’s lesson, I took the opportunity to build some community and a greater rapport with the students by structuring an activity that would allow us to casually interact on a one-on-one basis.

With it being the week of American Thanksgiving (this Thursday), I presented the girls with a short history of Thanksgiving and how it is authentically celebrated in the States. I then introduced them to the one thing that every American would associate with Thanksgiving (specifically primary school students) – turkey hands (after tracing your hand, you turn it into a turkey by adding feet, a beak, an eye). After showing them how to do this, I talked about how traditionally students would be asked to name five things they were ‘thankful’ for, one for each finger. I then said that typically students would name ‘mom, dad, dog, house, grandma’ or things along those lines. I said that if I were to have them do the same task, they would most likely name the same kind of things ‘family,
friends, house, education, health'. As they made their turkey hand, I was able to walk around the room and interact with the students in a more casual way.

I then said that their next writing was to be on two things they were thankful for, but that the things could not be in this strain – that they would have to be in regards to things, qualities, traits, and values within themselves that they were thankful for. I then gave them a personal example, telling them what I was thankful for (my smile), why I am thankful for it, and how my thanks came about.

Rationale (How/Why):
In my last reflection, I wrote about wanting the chance to spend more time with the students and thought that I could create a lesson where I would be able to interact more freely and help to build trust. I also thought that this would be a timely, interesting lesson that would teach the girls a bit about America while also asking them to inwardly reflect.

One of my goals for their narrative writing is also to extend their thought beyond simply answering the 'what' question....what did I do? To understand themselves and their learning they need to begin to contemplate and articulate the how and why. This will also be helpful for them when they revisit their work and looking for evidence of self and learning (though I do suspect that some of them will want to fill in the depth at that time). I thought the topic of giving thanks, and thanks in regards to something personal and directly related to themselves, would help to spark this thought, reflection and depth.

Personal Reflection:
I was glad to take this time to interact with the students on a more personal and informal level. I think that we are finally learning the rhythms of each other and how we work together to form this community. The girls know what my answers are to certain questions and I know who is more willing to answer and who will need a bit of coaxing. In regards to the writing the girls are producing, I think that the girls are also finally starting to feel comfortable sharing in regards to not being self-conscious of what they are saying or if what they are saying is appropriate. I am starting to get excited for them to begin to evaluate their own work and to see for themselves the patterns I have started to notice.
I will also say that I am enjoying being able to give the girls homework as this leaves more time for purposeful instruction in the class, instruction that will help them get to the point they want to be. I am feeling very positive about both our experiences and do feel as though the data being collected will be useful.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Eight (November 30th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What events in your life do you deem ‘significant’?

Instructional Sequence (What):
To begin class for the day we reviewed the goals and aims of the course – generally the ideas contained within the enduring understandings and the essential questions. The girls were very quick to articulate their function and purpose in the course (to talk about themselves) and they also expressed their enjoyment (‘I hate when I have to miss this class’).

In regards to instruction for the day, I told the girls that today we would be drawing pictures of what they think have been their five most significant life moments (to write about for the coming week). To help them, I modelled my own personal events on the whiteboards, asking them if they could guess any of them. They were able to guess two correctly (becoming a teacher and moving to Ireland) and we talked about how they were able to do this (from my past instruction and sharing of personal stories to help explain events). I also then modelled (with the example of becoming a teacher) how I wanted them to write on the events, not just telling me ‘what’, but also telling me ‘how’ and ‘why’.
As they drew, I walked around the class interacting with them, continuing my efforts to build rapport. As I walked, I gave directions and examples of things to write about (moving, changing schools, birth of a sibling, parental divorce, illness, death, etc.) we also talked that some of the things they were to write about could have happened to other people, but still been significant in their own lives.

**Rationale (How/Why):**
The purposes of this class session were to help the girls get beyond the simple factual telling of their lives and days and to start searching the depth of themselves a bit by focusing on the idea of a ‘significant event’ and what that means by definition and, most importantly, by impact. The intention of this lesson was also more far reaching in regards to what the girls would be asked to do for the final summative piece of this research.

**Personal Reflection:**
This class was a great opportunity to share a bit with the girls, build some trust, but to also have them interacting with my life and making connections to previous lessons. Their enthusiasm and willingness to trust was obvious in this lesson as they really started to dig in and engage in the thought required here, to expose a bit of their own vulnerabilities with the same casualness that I tried to model for them.
Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

'Unit' Question(s):
- What does learning feel like? What circumstances make it easier?

Instructional Sequence (What):
I began class by taking any questions about the project, expectations, etc. As there were no questions, I prefaced instruction with the statement that today we would be looking into learning.

After this, I began instruction by asking for five volunteers. After getting the volunteers, I asked them to come up to the front of the room. I then asked if they knew how to play 'Telephone' or 'Chinese Whispers' and gave the students one instruction...that they were to repeat word for word what they heard to the next person in line. To avoid the need for whispering, the first volunteer remained in the room and the other four stood in the hall.

I then began by reading a paragraph of information to the first student (based on a car accident). As I kept reading, her eyes grew wider as she tried to retain the information. Her classmates who were not participants held back laughter. When the next student came
in, the first student did her best to pass along what she remembered, and etc., until the last student repeated what she heard to the class. By that time, the information had dwindled down to just a few sentences. I then asked the students sitting in the classroom to write down all they remembered from the story (as they had to remember the story to laugh when it was told incorrectly). After they did this, I asked them to share one thing they remembered and we went around the room until we filled in most of the blanks. I then asked the class why they thought it was easier for those seated non-volunteers to remember then those participating. They wrote on this question and I then reread the paragraph for them all to hear. We then talked about what I could have done differently as a teacher to help with the process of learning. I then gave the girls another chance at remembering a new paragraph with modifications (I would read slower, I gave the direction of creating a picture in your mind as the story was being told, and the class was allowed to help in the recall). A significant more amount of information made it to the end with these modifications. I then asked the girls to write on what they thought the point I was trying to make on learning through out the course of activities.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

The purpose of today’s instruction was to help the girls think about what makes for a good learning environment and who they are in a learner situation. What do they do/don’t do? Are they passive? Reactive? Etc. I also wanted to help them to think about the teacher’s role in helping (or hindering) learning as well as other resources that support learning.

**Personal Reflection:**

This was a good strong lesson in regards to learning...but...I am beginning to feel that the self aspect is becoming more significant, more interesting, and more possible. I think the girls are feeling that as well as they enjoyed this lesson but that they felt a bit of abruptness to it. I believe that I will be able to transfer this concept over to the self as a learner (and take it out of the classroom) and for that I am excited to see what will happen!
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Ten (January 11th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What in my life am I passionate about and invested in enough to confront it with resolve? What would I like to confront in my life with resolve?

Instructional Sequence (What):
I began by giving the students the directions for an anticipatory activity: they were to move their chairs so that they faced a plain patch of the classroom wall where they were then to stare at the wall for five minutes without talking, fidgeting, daydreaming, looking around or thinking about anything other than the wall. When I completed the directions, the activity commenced.

At the end of five minutes, I had the girls return to their desks. I first asked them if it was easy (the class was split) and why it was hard or easy. I then asked them to speculate on why I might have them do this (especially difficult after a month away from each other, but they are always game to give it a go!). Answers ranged from, ‘to quiet our minds’ to ‘so that the rest of the class seems fun’ to ‘to notice the reality of time’. We also talked about
the reality of the directions – thinking about nothing except the wall – and how inevitably most of them just ended up daydreaming.

To help direct the girls, I then showed the famous ‘Tank Man’ image taken the day after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre and gave them some history surrounding the image (the man moved with the tank, he climbed the tank, he then returned to his position in front of the tank). I then repeated my question about why I might have done this activity now that they see that I am also creating a connection between it and the video. The girls responded with answers that ranged from ‘staring down something’ to ‘keep doing something even when it gets difficult.’

From there, I introduced the concept of ‘resolve’ and asked why this might be something worth talking about in January. The class responded with ‘New Years Resolutions’ and we compared the nature of those resolves to the resolve of ‘Tank Man’. We then reached a definition of resolve - continuing to act on a belief repeatedly and in the face of difficulty. I then asked the girls to think about where and when they have showed resolve in their own lives and to think about if something you have resolved to do can – realistically – end up as a habit. The writing task for the week was to respond to this prompt in the past (what they have done) and what they would like to do.

Rationale (How/Why):
In regards to this lesson, the relevance of the opening activity was to allow the students a sense of the experience of resolve (if I hadn’t asked them to do it, how many of them would have sat for that long? Also How easy was it to follow the directions or did they have to keep reminding themselves (resolve) to do it?). My intention was to just get them thinking about the nature of the things we do and how sometimes they seem easy at first but get more difficult with time. Sitting for 30 secs would be much easier than five minutes. In regards to the topic selection, I felt that the issue of resolve was a re-examination of the concept of choices, but at a deeper more synthetic level. And as choice and the ‘lessons of life’ will be at the heart of the end of the year product, it seemed relevant to revisit it in regards to curriculum construction. It was also timely in regards to the date of the class, our first session together since the turn of the new year.
In regards to the ‘Tank Man’ image, I thought it was a good example of true resolve as well as an image and a story that the girls may have seen before. It also is a great piece for discussion as the circumstances surrounding the man’s actions, the extent of his actions, and the side story of what it took to save the image, are very interesting in regards to personal choice, issues, and the morals and values that those choices stand for.

**Personal Reflection:**

After the winter holidays (and the extra week in snow days) the girls had off, it was a bit tough to focus them at first but they all said that they were excited to be back in class and excited to see what the new term would bring. In regards to the new term, I am excited as well, excited to see how this all goes.

In regards to the lesson, I think the thing that worked the best was the topic selection...it was a little bit to the side of something they were familiar with (resolutions) but not a topic they had much time exploring. I also think the image and the story behind it peaked their curiosity, thinking about where this concept is in their lives.

I also think that in regards to the concept of narrative, the stories of their lives, and examining the learning moments that have made them who they are that this was a solid topic choice.
Class Profile:
24 4\(^{th}\) year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- Where do I find comfort in life? Where do I belong? Where are my homes?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Class began with a bit of discussion on the research project. Specifically, some of the girls had been worrying about ‘losing’ writings (though they have been given a folder) or if it were possible to email writings in. We talked about the end of the module and what would be done with the writings (the creation of the autobiographical portfolio and construct of learning) and I offered some suggestions for keeping it all together. I also said that it was not the worse case scenario to be missing a writing or two...that they could always re-do them or find something else that would fit.

After that, I began instruction by having the class break into partners for a session of what I like to call speed-dating (You are with one partner for a short period of time, I ring a bell, and you move to the next partner). This strategy is not about creating depth, but about creating exposure to a topic and allowing for peer interaction on the topic. All of the conversations revolved around the topic of ‘favourites’ and included: favourite food,
favourite song, favourite place to go, favourite piece of clothing, favourite person (non friend) to see during day, favourite smell, favourite sport, favourite childhood memory.

I ended with favourite childhood memory because it was – in my way of thinking – the hardest to come up with. But, it was a good place for discussion because we talked about how we have a whole catalogue of memories – snapshots almost- that we flip through. We talked about when we flip through them and what they mean to us, how they make us feel.

I then transitioned to the actual topic for the day, which was not favourites, by putting the letter ‘H’ on the board and asking the class if they had any guesses about where I was headed based on where we had been. One student shouted out ‘Hope’ and on shouted out ‘House’.

I followed the ‘House’ strand with ‘Home’ and asked the class to think about the two words and if they were the same, if they were synonyms? After deciding that no, they weren’t necessarily synonyms I linked the idea of home to all the various favourites we explored and how sometimes home, the qualities and comforts of home, is found in more untraditional places and things.

This conversation then led to the prompt, which asked them to write about their ‘homes’...where do they feel at home? What things, places, people make them feel at home, etc.?

Rationale (How/Why):
In regards to the structure of the lesson, I thought that it would be good to have the girls interacting with each other, so that a sense of the fact that our narratives are something to be shared would start to come creeping in. Also, I felt that this would help with the sense that these answers are not for me, specifically, but about them.

In regards to the topic selection, I thought it was important in regards to getting a more complete narrative, to look at the idea of home. In a prior lesson, we had explored the concept of fear and looked at the things that keep us in place as perhaps negative or limiting. Here, I wanted to explore the other side of this by looking at how those same things can comfort and cradle us so to speak.
Personal Reflection:
There are two things I am beginning to worry about for the study at this point in time. One, that there will be a lack of cohesion in the narrative...that it won’t be a narrative that begins in one point and ends in another, recording all the details in a sequential and chronological fashion. Two, that I am not getting the type of depth that I was looking for, that the students aren’t revealing the realities and complexities of themselves.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans  
Week Twelve (January 25th)

Class Profile:  
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):  
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world  
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):  
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?  
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):  
- What is important to me? What are the ideas that swirl around my life, giving me pause and making me question?

Instructional Sequence (What):  
To begin the class, I told the girls that I would be talking for a couple of minutes technically about the course but that this was a necessary conversation for what we would be doing today.

I then told them that I had a Masters Degree in Education, specifically the areas of Curriculum & Instruction. I said that instruction was what they saw in the classroom and we talked a bit about how I had a slightly different approach to instruction than what they were familiar with. I then segued to curriculum being the ‘behind the scenes’ portion of what they experienced in the class room. I generally explained curriculum design to them, drawing on the board to illustrate its typically linear properties (in regards to chronology and skill building) but that the design of this course was spiral. I then explained what that meant and the seemed to get the fact that at the centre of the spiral was themselves. I
talked about how I selected topics for each class period and had them help me identify where and how we started with a certain idea, and came back around to it at a higher level or different side. I then asked for them to help me with where we should go next...what ideas, issues, themes, concepts are ‘spiraling’ around them? I asked them, though, as they wrote, to write for themselves and not for me so that what they created would be an honest piece not bound by classroom expectations.

The girls wrote on this question for about fifteen to twenty minutes and from their writing, general concepts that I pulled out for future classes were (Appearance, Trust, Purpose to Life & The Future, Relationships, Expectations, The Pressure of Life, The Difference between Perception & Reality).

The writing prompt for the week was to continue on the same path as they had in class.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

There were multiple reasons for this lesson and the first comes from one of the tensions identified in the methodology chapter regarding the student and their perception of their role in the classroom and with the teacher. Generally, it seems, that most students view learning as passive, an activity in which they are the receptors of whatever is going on, as opposed to actively engaging. However, in the role I wanted to place the students in this course, as integral parts of the curriculum, there is a necessity (well, really, this is how it should always be, I think) for them to be active, to take part.

In past lessons, the girls have done this through the instructional strategies I have used in the classroom and through the writing prompts I assigned for homework. However, in this lesson, I wanted to encourage ownership, investment, engagement, and interaction with the material, so I literally turned it over to them asking them to write on their life, the things in their life, that are important and worthy of – thematically – instruction, discussion, and reflection.

In regards to the idea of learning, this lesson was about learning how taking control of the information – owning it – can affect the experience of it and with it. Also, in regards to self and narrative, this was designed as an opportunity to see where the girls would go, what level of trust and openness, they had.
Personal Reflection:

Well, I did it. After reading the responses from the girls it is evident that I have gotten to a place with them where they trust me and our willing to share. In this, though, I think that they are beginning to realize that this isn’t really about me, though, but that it really is about them and for them. I gave the girls about 15 – 20 minutes to write and not one of them finished ‘early’ or said that they didn’t have anything to write. It was hard to read these responses, hard to see the pain that is running through some of their lives. From a alcoholic mom to eating disorders to the constant struggle to fit in, the lives of the girls, in this writing, became clear, it become them, and that was great to see. And one of the things that I thought was most interesting is, stereotypically you would think that fifteen year old girls are going to write mostly about boys, but only one girl did and that was briefly. And I found that really interesting and almost a point of proof of the depth of their lives and feelings. Specifically, the topics that the girls wrote around and will be fueling future instruction are: Appearance (who you are supposed to be vs. who you actually are), Friend, the Future, Family, Trust, Expectations.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Thirteen (February 1st)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

'Unit' Question(s):
- What is perception? What influences it and when should we change and/or challenge it?

Instructional Sequence (What):
This lesson was designed in response to the writings of last week and the ideas, concepts, and themes that I perceived to emerge from them. The theme of this week (which will be revisited) was on perception, specifically regarding how people see us and how we view them (and misconnects and disconnects that exist within).

To begin, we visually and kinesthetically explored the idea of being 'in the middle' (selected for its generalness in regards to connotation and expectation) by standing for a minute with two people on either side of us. The two people faced outward with their backs to the student standing in the middle for one minute and then they faced inward for the next minute. This was then repeated until all students had the opportunity to experience being a part in the middle and being on the end.
The purpose of this exercise was to allow the students the chance to be mindful of what happens when you are in the middle and the general feelings, experiences, sensations it can prick. For some, it could be comforting, for others it could be isolating. Generally, the sensations of being self-aware or irrelevant were identified when the people were looking out or being self-conscious when on display as the centre of attention when the others were looking inward. We talked around this feelings and why they came about, if there was a foundation to them, and what real life parallels could/would be? We also explored alternatives (those standing looking out as supportive or protective, those facing inward as comforting) and also talked about the connection/link to perception and how this can all apply to so many situations we are in in our life.

We then listened to 'The Middle' by Jimmy Eat World to inspire us a bit and help us think about another face of being in the middle and its connection to where the students are in their studies (the Transition Year). We also discussed what you can control in regards to your perception and what can change it (knowledge, power, performance, action, etc.) To reinforce this idea - about how things aren’t always what we expect or what we see - I then showed two clips...one of the man who does Elmo's voice as well as a clip of the man who sings the ukulele version of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'...both of whom are not quite what you may expect. This worked to reinforce the limiting nature of holding fast to certain perspectives.

The writing prompt for this week was for the students to keep on with the writings of the previous week or evolve to new places of exploration in regards to the 'story of their life'. Specific questions given: What does it mean to be you? What have been your celebrations, your tragedies, your challenges, and your victories? Who or what inspire you? ground you? Where have you been and where are you going? Who are you? What is YOUR life about (in the deep places you exist)?)

Rationale (How/Why):
Out of all the themes that seemed to come from the girls writing of last week, self-awareness and the goods and bads that come with it seemed to be a fairly touched on topic across the board. Today's lesson was a starting point for future classes on the topic and worked to introduce the concept of perception. In regards to thinking about self and exploring a students’ understanding of self and learning, as this was an issue identified by
the girls, it seemed to be worth exploring. The manner in which we discussed it was meant
to be user-friendly and based on a very neutral topic so as to show that even a ‘neutral’
topic can be loaded and have a variety of perceptions.

**Personal Reflection:**
I think this was a nice lesson for starting the girls thinking on this topic. There were many
different ways for them to interact with the idea and the concept and I think this worked as
one girl responded that the Elmo video shocked her (in regards to how she thinks and how
and why she thinks that way) in a way that the standing exercise didn’t. I also think this
was a good lesson to have at the start of the ‘emerging’ portion of this curriculum as I think
all the girls felt that it was relatable and attached to their writing.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Fourteen (March 1st)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

'Unit' Question(s):
How do I see others? How do others see me? How do I chose to see myself? Why do we chose criticality over positivity?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Prior to starting class, I had two pieces of 'housekeeping': 1. Discussing our 'field trip' down to Trinity (where they will meet with my PhD supervisor to discuss research AND speak on their view of learning and teaching to the PDE elective I teach), and 2. a general reminder that the topics/themes the module will now come from the girls’ writings (as opposed to my general suppositions on topics and themes of import) so they may feel more relevant and personally directed (but that I will not 'call anyone out' or specifically mention any writing I have been given).

In class today, I first asked the girls to form a circle with their desks, directing them to sit on the inside of the circle so that they would be facing outwards with their backs to the centre. I then stood in the centre of the desks (so they would be unable to see me) and asked them to (without looking) 1. write down - in specific detail - what I was wearing, 2.
write down where all their classmates were seated within the circle, 3. write down what colour eyes their classmates all had. After the girls had completed these tasks, I had them turn to look at me and each other so they could gauge the ‘correctness’ of their observations (we went around the circle to say our eye colour aloud). I then asked what they thought the 'topic' for the day was....Observation/Perception were the agreed upon responses.

I then kept talking, specifically about what I wearing, why I was dressed they way I was, etc. (I was self conscious of my curling iron burns and trying to hide them )... no one had noticed the burn (even after I pointed it out). We spoke on where the girls were sitting and their eye colour and the fact the everyone was able to answer correctly for themselves but after that, they were for the most part, just guessing. We then discussed the fact that they have known each other for (at minimum) four years and didn't know each others’ eye colour. I then asked if they had any more guesses on the topic for the day, building off the idea of observation. The final conclusion in regards to the topic for the day, then, was observation, specifically that NO ONE sees us the way we see ourselves, NO ONE pays as much attention to ourselves as we do...and that with all of this attention we put on ourselves, we typically focus on our flaws in regards to being mindful of our appearance, status, intelligence, ability, etc...wouldn’t it be nice to focus on our strengths...to build our self-esteem instead of cutting it down?

I then showed a video (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gc4HGQHgeFE) on Nick Vujicic entitled ‘Look at Yourself After Watching This’. Nick was born with no arms and no legs but has become an inspirational speaker, talking about how he has chosen to see himself and to live his life, not hindered by his disability but buoyed by a positive and self-loving attitude. This video was to help make the point that it is possible to move beyond how others see us, to move beyond the limits we place on ourselves when we are critical of who we are, and to choose to pay attention to ourselves but in a POSITIVE fashion, to be mindful of all the wonderful parts that make us up, to be grateful for what we have and to do our best to make the most of who we are!! To go along with this, I told a story of myself and my friend standing in front of the mirror together and finding ten things we liked about ourselves, that we were proud of in ourselves and how difficult it was and how long it took. We all agreed that if it was ten things we didn’t like about ourselves the task would have been very easy and over in probably a minute. I talked about how it was
HARD to do this, especially with a witness, but after we did it, we felt so STRONG. We also spoke about the need to be more mindful of these kind of moments, moments where you chose to observe yourself with kind and loving eyes.

The writing prompt for the week was: to consider the way in which they see themselves, the things that are important and deep and in them....to consider their strengths, the things to be proud of....and not just the ways they are critical of themselves, but WHY they are critical, uncertain, or dissatisfied in these areas...and what can you do to turn that negative self-talk/thought around?!

Rationale (How/Why):
In regards to selecting this topic/theme for the class, as previously stated, it came from the girls writings and the self-esteem issues I saw arising in them – whether they were talking about body issues, fitting in, being smart enough, talking in class, having a boyfriend, living up to siblings, wanting a normal family, etc. – in regards to their perceptions on what they should be like and what their life should be like.

With this is mind then, I did started class off with the general housekeeping items to specifically remind them that our classes are coming from them, where they have been and the lives they are leading. I wanted to set the context for the day’s lesson by connecting to them and the discoveries we have been making together.

I then wanted to give the girls a tangible experience with the idea that others do not notice us as much as we notice ourselves because it seemed that much of their self-esteem issues were coming from points of comparison or worrying about what others were thinking. So, by asking them what they ‘noticed’ about me, what they ‘noticed’ about their classmates (over a short period of time – 5mins with my clothes – and long period of time – 4 years with each other), I was trying to get them to see that we really are the ones responsible for the criticism, not others, as they probably don’t even really see the things that we are worrying about, etc. In regards to the experience of self and the narration of self, then, this was about having them look at the ideas of control and choice in regards to how we experience ourselves.
The video reinforced this concept by having the girls look at someone who appears obviously limited, who others do take notice of because of his condition, and how the judgements they make are faulty because he has chosen to make them faulty. In regards to self, this was chosen to show an alternative to how many of us self-talk.

In regards to telling the personal story, this was to create an authentic example for what they could do, an experience they could have, and to show them that this concept and theme is also relatable to my life— a commonality of human experience if you will.

**Personal Reflection:**
The thing that I noticed most with this lesson was the level of engagement by the girls. When I asked them to sit in the circle facing outwards, they were intrigued (‘What are we going to do now, Ms. Kipp?) and when I told them what they had to do (first with my clothes, then with seats, then with eye colour) they were engaged in each step of the process, exclaiming ‘oh no, I don’t know!’ and ‘that’s too hard!’ but quietly getting down to business when I assured them that there was a clear point to it all and to just trust me. They were also delighted when they turned around to look at me and each other and the room was filled with laughter and exclamations as each girl realized that she wasn’t the only one who didn’t get it! The girls enjoyed how ‘off’ some of their observations were (‘I said you were wearing red pants (they were dark brown). What was I thinking? No one even owns red pants!’ and ‘What do you mean you don’t have blue eyes!’). I also think that in regards to personal reflection the experience of this (along with the video and story) were relatable and therefore thought provoking as I could see them nodding their heads along with the thing their classmates and I were saying.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans

Week Fifteen (March 8th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
  o The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
  o Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
  o What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
  o What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

'Unit' Question(s):
What does trust look like? What factors influence trust and what are different dimensions of trust?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Today we began class by generally talking about the planned field trip to Trinity and the rationale behind it: 1. That the students get a true sense of how much of a difference I hope to make with the help they have been giving me, and 2. That they are able to actually SEE the difference they can make in education by talking with my class of student-teachers about your thoughts on teaching, learning, and school in general!!!

In regards to the class instruction, I started by asking the girls about what the biggest risk I was taking with a PhD built around student voice and student life. They correctly identified that it would be in finding the right students, students who would be able to trust in me and therefore be willing to share with me. They then decided that part of my willingness to do this then came from the faith I had in my general trustworthiness. When I asked if I had their trust, the majority of the class either verbally declared 'yes' or nodded
their heads in confirmation. I then asked them why? We then talked about factors and reasons that I, personally, am or am not deserving of their trust (listing the factors on the board). Reasons under the 'why I am' were: a sense of genuineness about me, my ability to just be 'me' as teacher as opposed to just assuming the role of a teacher, the fact that I have trusted them with personal information, that I am very clear about what I am doing, looking for, etc., and my evident passion and interest in our time together. Reasons under the 'why I am not' included: the fact that I am a teacher and an adult, that I am a stranger, that they are not used to this sort of self revelation, and that I have an obligation to alert the school to anything that is shared that puts you at risk. After getting them to think about trust, why it is given, when it is given and certain factors that influences it, I then told them that I really don't have any answers on trust, that it is a difficult thing to pin down, and that I couldn't really stand up and 'teach' on it and that it was something we would need to explore together. What I then asked them to do was to get into groups to work on personal definition of four different dimensions of trust: 1. predictability, 2. value exchange, 3. delayed reciprocity, and 4. exposed vulnerability (see this website for 'official' definitions: http://changingminds.org/explanations/trust/what_is_trust.htm). They then shared their responses and we talked about the actual definitions.

In regards this topic then, the writing prompt for the week was to: explore the idea of TRUST in your life...how trustworthy are you? who do you trust? who deserves your trust? who do you give your trust to? what factors influence how you build trust? Etc. As trust is such a huge topic, and has played such a significant role in their girls writings, I closed by stating that we would work with this topic again next week.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

In regards to choosing to do a field trip with the girls, I felt like it was a great opportunity for them to see the greater scope of what they have been contributing to and to also offer them a sense of empowerment in regards to their classroom role (in speaking with the student-teachers)

Trust has been the topic that has seemed to be the most prevalent in all the girls' writings...and while they may not have named it outright, it has been implicit in much of what they have constructed when writing about friends and family. Dealing with this topic, then, seemed natural.
In framing this lesson, I wanted to first have them think solidly about trust with a specific person and I thought it was best to offer up myself in regards to this as myself as an example allowed us the opportunity to discuss their role in this project as well as delve into what makes a person trustworthy (without them sacrificing a friend or family member). I then wanted to take an academic approach to trust to help them engage with the topic first intellectually (before emotionally interacting with it). Aware that formulating a definition of trust might be complicated, I used to groups to allow for the opportunity of discussion and brainstorming around this higher level topic. I also provided some partial definitions to help guide discussion and to illustrate that one of the reasons that trust is so complicated is that it is multi-layered.

Personal Reflection:
I think that this topic selection was much needed as when we started headed in that direction as the focus for the day many of the girls faces began to light up and they began to nod. In doing the activity on identify myself as trustworthy or not, while I think it might have been slightly awkward for some of the students in the room, I think they all generally understood I was just using myself as an example of someone we all had in common and that there were most certainly reasons in either the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ category that were not mentioned. I do think this activity got them to begin thinking on trust as you could see them – in regards to trust as one of the main factors of my PhD – really appreciate where a trusting relationship could take you (one girl commented...‘wow, that was a big gamble on your part’).
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Sixteen (March 15th)

Class Profile:
24 4<sup>th</sup> year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- How do we make friends? How does this affect the trust we have in them?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Since trust was such a big topic that the majority of the class had written on (multiple times) today’s lesson was an extension of the previous one. Where in the previous lesson we looked at trust specifically and the different factors that influence trust, today we looked at trust in the relationship that was of the most concern to the girls – that of friends.

To begin with I wrote four names on the board: Christy, Jenny, Marta, and Paula. I told the girls that these were four of my closest friends. I then drew a line to separate the names Christy and Jenny from the names Marta and Paula. I asked the girls why I might have done this? They had no responses. I then said, ‘does this help’ and underneath the names I wrote how old I was when I became friends with this person (Christy – 2 months; Jenny – 5 years; Marta – 26 years; Paula 34 years). They then realized that I was dividing them by when they became my friends. I then asked them to brainstorm how making friends at these to times of life would be different: what factors would influence the friendship? We then shared our thoughts as a class.
For the friends met at early ages, the girls came up with the ideas of: physical location, family, school class, last name, activities involved in, convenience. For the later age, the came up with: values, interests, backgrounds, and that you actually get to choose.

We talked about these two groupings then and where they were in relation to them (that they are maturing past the original factors that had them make friends...that some friends would come with them past this point and some would not...that they are transitioning between the two groups). We also talked about how these various ‘friend factors’ would, could, and should influence the trust that we have in the relationships. (that if there isn’t the basis for trust it is hard to have and normal to have doubts).

The writing prompt for the week was: write about the friendship relationships you have? Where does trust come in?

**Rationale (How/Why):**

In regards to the topic selection, the reasoning behind this, once again, came from the girls writings and their identification of this as one of the issues they wanted to explore.

In my approach to the topic of friends and trust, I wanted to highlight the idea that in regards to self and formation of self, the types of friends we have and make evolves as we do. And that the girls, at the age of 15/16 are in a stage of transformation, reprioritizing, and changing; that it is natural for their peer groups to change as they change and that all of these factors influence trust.

Because of the sensitivity of the issue, and an awareness that each of the girls has a friend in the class, I thought the strongest route to the topic was to share examples from my own life. Having the girls brainstorm individually was a strategy to get them to personally connect to the topic before we shared as a class. As a class, then, each of the answers shared was written on the board and talked about. After both columns were created (friends from a young age and from an older age) we then compared and contrasted the differences. This was done to help them understand that things such as friends do change, but that there are very specific factors that are involved in such a change.
In linking the discussion, then to trust, the choice was made to make minimally about it is class...just to get the ball rolling...and then allow the girls to individually explore it in their writing.

**Personal Reflection:**
I think that the session went well today in terms of the girls becoming enlightened on their friendships, what has made their friendships, what things influence friendship and a change in friendship, and how trust is then influenced by all these things. I also think that the girls liked talking about the topic...there was a genuine enthusiasm in the classroom as evidenced by their eagerness to share and the sparks of knowledge discovery that seemed to be shooting up all over the place ‘OH....that is so true!!’ for example. I think that this was a strong lesson also in regards to interacting with previous topics with a greater level of depth.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Seventeen (March 22nd)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning 'look' like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

'Unit' Question(s):
- How can my experiences as a student help the classroom understandings of teachers?

Instructional Sequence (What):
Class today was spent preparing for our presentation to the PDE's (within the elective I was teaching).

For this, we created a power point based on the headings the PDE's provided....(the student, the teacher, classroom environment, instructional strategies and methods, thoughts on specific modules, other). As a class we went through each slide and added questions to speak on as well as the category of 'life outside of school'. In the end, the powerpoint had the following questions for the girls to respond to for the day of the presentation:

THE STUDENT
What is the job of the teacher? What is the teacher supposed to do? What do they actually do?
What makes for a bad/good teacher?
THE TEACHER
What is the job of the teacher? What is the teacher supposed to do? What do they actually do?
What makes for a bad/good teacher?

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
What makes for a good classroom environment? What is important to students in regards to the classroom environment?
How do students prefer to be ‘managed’? (classroom management)

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND METHODS
What sort of classroom activities help students to learn?

THOUGHTS ON SPECIFIC MODULES
What can teachers do to help make their class valuable, relatable, authentic and interesting?
Languages, Maths, Religion, etc.

LIFE OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL
What are the realities of a students’ life outside of school? What else enters into the classroom with the student?

Rationale (How/Why):
In regards to the rationale behind – not this specific class – but the specific want to have the students speak to the teachers, it is for many reasons.

Specifically, in regards to the research and the idea of the story of us being valid and reliable, I wanted to give the students the opportunity to feel empowered beyond their narratives – to experience what a sharing of self could accomplish beyond the parameters of the study and beyond the parameters of self. I also wanted the students to experience a sense of validation in regards to their life and experience as a student – that they have a unique perspective on the classroom that is hardly ever shared in this capacity but that should be shared.
Also, my supervisor and I had wanted the students to come in at some point in the research to allow them the chance to ask questions on the research, to see the environment of the university, and to just generally thank them for being a part of the study. I thought that matching this up with a teaching session would be great in reinforcing the empowerment ideals from above. I also felt that allowing the girls to create the powerpoint, with some pre-established parameters, they would truly feel as though they were the teachers of it all.

**Personal Reflection:**

This is going to be a great idea. The girls have much to say and are virtually coming up with all the things I would say to a group of new teachers if I had the chance. They are articulate, thoughtful, intelligent, and funny and really get what it is they are speaking to. I can't wait for the actual day!

NOTE: The day was quite successful based on feedback from both sets of students (the TY’s and the PDE’s).
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans

Week Eighteen (March 29th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- What does empowerment look like? What relationships do I have where I would like to self advocate? How do I go about doing this?

Instructional Sequence (What):
On the Monday prior to this class, the girls had come into Trinity to teach a class of PDEs. This session was built to come from that lesson and to capitalize on the freshness of the experience.

Firstly, we reviewed the session the girls had with my supervisor where he spoke on the research process, their role in research, and took any questions they might have had. The girls said that from this they were more reflective on the realness of being a part of such a study and in talking about how nice it was to meet someone – at the college level – with such passion and enthusiasm for what it was they were doing! The also said that the experience helped them have a sense of concreteness about the process.

We then discussed the teaching session. I first congratulated the girls on their poise, confidence and honesty within the session and then asked for them to share their personal
reflections, etc. They spoke on how they felt quite equal to the ‘students’ in their class and how it was really nice to be able to speak honestly about the classroom to those who are ‘in charge’ of it. They said that it was neat to see teachers taking notes on what they were saying and they said that the topic they were most thrilled to be talking about was how ‘groups don’t work when you just throw us into them’.

After this discussion, I pulled out the idea of relationships and the nature of relationships (and how in this relationship, the roles seemed to be reversed). I asked them to identify the key relationships they had in their lives in regards to influence, trust, pressure, etc. They had the answers of peers, best friends, general friends, other groups/cliques of students, parents, siblings, coaches, family, boys, self, and arch nemesis (which they said could and was usually yourself!!). From this we talked about the features of these relationships and about the balance of power in them. We then transitioned to the concept of self advocacy and the use of ‘I’ statements.

In regards to the writing prompt, students were asked to write on one of the relationships identified on the board, the nature of it and how they use or do not use their ‘voice’ in it!

**Rationale (How/Why):**
The topic for this lesson came out of their writing on relationships but was also inspired by the students coming in to teach for the PDEs.

First, in regards to the students teaching the PDEs, the reasoning behind this came from the general aim of my PhD research – allowing for student voice and experience within the classroom. I thought that this was a great opportunity to create a tangible experience where the students would be able to see the ‘power’ of their voice in action and would be able to get the sense that they are a vital part of their own education. In many ways, this was me giving back what I could to them (though I am well aware this was also for my interests as well).

Following up on this in the classroom then, I thought it would be interesting to (following from our discussion on trust) ask them to look at the relationships they had in their life and the way in which they were or weren’t balanced and how, why, and if they could change
this balance. I also felt that from what they have written, and what the literature says about ‘selves’ and relationships, that this was a good area to ask the students to explore.

**Personal Reflection:**

Having the girls teach the teachers-to-be went brilliantly and was more than I could ask for. I think if I could do it again, I would bring them in earlier in the year (but not much earlier) so that there could be more use of such reflection in the individual lives of both the TYs and the PDEs. I also think the way the girls talked about it showed that they were so thrilled to have been a part of it (‘I mean the teachers were taking notes on what I said!! Brilliant!’). In regards to the relationship angle of the class, I was amazed at the relationships the girls identified that went beyond what I had anticipated. I was also amazed that ‘boys’ didn’t come up until the very last and with me doing some prompting for it – to think, they came up with their relationship with themselves and their arch nemesis before boys...well now that is something to think about!!!
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Nineteen (April 5th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):
- How does my past link to my present and help to influence my future?

Instructional Sequence (What):

Instruction today centred on the concept of celebrating life and to do so I asked the girls to bring in a personal photograph to work with.

To model the lesson, I created a power point with a couple pictures from my own life, selected for no other reason but their randomness. As I showed each picture, the class would have a couple of moments to create the story behind the picture, using what they had learned about me throughout the course of the year (and speaking on the concept of how others see us and influence us). After asking for a couple of students to share, I would tell the actual story of the picture and we would compare. I would then add in the ‘history’ of the picture (i.e. when I met the person in the picture with me) to symbolize the past. Then as a class we would speculate on the future of this moment – what concepts of me
would continue on past this moment in regards to interests, personality, values, morals, hopes and dreams (and what would, perhaps, be changed by this moment).

After we had completed this task as a class, the students worked individually on doing the same tasks with their personal pictures. When they had each completed this task, we spoke as a class on the concept of temporality and the past linking to the present to influence the future of self.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

This lesson was crafted to specifically address one of the course’s enduring understandings in the regards to the context and extension of self. It was meant to help them prepare for the tasks of the summative assessment (autobiographical portfolio) and also ask them to look at their stories in a different, more constructed, light. In regards to the decision to model this task with my own life, I felt that this would help both with reinforcing the trust environment of the classroom as providing a common ground for discussing this concept of self.

**Personal Reflection:**

I think the girls enjoyed the challenge and the thought behind today’s lesson. While they were at first distracted by sharing in my life through pictures, they eventually settled down and were able to clearly articulate not only what they saw but what they were thinking and how and why they had come to these conclusions. When working on their own pictures, there was a general sense of nostalgia in the class in regards to thinking on what led to that moment and genuine excitement in thinking on the future. It was a good lesson judging by the chatter in the classroom and the smiles on their faces!
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Twenty (April 12th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
- The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
- Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
- What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
- What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):

Instructional Sequence (What):
The purpose of this class was to go over the specifics of the final summative portion of the course. In preparation for this, the girls brought in all of the material they had created throughout the course of the module.

To preface the days discussion, we discussed our class as a research product. I reminded the girls of their tasks as co-contributors and how they were going to be helping with the analysis part of the research. I said that that this would be happening through the final summative portion of the course – the autobiographical portfolio assignment.
To this end, we went through the assignment together, discussing both the directions and how the directions correlate to research methods. After this discussion, I took questions.

**Rationale (How/Why):**

In regards to taking an entire class period to explain the autobiographical portfolio, I felt it was necessary for two reasons. Firstly, having seen how hard it was for the girls to 'let go' in previous lessons, I knew that they would be more comfortable with me treating this as a formal assignment. For that reason, I read it through to them, offering explanation and examples as we went. I also took whatever questions they had. The second reason for this class period of explanation was to also remind the girls that they were now assuming the mantle of researcher and to show them how and where they would be doing that without intimidating them.

**Personal Reflection:**

The class went well. Not only do the girls understand the tasks ahead of them, but they are excited for them ('This sounds cool!'). They are aware there is a lot of work to be done, but generally keen to get started ('I like the marker part.'). They were also excited that they could add in their own touches and do what they wanted in this final piece to showcase themselves. In regards to the discussion being researchers, some of the girls seemed overwhelmed at first, but as they realized that it was all in the frame of something they were used to (a 'homework' assignment) the panic lessened and they were intrigued by it.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans
Week Twenty-One (May 10th)

Class Profile:
24 4th year girls (approximate age 15); all voluntary participants in the project

Enduring Understanding(s):
  o The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world
  o Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities

Essential Question(s):
  o What is my story? What does my story mean? What influences my story? How can I influence my story?
  o What is learning? What does learning ‘look’ like? What influences my learning? How can I influence my learning?

‘Unit’ Question(s):

Instructional Sequence (What):
At the start of the class, I took questions on the autobiographical portfolio. We also set a week in June for turning in the portfolio’s as well as discussed the option of mailing it in to me at Trinity.

After this, we sat in a circle and had an open-forum discussion on the girls experience of the class...what had they learned, prompts or instructional moments they enjoyed, what made them think, what was valuable, what would they do different, why did this class work (or not work) for them, what did it feel like to be a part of a research study, etc.. Also talked about lessons learned, who we have been and who we hope to be.
Rationale (How/Why):
I chose this for our last ‘teaching’ class as a means of allowing the girls to reflect on this experience and to perhaps work through issues out loud that they might wish to write on for their autobiographical portfolio. This was also a time for their voices to lead the way and for me to listen to where they are, who they are, etc.

Personal Reflection:
This lesson was very nice, very relaxed, and the biggest thing that hit me throughout every minute was the absolute community that had been built during the course of this class. Everything was natural and thoughtful and I didn’t need to do anything to encourage the girls to speak beyond ask a question. Also, while I had a series of questions ready for us to explore, the thing the girls focused on was how nice it was to be able to have a class that cared about who they were in their school day. They also commented on how my passion and genuine interest as a teacher was tangible and made a huge difference in their attitude towards the class.
APPENDIX B4 - Lesson Plans

Week Twenty-Two (May 17th)

As this was the last day of class together, there was no planned instruction. Class time was used for turning in the autobiographical portfolios, doing some administrative tasks for the school, and saying goodbye.
LESSON ONE:
In-class
  o poem The Invitation by Oriah Mountain Dreamer,
    http://www.inspirationpeak.com/poetry/theinvitation.html

LESSON TWO:
In-class
  o personal photo

LESSON THREE:
In-class
  o paper for making paper airplanes

LESSON FOUR:
In-class
  o youtube clip on Olympic athlete Derek Redmond,
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iCUgPdRXPs

LESSON FIVE:
In-class
  o Good Will Hunting, DVD (46:03 -47:03)

LESSON SIX:
In-class
  o Stranger Than Fiction, DVD (start - 3:04)
  o Power point on ‘FEAR’
LESSON SEVEN:

In-class
- paper and markers for making ‘turkey’ hands

LESSON EIGHT:

In-class
- paper and markers for drawing significant events

LESSON NINE:

In-class
- paragraph for Chinese Whisper/Telephone game

LESSON TEN:

In-class
- image of ‘Tank Man’ (from Tianamen Square)

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day’s lesson)
- Video footage and narration of ‘Tank Man’
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SB70mWXrzEE
- Teen New Years’ Resolutions
  http://teenadvice.about.com/u/ua/stayinghappy/your_new_years_resolutions.htm
- Dedicated to year round resolutions
  http://www.43things.com/
LESSON ELEVEN:

In-class

- List of ‘favourite’ questions
  Inspired by http://tribes.tribe.net/d71b7e08-f6e2-4cb9-9c9a-2af4bf5f7ce1/thread/ba3b0d0e-f947-485e-9196-24d600e49b49

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- My favourite hero – TEAM HOYT
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIRvsO8m_KI

LESSON TWELVE:

In-class

none

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- a link to help you think about who you have been, who you are, and the possibilities of where you can head
- A 'last lecture' given by Randy Pausch entitled 'Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams' where it really was to be his last lecture as he was diagnosed with cancer and died shortly after
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo
- Famous article on what you 'should' do with your
  http://www.planetgary.com/sunscreen.htm
- Reflection back on the first lessons of school
  http://www.kalimunro.com/learned_in_kindergarten.html

LESSON THIRTEEN:

In-class

- The Middle by Jimmy Eats World (song)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV-HPOHu8mY
- Interview with Kevin Clash (voice of Elmo)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IY_sl1R3KJQ
At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- **Stuck in the Middle with You** by Gerry Rafferty and Joe Egan
  
  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMAIsvqVTh7g)

- **Malcolm in the Middle** Theme song, **Boss of Me** by They Might be Giants
  
  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRVlIZidIRM)

- Inspirational story on how to tackle life
  
  [website](http://www.heartwarmingstories.net/carrot.htm)

- Things aren't always what they seem
  
  [website](http://www.optillusions.com/)

**LESSON FOURTEEN:**

**In-class**

- Nick Vujicic, ‘Look at Yourself After Watching This’
  
  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gc4HgQHgeFE)

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- Moments that make you think about life, about how others see you and how you want to see yourself
  
  [website](http://makesmethink.com/top)

- Thinking about the choices YOU make for YOUR life
  
  [website](http://www.eightprinciples.com/)

- The DOVE Campaign: thinking about what shapes self esteem and how to go from being critical to being positive
  
  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQaOABvHob4&feature=related)

  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U&feature=related)

  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnOSZX4tpOA&feature=related)

  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnOSZX4tpOA&feature=related)
LESSON FIFTEEN:

In-class

- dimensions of trust
  http://changingminds.org/explanations/trust/what_is_trust.htm

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- Thinking about the people in your life and why they are there
  http://www.allatsea.co.za/froglunch/people.htm

- To know what unconditional trust looks like, all we need to do is look at children
  www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/blogs/a-father-who-creatively

- Take this one with a grain of salt...how to tell when someone is lying!
  www.blifaloo.com/info/lies.php

LESSON SIXTEEN:

In-class

none

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- Thinking about your own friends
  http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201002/what-makes-true-friend

- Where best friends learn to be great friends
  http://www.the-friendship-cafe.com/

LESSON SEVENTEEN:

In-class

- powerpoint made by class

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- Things we all can learn from children
  http://parents.berkeley.edu/jokes/important.html

- Things that you can learn from adults
  http://www.paulgraham.com/hs.html
○ A chance to do something great with all that you have learned...
  http://www.freerice.com/

LESSON EIGHTEEN:

In-class

none

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

○ The power of 'I' statements
  http://www.humanpotentialcenter.org/Articles/IStatements.html

○ A different kind of empowerment
  http://www.payitforwardmovement.org/individuals.html

○ A little reminder on what life is about and why the choices you make for yourself can be so important.
  http://www.robinsweb.com/inspiration/time.html

LESSON NINETEEN:

In-class

○ personal photos

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

○ Its all about the angle you choose to look at something!
  http://designyoutrust.com/2010/11/02/photo-of-the-day-shadow-birds/

○ Watch the trailer that pops up for a bit of inspiration about the future and your place in it!
  http://www.theway-themovie.com/

○ A nice reminder about how we can exist with and for others
  http://www.guy-sports.com/months/red_marbles.htm#Mr_Millers_Grocery_Store_in_Idaho
LESSON TWENTY:

In-class

- autobiographical portfolio assignment

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- Self-reflection...here is a short yet interesting read on it

- Look at your profile...how are 'you' represented to the world?
  http://www.facebook.com/

- A piece of advice to remember while looking back at all of your days and planning all those that will come
  http://img3.visualizeus.com/thumbs/10/05/04/quote%252Csaying-ebc9bd0a06f35f6e27d1a80b1481229c_h.jpg

LESSON TWENTY-ONE:

In-class

None

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- A bit of perspective on living YOUR life

- For when you need a little touch of our class over the summer
  www.32keys.com/

LESSON TWENTY-TWO:

none

At-home (things that might interest/inspire in regards to the day's lesson)

- Something to think about in regards to why we are doing this

- What do you see, what do you walk past? An interesting experiment!
APPENDIX B6 – The Irish School System

Generally, as outlined in *Secondary Education in Ireland* (Coolahan 1996) and the document ‘A Brief Description of the Irish Education System’ (DES 2004), the education system of Ireland is ‘state-aided’. Many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are centralised in the Department of Education and Science with the duties of this Department including: regulating the recognition of schools, prescribing curricula, establishing regulations for the management, resourcing and staffing of schools, and centrally negotiating teachers’ salary scales (DES 2004: 8).

Within the Irish Education System, mandatory schooling extends from the ages of 6 to 16 or until students have completed three years of post-primary schooling. Primary schooling is offered following the child’s fourth birthday, allowing for free ‘pre-schooling’ at the junior infant and senior infant level, and becomes compulsory during the 1st – 6th class levels. Thus, within the Irish system, first level – primary – education is comprised of an eight year cycle.

In regards to Irish secondary schooling offerings, of which this study is primarily concerned, students may be enrolled in a secondary school, a vocational/community college, or a comprehensive/community school. ‘Secondary schools are privately owned and managed. The trustees of the majority of these schools are religious communities or Boards of Governors. Vocational schools are State established and are administered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) while community and comprehensive schools are managed by Boards of Management of differing compositions’ (DES 2004: 13). With the ability to chose, it is important to note that ‘while some differences do exist linked to varying traditions, range of subjects on offer and modes of ownership/management, these variations are more in nomenclature than in essentials’ (Coolahan 1996: 13). All second level education consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (approximate ages 12-15), followed by a two or three year Senior Cycle (approximate ages 15-18), depending on whether the optional Transition Year is taken. ‘The principal objective of the Junior Cycle is for students to complete broad, balanced and coherent courses of study in a variety of curricular areas, and to allow them to achieve levels of competence that will enable them to
proceed to Senior Cycle education’ (DES 2004: 13). At the end of the Junior Cycle, students complete the state mandated Junior Certificate Examination.

‘During the final two years of Senior Cycle students take one of three programmes, each leading to a State Examination – the traditional Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)’ (DES 2004: 13). The Senior Cycle ends with the completion of the Leaving Certificate Examination, the results of which are a main determinant for third level education.

Immediately following the Junior Cycle, and comprising the optional (subject to school regulation) first year of the Senior Cycle, the Transition Year is an innovation in Irish education. The Transition Year ‘provides an opportunity for students to experience a wide range of educational inputs...[and] is a year that is free from formal examinations. The aim of Transition Year is to educate students for maturity with an emphasis on personal development, social awareness and skills for life’ (DES 2004:13).

With this understanding of the Irish Education System, then, it became apparent that the possible difficulties I had determined regarding the identified student population (see Section 3.4.1a & b) were prohibitive. My discouragement at this realization was minimal, however, because just as it became apparent that there was no space in the 5th or 6th year for this study it also became clear that the 4th year, the Transition Year, had the potential to house such a research project, particularly with its DES declared mission statement.
After getting the supervisory nod that I was, indeed, on to something with my identification of the Transition Year as the best fit for my project, I began to look into the goals, guidelines, and curriculum of the Transition Year to see if, on a regulatory level, my project would be supported. I also informally sought out teacher and student impressions on the Transition Year to supplement my lack of ‘real world’ experience with this inventive step in Irish secondary school design, knowing from my time as a teacher that officially mandated parameters and guidelines do not always realistically define the accepted and practiced boundaries.

As previously stated, the Transition Year is the optional 4th year of the secondary Senior Cycle. The mission of the Transition Year, as identified by the Irish Department of Education within its Transition Year Guidelines (DES 1994: 2) is to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative, and responsible members of society. This document also identifies the overall aims of the Transition Year programme as:

- Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
- The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
- Education through experience of adult and working life as a basis for personal development and maturity (DES 1994: 2).

In further definition of the Transition Year programme, the Irish National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA 2011) states that the Transition Year, ‘provides an opportunity for learners to reflect on, and develop an appreciation of, the value of learning’ as a means for preparing them for ‘the ever-changing demands of the adult world of work, further and higher education and relationships’ without the pressure of examinations.

Within the Transition Year, curriculum content and development is the responsibility of the individual school (DES 1994: 2). This allows each school the flexibility to create a
comprehensive and tailored programme of modules that suit the 'needs and interests of its students' (NCCA 2011).

Informally, the impressions on the Transition Year, gathered to supplement my lack of classroom experience in such an area, came from my time in the schools as a supervisor for the Postgraduate Diploma in Education student-teachers. Speaking with both the PDE students and any willing staff teacher, I asked about the TY programmes at the schools they were working at, specifically gearing my questions around English based modules. From these discussions, I got the sense that there was a great sense of liberty and freedom in curriculum design and that it truly was a year built around and for experiential learning. In particular, I came to understand the reality of the term 'transition' in the title of the year; the students are being given the opportunity to transition as both a student and a person (learner) and the emphasis is on the authentic experiences that will facilitate this. I also learned that the success of the TY programme and the overall acceptance of it by both the staff and students varied from school to school and that many teachers dreaded the assignment of a TY class due to student buy-in, the lack of a prescribed curriculum, and the inability to extrinsically motivate students through concrete assessment.

During this time, I also informally spoke to students to gather their impressions on the Transition Year. The students I questioned were generally non-committal in regards to discussing the Transition Year, but general sentiment ran towards it being nice to actually get to 'do something' for a change.

To supplement the lack of depth in the informal response, a formal look into students’ perspectives of the Transition Year, according to research done by Smyth, Byrne, and Hannan (2004), identified positive aspects as: ‘the chance to take different subjects, the work experience placement(s), trips and activities, and a different approach to learning’ (169). Negative aspects were also identified by the students and input ranged from the belief that ‘little work was done in the Transition Year,’ which would affect performance at the Senior Cycle level to a ‘lack of variety in the courses offered’ (171-172). Student recommendations for improving Transition Year included ‘having more trips and practical activities, a greater variety of courses and a more structured programme’ (177). Also of interest, in regards to the determinations made for the research setting (see Section 3.4.1a) students identified the ‘Transition Year as facilitating improved relations between teachers
and students’ (166) as the lack of exam pressure generally led to a more relaxed classroom environment.

From these informal conversations and formal research, I identified a few key characteristics that seemed essential to creating a successful TY module: relevance, accessibility, investment, diversity, activity, and creativity.

For a study interested in the student-learners’ view of self and self within the learning environment, and in the narrative of self that directs the students towards those views, it seemed as though the Transition Year was crafted with my project in mind. The goals, aims, and ‘enduring understandings’ of the Transition Year – both formally and informally identified – run parallel to those of this research study.
Stage One – Identify Desired Results

In regards to the first stage of design, Wiggins and McTighe identify the ‘Big Picture of Design Approach’ (1998: 18) in the following way:

**Key Design Question:**
What is worthy and requiring of understanding?

**Design Considerations:**
- National, state, and district standards
- Regional topic opportunities
- Teacher expertise and interest

**Filters (Design Criteria):**
- Enduring ideas
- Opportunities for authentic, discipline-based work
- Uncoverage
- Engaging

**What the Final Design Accomplishes:**
Unit framed around enduring understanding and essential questions

For the purposes of understanding the module designed for this study, formulating the answer to the key design question (What is worthy and requiring of understanding?) was done by using the design considerations to establish curricular priorities. Such priorities can be broken into three rings of knowledge priority:

1. Worth being familiar with
2. Important to know and do
3. ‘Enduring’ Understanding (2005: 71)
In regards to these understandings in a curricular framework and the design criteria and filters, Wiggins and McTighe (2005; 1998) start with the smallest ring of knowledge priority, the concept of ‘enduring understandings’—knowledge that transcends the classroom to become contextualized and applicable in the life setting—by asking that the material covered be:

1. Enduring
2. At the heart of the discipline
3. In need of ‘uncoverage’

These parameters for knowledge filter what is to be understood into enduring understandings that allow for student ownership and engagement with curricular concepts.

After establishing the enduring understandings within the material, Wiggins and McTighe’s ‘key design strategy is to build curriculum around the questions that gave rise to the content knowledge in the first place’ (1998: 27). These questions are referred to as ‘essential questions’ and the answers to these question link to the enduring understanding while allowing for richness and depth of knowledge. Essential questions are ‘provocative and multilayered questions that reveal the richness and complexities of a subject’ (1998: 28). Essential questions may be characterized by what they do:

- Cause genuine and relevant inquiry into the big ideas and core content.
- Provoke deep thought, lively discussion, sustained inquiry, and new understanding as well as more questions.
- Require students to consider alternatives, weigh evidence, support ideas, and justify their answers.
- Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, prior lessons.
- Spark meaningful connections with prior learning and personal experiences.
- Naturally recur, creating opportunities for transfer to other situations and subjects.
  (Wiggins and McTighe 2005: 110)

Essential questions are both overarching and topical and are used to guide a scheme of learning (associated with learning aims and objectives). Overarching questions are more
general and lead to conceptual understandings. Topical questions are more content specific and guide day to day classroom instruction while allowing the students to formulate answers to the overarching essential questions and interact with the knowledge relevant to the enduring understandings. The final module design then accomplishes a ‘unit framed around enduring understandings and essential questions’ (Wiggins and McTighe 1998: 18).

For this study, the enduring understandings established from both the research questions and the specific literature on the narrated self (see Section 2.4.2) were: 1. The story of who we are is varied, valid, and reliable in connecting us to the world, and 2. Past experiences formulate present realities and influence future possibilities. These questions were mindful of the learner mindset, the nondirective teaching model, and the interest in self as knowledge as well as population of the classroom, teenaged females in their 4th (Transition) year, and this as study of stories and the narrated self.

Stage Two – Determine Acceptable Evidence

In regards to the second stage of design, Wiggins and McTighe identify the ‘Big Picture of Design Approach’ (1998: 18) in the following way:

Key Design Question:
What is evidence of understanding?

Design Considerations:
Six facets of understanding
Continuum of assessment types

Filters (Design Criteria):
Valid
Reliable
Sufficient
Authentic Work
Feasible
Student Friendly
What the Final Design Accomplishes:
unit anchored in credible and educationally vital evidence of the desired understandings

In understanding the module created for this study, this second stage of design in the UBD format asks 'teachers and curriculum planners to first think like an assessor before designing specific units and lessons, and thus to consider up front how they will determine whether students have attained the desired understanding' (Wiggins and McTighe 1998: 12). The backwards design approach 'encourages us to think about a unit or course in terms of the collected assessment evidence needed to document and validate that the desired learning has been achieved' (Wiggins and McTighe 1998: 12). For the purposes of this study, the assessment (summative data/writing/assessment) was considered to be the final autobiographical portfolio to be created by the students as well as the narratives in general (see Section 3.7.2).

According to Wiggins and McTighe's the six facets of understanding (2005; 1998), when we truly understand, we:

1. Can **explain**: provide thorough, supported, and justifiable accounts of phenomena, facts, and data.
2. Can **interpret**: tell meaningful stories; offer apt translations; provide a revealing historical or personal dimension to ideas and events; make it personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models.
3. Can **apply**: effectively use and adapt what we know in diverse contexts.
4. Have **perspective**: see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.
5. Can **empathize**: find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitively on the basis of prior direct experience.
6. Have **self-knowledge**: perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that both shape and impede our own understanding; we are aware of what we do not understand and why understanding is so hard. (84; 44)
This evidence of understanding utilizes a range of assessment methods that vary in ‘scope...time frame...setting...and structure’ (Wiggins and McTighe 1998:13). Due to the focus of understanding as the core of this design frame, assessment in the UBD format is ‘anchored by performance tasks or projects [as] these provide evidence that students are able to use their knowledge in context’ (Wiggins and McTighe 1998: 13). Filters in the design criteria for evidence of understanding is that the assessment is valid, reliable, sufficient, based on authentic work, feasible, and student friendly.

*Stage Three – Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction*

In regards to the third stage of design, Wiggins and McTighe identify the ‘Big Picture of Design Approach’ (1998: 18) in the following way:

**Key Design Question:**
What learning experiences and teaching promote understanding, interest, and excellence?

**Design Considerations:**
Research-based repertoire of learning and teaching strategies
Essential and enabling knowledge and skill

**Filters (Design Criteria):**
WHERE TO (revised in 2005)
Where is it going?
Hook the students
Explore and equip
Rethink and revise
Exhibit and evaluate
Tailored to individual
Organized for deep understanding

**What the Final Design Accomplishes:**
Coherent learning experiences and teaching that will evoke and develop the desired understandings, promote interest, and make excellent performance more likely.
The third and last stage in the backwards design format of UBD relates to the most familiar territory of instructional activities. In regards to the module created for this study, Wiggins and McTighe (1998: 13) relate five key questions to consider:

1. What enabling knowledge (facts, concepts, and principles) and skills (procedures) will students need to perform effectively and achieve desired results?
2. What activities will equip students with the needed knowledge and skills?
3. What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of performance goals?
4. What materials and resources are best suited to accomplish these goals?
5. Is the overall design coherent and effective?

It is this last stage that allows for teacher freedom and ownership in regards to the articulation and application of the designed model and frame. In response to the five key questions outlined above, teachers can apply the model to their own classroom dynamic, selecting instructional strategies and tasks that reflect both their personality and the personality and needs of each individual class and student. For the purposes of this study, I selected topics from the literature, specifically from the learner profile discussed in Section 2.2, to guide instruction and establish the selected instructional activities.
APPENDIX C

Data Samples

C1 Data Sample – Christy
C2 Data Sample – Jenny
C3 Data Sample – Becky
C4 Image Samples from Summative Data
In ways I have found the person I was hiding from this past few months. I have finally dug deep the rest of who the person is - that was smoothed by layers. This person is flawed, the wants I’ve liked, and in being liked, has formulated this person who wasn’t hard to like, but hard to know. Time has flown and over thinking translates to me over handling who I am.

So thankful!

Unpeeling, unwinding the stream of disguise so tightly wound, anticipating the truth. It’s like sitting with a map, trying to follow the starting point to the present, and re-live the bumps along the way. Figuring out I’ve been almost leading a double life for unnervingly many years and for most of my adulthood, was a self-explanatory thing. Only after living with addiction, can I understand its manifestation in my life, my being and it’s imprint on my way of thinking. It is strenuous enough hiding this part of my life from friends, but trying to hold back it’s part played in who I am was impossibly done without feeling worse. The distance between how you feel and how you portray these feelings, I’ve learned needs to stay in line. When I felt unhappy, depressed, angry inside I got in the habit of masking these feelings with a smile. It would make sense for some to want an invitation to discuss these unsettling emotions, but my worst fear question was, "Are you okay?"

I don’t know why exactly hiding it was definitely a coping mechanism, a defense. But I was terrified of displaying true emotions. I programmed showing what I felt as weak and the vulnerability I’d have to experience would be too open and bare. I wasn’t able to be myself in school. I tried to fade in, from being loud and gregarious, I disliked putting my hand up. I wanted to go unnoticed. Attention on me became a pressure, I had to seem okay and happy in front of
others... anything less, was failure to me, showing a flaw. Anxiety surrounding this need to appear like everyone else.

This anxiety about home-life, school-life was being filtered and released through directed reading aloud. I could center, not putting up my hand, or not looking for attention. However, reading aloud was this unpredictable light switch of daydreaming in class to instant focus on the sound of my voice the seeming to be seen as "fine" was pressure, but in reading aloud I felt as though every word of me was being examined. I urged myself, not to make a mistake, convincing myself before I spoke a few words would reveal, I wasn't at ease or confident. I imagined people seeing right through me... the worst feeling for me as well!

It's funny how our minds can latch onto a task to emit such anxiety. I was quite successfully performing, but carrying out this simple task filled me with dread, sleepless nights, terror. Were people really going to begin to judge me for stumbling over a word, decide I was strange and unfamiliar. That all wasn't what it seemed? No... I was a good reader before this fear. Comfortable in this situation were people going to notice my mumbling, gaps in my breathing, my body's betrayal? Unfortunatly... yes. However it would be illogical to think that the anxiety wouldn't find a way to be released. It was hard that my anxiety had to be unleashed in front of a room full of people, but in understanding these anxieties through consoling, I've stopped despising myself as much for this fault.

That is wonderful to hear, you have the power now... not your fear!

I've asked not to read aloud, and have more free time to concentrate on developing who I am. I may feel more comfortable being private with my life, but I don't have to feel the impulse to feel so things I'm hiding who I am... I tried being unoffensive, met with opinions...
People do not have time to search one another, as we
have skillfully trained our eyes to search within
ourselves. However, it is to be expected, as I begin
to know others, ironically, the less and less I notice
them. So it is to be expected that strangers, acquaintances study and internalize every detail.
Perhaps some more than others, however when we are
conscious of something, we decide others are undoubtedly judging or thinking less of us. Brushing past a stranger
it's a little naive of me to think they travel through
my face, clothes, body, that stubborn
simple and judge. Like some imaginary
target aimed at by others. Brushing past a stranger, sometimes I'd fail to
recall their hair colour let alone intricate
details. When I am so restricted in self-consciousness,
I lose any essence of who I am. I don't want to be
edited to conform to others' opinions.

I remember being younger, and my eyes didn't shift
likewise. Staying truant around a room of people-
I wasn't threatened, shyness at all. Children can shift
into wasn't. At the age of new. I worked, I didn't retrieve
and became quiet because I felt judged or on edge,
being introduced to people was just an ambivalent
encounter, not alarming, being blissfully oblivious to
how I was portrayed and if I would be liked. I was
free in my being, I did as I pleased and didn't second
guess. As I grew older, the attributes of child
hood ignorance have shed and new I am being
a quick paced thinker. It seems like the less life
experience brought less questioning of who I was.
I think everyone my age is cloaked in insecurities, pressure of appearance. "Don't care about what people think!" I could do that, I think to myself, but it takes acceptance and a foundational self-validation first and foremost, sort of like this parent you are willing to expose and secure enough to be indifferent to other's thoughts. Teenage girls, myself included are self-conscious. We are submerged into vanity out of a hesitant of being to be comfortable, rather than equating. Every female knows how universally harsh we are to our self.

At 16, it takes more than a plastic horse to feel beautiful sitting in feathered hair to feel effortlessly beautiful. There was such security, if I was acting like Baby Spice, then there was no question, I was her on 'Tilly Toss' prancing around - I was in pink platforms performin to thousands. One once questioned if I looked silly, irrelevant. Unawareness of the spirit bashing game of COMPARISON gave me self-entitlement and acceptance. Sitting in front of a window, mirror, I was me, other girls weren't applicable. Why would I want to look like someone else? Five year olds, seven year olds didn't feel like themselves or cringe thinking when it occurred to them that I is prettier or skinnier. It's funny how I would relish in hearing over the playback of me singing on a video camera, nowadays old squirm at the thought I wasn't unshielded, or orchestrated, proud of myself. It's made me realise how much more at ease I can be and less ridiculing if the cul of my negative thoughts was released. I am learning who I am by who I think I am. What a wonderful realization!
but girls are fragile, we prep and cultivate our outfit, a hairstyle, makeup, carefully think about possible opinions. Contentment will hopefully reign all our striving for the time being as we examine the studied product. A compliment will be gratefully accepted accepted internally: we'll deny the flattery as being so complex we want to be liked. Boys would just say "Cheers!" But these kind words will drift: we'll believe it for a nano second compared to the stored insults that last much longer. The contrast a put down will linger, and our instincts, it will be shelved in the back of our minds ready to be delivered on to us at low points, they will be pushing floods of negativity. A compliment will seem suspicious, untrustworthy they just melt into one another and be a question if I misread it or was it a joke. 

I don't agree with "funny" hurtful comments. I've encountered situations of a constant insecure friend and don't laugh myself to laugh while I can't endure unnecessary things like this, the insecurity of others can't be shielded with a response of laughter. It's sad we can't be more honest and frank times when we feel insecure rather than try and delude others to feel better. I think I should give up comparing myself to others and in doing that maybe relaxing into who I am or feel most at ease. Being will fall into place. Compassion is pointless. But impossible to resist giving, it's like comparing two different species, or colors. Compassion refuses beauty and individuality to live and breathe, it's like forcing magnets together.

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This is very true...and it is good to feel safe in trust...and as I said, maybe you could talk to your mom. I find it difficult with friend's being completely oblivious of everything I never tell them, which is unfair of me! But I think I want the best of both, which is no easy feat. I want a sensitivity but yet I also want no sympathy contract! I understand this...and I have a question for you...what have I done that has allowed you to trust me? and can you find this in others, in small bits and pieces? I don't think I trust in people enough, or acquire the strength to talk about things that go on. I suppose I am undermining people's understanding and potential to be a lot kinder than I think. Especially as I've had friends who detour around the fact I don't really invite...
### CELEBRATING LIFE

#### TOPICS OF MY LIFE (and marker colours)

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<tr>
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<td>Dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THEME 1</strong></td>
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<td>Equality</td>
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<td>Happiness</td>
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<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quotes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I wouldn’t be able to live as contently because I need these things to be home.&quot; (About family and friends)</td>
<td>&quot;I don’t always get the respect I deserve, I live in quite a sexist household.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I always feel at home with my family and friends,&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Without all these things I wouldn’t be comfortable or happy,&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;They shower me with love and protect me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>THEME 1</td>
<td>THEME 2</td>
<td>THEME 3</td>
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<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quotes</td>
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<td>Quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Seeing them knock themselves down kind of knocks me down and just lowers my self esteem.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Honesty is my policy.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Expect something in return like the other person's trust in you.&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependence</th>
<th>THEME 1</th>
<th>THEME 2</th>
<th>THEME 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>God</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I depend on them,&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I wouldn't be able to live as contently because I need these things to be home.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Others believe he is the cause of all good and bad and worship him.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Trust

I'm going to just discuss trust under the headings we took down because I guess it's the best way for me to explain my views on trust.

Predictability
With predictability and trust, I guess it’s just what you expect to happen after you trust someone with a secret or a thing; for example, if you trust someone with a secret, you'd hope they will not tell anyone the secret, or if you trust someone with something that belongs to you, you would hope they'd take care of that thing. Value exchange or hope they'd make an exchange! This is when you'd expect a return.

Value exchange with someone, for instance, you tell a person a personal secret and then you'd hope - and/or expect - that the person would trust you with a secret some stage after that.

Delayed reciprocity
This kind of means the same thing with value exchange and delayed reciprocity by saying after exchanging a secret you kind of expect something in return like the other person's trust in you.

Exposed vulnerabilities
This is when you let your walls down and show everyone your weaknesses.

This is the easiest time for a person to take advantage of you or bully you.
Angry.
So yesterday I got a text from a girl in the year. She used to be my best friend, but we drifted, thank God. Anyway, she texted asking me to lend something to her, personally I don’t want to lend anything to her because the last time I did, (it was a book) it came back ripped and half eaten by her dog, this is after I specifically told her to be careful with the book because it was new and I like keeping my books in a good condition, she didn’t even apologise for the state of the book, so I don’t want to lend her my new and favourite CD that was a birthday present. She keeps making excuses as to why she can’t buy it herself, when really everything she’s saying is a load of bullshit, as per usual. What pisses me off is how she only makes contact with me when she wants something, she does the exact same thing to my best friend! I just want her to leave me alone, I’m sick of her lies and drama, my mum is even sick of her at this stage, and that’s saying something! I wish she would finally open her eyes and realise that I mean it when I say “we’ve drifted,” and of. There’s no point in saying something if it’s not worth saying.
Because then it’s just not worth having.
Relationships with everyone vary, it also depends on who the relationship is with. In my opinion, the relationship with yourself is the most important. If you're not happy and comfortable with who you are, you won't be completely happy and comfortable with anyone else.

Your relationships with your classmates and teachers can affect how you learn and participate in the class. If you don't feel comfortable to talk like your classmates, it's hard to work with them because you don't want to work with them and if you don't like your teacher, it's hard to learn from them. That's why respect, patience, and the
Ability to listen is so important in a class.

There isn’t really much of a relationship with your arch nemesis because you don’t like them, you don’t talk to them, there’s just a mutual dislike.

The relationship with boys changes completely depending on whether you like them or not. If you don’t, then it’s just the same as being with your friends that are girls, but if you do, you try harder to impress them, a lot of your attention goes to them and you pay more attention to your actions.

A relationship with God is different with every single person, some people don’t believe in god and have another faith while others believe he is the cause of all good and bad and worship him.

The relationship with your family and friends is one of the most important relationships. These are the people you love and trust, confide in, live with. They are the people who will always be in your life so a good relationship will ensure you will always be in each other’s lives.
I was at my first friend's house. After coming home from the cinema, we had nothing to do so we decided to play scrabble. A piece was just lying there on the floor in the other room. Five minutes later we get caught in a letter fight. The letters went everywhere. We had to stop after knives nearly knocked her lamp over. It was on her shelf. After that we decided to keep making a very using the letter rank, things, and present people.

To this day, there are still scrabble letters at the sides of her radishes and on her windowsill.

Very funny! Sounds like a good time, though!

I love remembering this story because it was a time when we were neater and just such close friends as we have been drifting apart so much this year especially these past weeks. I haven't spoken or seen her in 3 weeks.
When I'm with my family, I treat them with care and understanding.

I'm a person who is very patient and doesn't act as hyper when I'm with them. I am more calm and totally different person when I'm around family.

I treat them with respect and also in a fun way because I don't want them to get angry at me for being really hyper. My parents don't like me when I get hyper active and my brother finds me annoying because I seem to never stop laughing. I think I act a little different with my family because they might not want to treat me exactly like they do my friends.

I think it's an interesting observation when I'm with my friends I act really hyper and crazy because that's kind of who I am. My friends accept that I tend to laugh a lot and we are used to it. I treat my friends really well and take care of them. I treat them like I would like to be treated and I make sure they're ok if they don't feel well or in trouble or anything like that. I treat them with respect and honesty because it's important to want them to treat me the same. A friendship isn't a friendship if you don't put in the effort. You have to have a lot of friends but I keep my best friends closer.

When I wait by a homeless person I feel quite uncomfortable because I sometimes get a feeling that they are going to mug me or something. But sometimes I feel bad for them because they are less fortunate and they could be really nice but others treat them as if they are a totally different person when I walk by them I just try to ignore them and often feel sorry for them and it usually happens all the time. My family still treat me as if I'm a child all the time, they're really doing it out of love but it gets really distracting.
I miss out on a lot of things and don't have experience in some areas. I go to dances, sleepovers, and act totally different with my friends than I do my family as we and my family are not THAT close. We don't share our personal feelings. I might have odd time with my brother but you know, not all the time.
I have a lot of friends but I feel like I only have a few real friends. In English class (the class before this one), we were talking about Emily Dickinson's poems and one poem we did was about her picking one true friend and shutting out the rest of the world. Which kind of got me thinking about who my real friends are.

"My one best friend," she began, "she knew her name. We used to tell each other everything and I meant 'EVERYTHING.' But at this moment we're not in any of each other's classes and barely see each other that much. We always talk on Facebook at night but it's only about the gossip and scandal we love about. We also talk about our relationships with people but not as much. It just brings me sometimes when we don't really talk about 'ourselves' but recently her life has gotten a little 'eventful' and she's been telling me all about it because she's been getting upset more and more. And I have been upset about other things in my own life so she listens to me, we support each other in a way that we used to again which is good but it's just sad that it's only when our lives are getting difficult that we do. Friendship's not what it used to be.

My other best friend has known her since first year but feels like forever. I tell her all my problems too and she helps me out. She's hanging around with a different group though who are a bit... lets just say they're changing her who someone she never was. They're nice to me though so it's okay and still talks to me and she hangs around with me and stuff like that. She's still my second best friend so I'm fine with..."
It is amazing learning about the past and meeting what people are doing now. I often wonder about the past and think about how we are today. And then there's my best friend. I feel like we haven't really gotten to know each other. She tells me personal things and stuff, but it's really difficult because I don't know what to say in those situations. I don't know if she's seeing anyone or if she's feeling unwell. She basically says it everyday but I don't say anything about it to other people except Lauren because she did the same for Lauren.

I totally forgot about this my third best friend.

I'm not finished :) 
Okay."

Since Lauren and I are in the same class, we always talk and we even have a class together where we just chill out together and watch a movie and eat lots of junk food.

We used to have a lot of those days.

We 8th graders started to have those :)
I feel at home when I'm either with my friends, family, or when I'm doing sports. When I am with my best friends, I feel at home because they know me and accept me for who I am (a lunatic). People who don't know me as well don't really get me and might get the impression that I'm insane and don't care about anything but my best friends know that I do care about things and people more than anything and yeah I might be crazy but good crazy. My best friends, ("besto's" as I call them) look out for me and I do the same for them, even though I have several! There will always be my two best best friends, if there's such a thing.

I've known them since the third grade when I moved to this school and I've known them for like forever! I tell them everything and anything even if they don't mean a thing or if they bore them, they still listen. We give each other advice and just have a blast.

When I'm with them I feel like I'm at home even if I'm only with one on some odd day. Their houses are like my second/third home. I am always there! When I am with my friends, I am myself, not someone else and that's why I think being with my friends is my home.

Playing sports is also a place where I feel at home. Ever since I was little I played sports as well. I just loveeee sports!!! I think it's because it's one of the things I know I'm good at because I'm not good at a lot of things! I love trying new sports but even if I don't like them that much. I did so much sport when I was little that it got too much for me when I moved up into secondary school so I had to quit the majority of them which was really depressing! But I kept up swimming and hockey sort of... And I joined a running club just this year for gaisce but my parents don't like the idea of me running because it apparently isn't good for me health. In a couple of weeks I will be taking part in the indoor championships for sprinting but that's only if I get fitter because I was off sports for a good while because of my leg injury. Hopefully I will be ready for it and I'm so excited about it! Playing sports is like my passion. I want to become a psychologist when I'm older but seeing as I love sports I'm thinking of being a sports psychologist! Whenever I'm playing sport it's like all my worries have gone and disappeared which is a good thing I guess. To me home is sport and friends (as well as family).
APPENDIX C4 – IMAGES SAMPLES FROM SUMMATIVE DATA
Conclusion.

Now that you've read everything you know a lot about me cause you'll never know everything. I don't think teachers will honestly change their ways but then as one great guy once said "NEVER SAY NEVER" 😊
These words are my own, from my heart flow.
“Life’s journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, shouting ‘Holy shit! What a ride!’"
APPENDIX D
Data Analysis

D1 Topical Breakdown of Data.
D2 Thematic Breakdown of Data
D3 Topic of 'Friend' Chart
D4 Topic of 'Family' Chart
D5 Topic of 'School' Chart.
APPENDIX D1 - Topical Breakdown of Data

FREQUENCY OF TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY POPULATION (17 STUDENTS) AND CORRESPONDING THEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRIENDS (15 participants)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **FAMILY (14 participants)** |

| **SCHOOL (11 participants)** |
| Happiness, Friends, Enjoyment, Pressure, Conformity, Love/Hate, Stress, Learning, Encouragement, Pressure, Friendship/Social, Constructive, Sadness, Fear, Stress, Fosters Interests, Life Lessons, Pressure/Motivation, Learning, Security, Personal Outlook, Mistakes, Change in Education, Career, Teachers, Learning, Underestimate, Don’t Think About Us, Inconsiderate Teachers, Sexist, Stressful, Friendship, Anger, Unhappiness, Education, Changing the System, Feeling Frustrated, Growing As a Person Through Learning |

<p>| <strong>MYSELF (5 participants)</strong> |
| Happy, Optimism, Confidence, Hobbies, Ambition, Appearance, Personality, Self-Esteem, Confidence, Loving, Relationships, Shyness, What I See in Others, How I See Myself, How Others See me, Self-Confidence, Ways of Thinking, Confidence, Hopes &amp; Dreams, Learning, Motivation/Determination, Qualities |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEARNING</strong></td>
<td>4 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing Up, All About It, In A Class Setting, Changing the System, Feeling Frustrated, Growing As a Person Through Learning, Teachers Uninterested, Hard, Boring, Not about Us, Underestimated, Personal Outlook, Mistakes, Change in Education, Career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE FUTURE</strong></td>
<td>3 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty, Pressure, Hopes, Not Knowing, Being Scared, Pressure, Career, Accepting &amp; Embracing the Unknown, Failure, Uncertainty, Scary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOME</strong></td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort, Family, Memories, Escape Place, Happiness, Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MUSIC</strong></td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing, Listening, Escapism, Getting More Out of It, Education, Unhappiness, Stress, Ambition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPORT</strong></td>
<td>2 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort, Anger, Friendship, Happiness, Freedom, Relax</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONFIDENCE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance Acceptance, Self Conscious, Getting It, Comparison, Sick/Worried, Nervous/Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ANXIETY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Themes Within This Topic (as identified by the participants):</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link with Past, Pressure, Embarrassment, Control, It’s Effect</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Participant(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFLICT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTROL</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEPENDENCE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCOVERING WHO I AM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAMA</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXPECTATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>GROWING UP</td>
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<tr>
<td>GYMNASTICS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>THE PAST</td>
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<td>SICKNESS</td>
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### APPENDIX D2 - Thematic Breakdown of Data

#### HOLISTIC THEMATIC DATA
Alphabetical Listing of All Thematic Identifiers (149 Total) Used by Participants

| A       | Acceptance 8  
|         | Ambition 2     
|         | Anger 2        
|         | Annoyed 1      
|         | Anxiety's Effect 1 
|         | Appearance 2   
|         | Aspirations 1  
|         | Being Authentic 1 |
| B       | Belonging 1    
|         | Betrayal 2     
|         | Bitching 1     
|         | Boring 1       |
| C       | Career 2       
|         | Careful 1      
|         | Challenges 1   
|         | Personal Change 1  
|         | Closeness 1    
|         | Comfort 6      
|         | Comfortable 1  
|         | Communication 1 
|         | Comparison 1   
|         | Concerned 1    
|         | Being the One Who People Tell Things to (Confidante) 1 |
|         | Confidence 6   
|         | Conflict 3     
|         | Conformity 1   
|         | Constructive 1 |
|         | Control 1      |
| D       | Dependable 1   
|         | Dependence 3   
|         | Depressed 1    
|         | Determination 1 
|         | Development 1  
|         | Being Different 1  
|         | Disappointment 1 |
|         | Doubt 1        
|         | My love for it (drama) 1  
|         | How it Takes up my life (drama) 1  
|         | My hopes for a future with it (drama) 1  
<p>|         | Dreams 2       |</p>
<table>
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<th>Column</th>
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<td>Enjoyment 1</td>
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<td>Embarrassment 3</td>
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<td>Accepting/Embracing the Unknown 1</td>
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<td>Equality 1</td>
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<td>Escape 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What you expect 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Me (expectations) 1</td>
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<td>Experience Together 1</td>
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<td>Faith 1</td>
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<td>Failure 1</td>
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<td>Fun 4</td>
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<td>Getting More Out of It (music) 1</td>
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<td>God 1</td>
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<td>Groups 1</td>
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<td>Growing Up 2</td>
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<td>Happiness 9</td>
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<td>Hate 1</td>
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<td>Helping People 1</td>
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<td>Hobbies 1</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fosters Interests 1</td>
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<td>Irritation 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Jealousy 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afraid of Judgement 1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Judgemental 1</td>
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420
| L | Learning 6  
   | Not about Us (learning) 1  
   | Growing as a person through Learning 2  
   | Life Journey 1  
   | Life Lessons 1  
   | Limiting 1  
   | Listening (to music) 1  
   | Loneliness 4  
   | Love 11  
   | Loyalty 3  |
|---|---|
| M | Masking 1  
   | Memories 1  
   | Misleading 1  
   | Mistakes 1  
   | Motivation 2  |
| N | Needing Friends 1  
   | Nervous 1  
   | Not Knowing 1  |
| O | Optimism 2  |
| P | Pain 1  
   | Parents 1  
   | Link with Past 2  
   | Not Dwelling on the Past 1  
   | Personal Outlook 1  
   | Personality 1  
   | Playing (music) 1  
   | Pressure 7  |
| Q | Qualities 1  |
| R | Relationships 4  
   | Relax 1  
   | Reliant 1  
   | Relief 1  
   | Respect 1  
   | Responsibility 1  |
| S  | Sadness 1  
    | Scared 2  
    | Scary 1   
    | Security 4  
    | What I See in Others 1  
    | How I See Myself 1  
    | How Others See me 1  
    | Self-Confidence 5  
    | Self Conscious 1  
    | Self-Esteem 3  
    | Sexist 1  
    | Shyness 1  
    | Shock 1   
    | Sick 1    
    | Sister 1  
    | Skills 1  
    | Social 1  
    | Stress 5  
    | Strong 1  
    | Support 3  
| T  | Teachers 1  
    | Teachers Don’t Think About Us 1  
    | Inconsiderate Teachers 1  
    | Teachers Uninterested 1  
    | Trust 14  
| U  | Uncertainty 2  
    | Underachievement 1  
    | Underestimate 2  
    | Understanding 7  
    | Unhappiness 2  
    | Upset 1  
| W  | Ways of Thinking 1  
    | Working Too Hard 1  
    | Worry 2  

**Top Ten Themes**

- Trust (14)
- Love (11)
- Happiness (9)
- Acceptance (8)
- Friendship (7)
- Pressure (7)
- Understanding (7)
- Comfort (6)
- Confidence (6)
- Learning (6)
### APPENDIX D3 - Topic of 'Friend' Chart

#### TOPIC: FRIENDS

Thematic Groupings of Participant Descriptors (Synonyms & Antonyms) with Researcher Label

(15/17 participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Being the One Who People Tell Things to</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-Confidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Betrayal</th>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Being the One Who People Tell Things to</th>
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<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needing Friends</th>
<th>Reliant</th>
<th>Security/Comfort</th>
<th>Dependable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELIANCE</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>How They Accept Me</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
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<th>Friendship</th>
<th>Strength of Relationships</th>
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<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOYALTY</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Helping People</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Fear/Shock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embarrassment</td>
<td>Doubt</td>
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<td>Jealousy</td>
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423
## TOPIC: FAMILY

Thematic Groupings of Participant Descriptors (Synonyms & Antonyms) with Researcher Label
(14/17 participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love</th>
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<td>Happiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Stress Worry Pressure</td>
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<td>Stress</td>
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<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Dependence Dependence</td>
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424
## APPENDIX D5 - Topic of ‘School’ Chart

### TOPIC: SCHOOL

Thematic Groupings of Participant Descriptors (Synonyms & Antonyms) with Researcher Label

(11/17 participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Encouragement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>Inconsiderate Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure/Motivation</td>
<td>Underestimate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Don’t Think About Us</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Sexist</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Happiness</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Love/Hate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing As a Person Through Learning</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friendship/Social</th>
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<td>Friendship</td>
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<td>Friends</td>
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<td>Change in Education</td>
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<th>Feeling Frustrated</th>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Career</td>
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